



Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Below

Date/Time: September 9, 2002 6:30 PM

Project No.: 51272
Plaistow-Kingston 10044-B

Place: Plaistow Public Library

Re: NH 125 Plaistow-Kingston
Select Board Meeting, Town of Plaistow

Notes taken by: Senan P. Murdock

Attendees

Robert Gray, Chairman Others: See attached list of attendees
Charles Blinn Jr., Vice Chairman
John Scruton, Town Manager
Merilyn Senter, ATF Member
John Sherman
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Marty Kennedy, VHB

Introduction

Chris Waszczuk introduced himself as the New Hampshire Department of Transportation Project Manager for the Route 125 reconstruction project and said that he appreciates the opportunity to present the plans to the Plaistow Select Board. Chris stated that the project begins at East Road in Plaistow and continues to Main Street in Kingston. Chris explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to present the conceptual plans in Plaistow to the Town Officials. An Advisory Task Force, made up of officials from both towns, has been formed to help guide the development of the Plaistow-Kingston project.

Project Background, Deficiencies, Project Need

C. Waszczuk explained that Route 125 is a major north-south corridor with traffic volumes ranging from 13,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day. Route 125 is designated as a principal arterial highway and is part of the National Highway System (NHS), reflecting its importance to the statewide and regional transportation system.

A feasibility study was completed in September of 1999 for the segment of Route 125 extending from the East Road intersection in Plaistow to the Kingston/Brentwood town line. The study identified several operational, safety, and access related deficiencies including:

- Lack of access control
- Absence of left-turn lanes
- Poor or insufficient illumination
- Poor alignment and sight lines in various segments
- Poor configuration or lack of definition at some intersections
- And poor level of service at unsignalized intersections.

Some of the interim improvement projects, which were recommended in the study, that have been completed include:

- Signalization and widening at the New Boston Road intersection
- Widening to provide a left-turn lane at Old Coach Road
- Widening to provide turn lanes at NH 121A

The feasibility study placed a high priority on the need to improve the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection. This intersection has been separated out of the main project and deemed a high priority by both communities to accelerate forward due to the many safety problems associated with this location.

C. Waszczuk emphasized that the design developed to date is a conceptual alternative and the Department is seeking input on the design. Several complete property acquisitions, driveway consolidations and driveway access restrictions are proposed with this plan to improve capacity, enhance safety, relieve congestion, and to enhance the safe and efficient access to abutting properties.

Proposed Scope of Work

Senan Murdock described the presentation materials on display, including the plans and typical cross sections, noting the color-coding of the various features. He reviewed the existing conditions along NH 125, including the roadway widths, number of lanes, signal locations, traffic volumes, and accident data. Senan described the proposed five-lane solution. He noted the following:

- The proposed concept matches into the existing five-lane section at East Rd and extends north through the town of Plaistow. This 5-lane section will consist of two through lanes in the northbound direction, two through lanes in the southbound direction, and a 20' raised median island, which will provide for protected left turn lanes in each direction at major intersections. To minimize impacts, the widening is generally shown to be equal on both sides. There are a couple of areas where we have widened more to one side than the other. In the area of Danville Road, we have sharpened the curve to a 400-meter radius to pull away from a detention basin. Near the Main Street intersection, we are widening away from Sanborn Candies.
- The Feasibility Study identified the need for a double left on NH 125 in the northbound direction at Danville Road, Jesse George Road, or NH 121-A. The proposed concept includes a double left at NH 121-A. This will help pull traffic away from Danville Road, where the entrance to the high school is. Geometrically, this intersection will accommodate a double left better than Danville Road and Jesse George Road. There would be severe impacts to Cumberland Farms with a double left at Danville Road. The following is a brief description of the proposed concept at each of the intersections:

- No widening is anticipated on East Road or Joanne Drive. The existing median island will be extended to the north.
 - Danville Road will be a signalized intersection with a single left in the northbound direction, and a through lane and a through-right hand turn lane in the southbound direction. Danville Road will be widened to provide separate left and right turn lanes. It is possible that there could be a future fourth leg to this intersection.
 - A raised median would extend across Jesse George Road restricting turning movements to right-in/ right-out only.
 - The intersection of NH 121-A/NH 125 will be a signalized intersection as it is today. NH 125 will be widened to a 6-lane section to provide enough room for a double left heading in the northbound direction at this intersection. As a result NH 121-A will be widened to the west to accept the double left. The approaching side roads would have separate through-left and right turn lanes, and are aligned to balance impacts to the potentially historic buildings on the north and south side of NH 121-A.
 - Old County Road will be a signalized intersection. Protected left turn lanes would be provided in the northbound and southbound direction. Old County Road will operate satisfactorily with single lane approaches, as they are today.
 - Kingston Road will be an unsignalized intersection. It will be widened to provide separate left and right turn lanes. We are proposing to re-align the intersection to reduce the skew angle. There is also the possibility of dead-ending Granite Rd.
- As part of this project we are trying to minimize the number of conflict points along the corridor by consolidating and relocating driveways in certain areas. There is still a lot of work that has to be done in order for us to determine where these areas are, and they will be looked at more closely as we develop the access management plan for the corridor.
 - Some potential acquisitions and retaining walls were identified but are very preliminary at this time.

Before opening the meeting up to comments and questions, Chris Waszczuk briefly reviewed the project development process and discussed tentative dates for future meetings. C. Waszczuk stated that this project would be funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds.

Comments and Questions from the Board of Selectmen

Comment - John Sherman asked for an explanation of the median.

Response - Chris Waszczuk explained that there would be a raised median island separating traffic in the northbound and southbound direction. The median island would become narrow at major intersections to provide for left turn lanes.

Comment - J. Sherman commented that this plan would not allow for left turning due to the median. He asked if this will increase traffic on Main Street, causing people to use NH 121A to avoid NH 125.

Response - Marty Kennedy explained that the improvements will enhance safe and efficient flow of traffic along the corridor and will result in less traffic diversion to the local street system. Currently motorists use local streets to avoid congestion on the corridor. Traffic in the area will continue to grow. However, the plan is designed to accommodate the growth on NH 125 and discourage diversion onto local streets.

Comment - R. Gray asked if the plan is to create a "T" intersection at Kingston Road.

Response - C. Waszczuk said that was correct. The proposed plan would re-align Kingston Road to form a "T" intersection with NH 125. He noted that there would be a median opening and that the intersection would be un-signalized.

Comment - J. Sherman stated that he is not convinced that the median increases access to businesses.

Response - C. Waszczuk stated that the median would increase the safety of vehicles entering and existing businesses along NH 125.

Comment - M. Senter stated that trucking is heavy on Kingston Road. She said that it appeared that trucks would have to travel a long distance out of there way. She does not believe the intersections are designed for single and double truck rigs to turn.

Response - C. Waszczuk states that he agrees and this needs to be looked into. Chris mentioned that U-turns for cars would be permitted at all signalized intersections. He explained that the Department is investigating locations for truck turn-arounds along the corridor.

Comment - J. Scruton questioned the affect of the median on land values. He asked how a left turn would be arranged if a large development project was proposed.

Response - C. Waszczuk explained that the access management plan would identify development areas. Suitable access points will be provided for these parcels. He said he did not think that land values would be hurt based on studies conducted elsewhere in the country.

Comments and Questions from the Public

Comment - Don Swanson of Canterbury Forrest stated that he assumes this traffic is heading to I-495 in MA. He noted that there are already several traffic lights and this proposes more. Will the lights be synchronized?

Response - C. Waszczuk stated that there is a separate NHDOT project that will coordinate the existing traffic signals located south of East Road. The signals north of East Road, which are part of this project, will be coordinated where possible.

Comment - Barry Condon asks if this will be synchronized in the morning and evening.

Response - M. Kennedy explained that the signal system would be designed to provide the best possible coordination, recognizing that good coordination is not generally achieved in both directions at the same time.

Comment - Ron LeBlanc asked how Walton Road would be accessed from the south.

Response - C. Waszczuk stated that currently a median is proposed across this intersection. A car traveling from the south, heading north, would travel by Walton Road to the signal at Old County Road. The vehicle would be able to make a U-turn at this signal and head south to Walton Road. Chris mentioned that this area was still being investigated and that an opening in the median may be needed here.

Comment - Thomas Law stated that more accidents have occurred near the intersection of NH 121-A and Danville Road since the improvements were completed.

Response - C. Waszczuk stated that the added capacity of the proposed double-left turn lanes at the intersection of NH 121-A and NH 125 should help alleviate this issue by diverting traffic away from Danville Road. He thanked Mr. Law for the comment and noted that the Department will take a look at this intersection to see what other improvements can be incorporated. *(Chris/Mike, please add/revise for accuracy, I didn't have your response recorded).*

Comment - J. Sherman asked if there is a Route 125 bypass on anyone's radar screen.

Response - C. Waszczuk stated there is not.

C. Waszczuk thanked the Plaistow Board of Selectmen for their comments and for the opportunity to present the project to them.