

August 24, 2020

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** Epping 29608  
NH Route 125 Capacity Improvements

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** July 30, 2020

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Via Zoom

**ATTENDED BY:**

- Greg Dodge – Epping Town Administrator
- Jim Pouliot – Superintendent of Water and Sewer for the Town of Epping
- Chief Mike Wallace – Epping Police Department
- Brittany Howard – Epping Town Planner
- Dave Walker – Assistant Director, Rockingham Regional Planning Commission
- Scott Bogle – Sr. Transportation Planner, Rockingham Regional Planning Commission and Bike/Ped representative
- Joseph Foley – Chair, Lamprey River Advisory and Chair, Epping Planning Board
- Wendy Johnson – NHDOT, Project Manager
- Gerry Bedard – NHDOT, Design Engineer
- Dan Prehemo – NHDOT, Design Group Leader
- Tony Puntin – BETA Group, Inc., Engineering Design Consultant

**SUBJECT:** Public Advisory Committee Meeting #1

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

Bold **text** below indicates action items resulting from the meeting.

T. Puntin opened the meeting and thanked all in attendance. Each individual introduced themselves and their role in the community or their area of interest relative to the NH Route 125 corridor. The Agenda, attached, was sent to all prior to the meeting. As currently constituted, the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members are as follows:

1. Greg Dodge – Epping Town Administrator
2. Jim Pouliot– Superintendent of Water and Sewer for the Town of Epping
3. Chief Mike Wallace – Epping Police Department
4. Brittany Howard – Epping Town Planner
5. Dave Walker – Assistant Director, Rockingham Regional Planning Commission

6. Scott Bogle – Sr. Transportation Planner, Rockingham Regional Planning Commission and Bike/Ped representative
7. Joseph Foley – Chair, Lamprey River Advisory and Chair, Epping Planning Board
8. Jen Kimball – Regional Economic Development Center
9. Wendy Johnson – NHDOT, Project Manager
10. Gerry Bedard – NHDOT, Design Engineer
11. Tony Puntin – BETA Group, Inc. (Engineering Design Consultant)

W. Johnson thanked the PAC members for their willingness to participate. She indicated that T. Puntin will be the point of contact for the PAC and correspondence should be directed to him. This PAC meeting is the start of the public input process of the project. She asked if there are other stakeholder groups that should be represented.

- The Town does not have a Business Council or Neighborhood Associations that should be included.
- While J. Pouliot (Water and Sewer Commission) does not represent the Department of Public Work (DPW), he will correspond and coordinate with DPW Director Dennis Koch as needed.
- B. Howard suggested that a representative from the Epping Conservation Commission may be good to have on the PAC. **T. Puntin will contact the Town Conservation Commission for participation.**

T. Puntin presented an overview of the project. Major components of the project that were reviewed included: Project Advisory Committee, Project Location and Background, Project Needs and Objectives, Project Development Process, Project Status, and Project Schedule. Refer to the attached Meeting Presentation for additional information of the items discussed. Upon completion of the presentation, T. Puntin and W. Johnson asked the PAC as to their thought on the various topics including the vision for the corridor, any Town policies, and any known areas of concern.

B. Howard asked when the traffic counts were performed as there was some concern over the timing. T. Puntin indicated the counts were done in 2019 prior to Thanksgiving. J. Foley asked if the traffic counts were by the hour as traffic varied. T. Puntin indicated the traffic volumes were taken by the hour.

While discussing the environmental scope of services, J. Foley noted that a previous mussel survey had been performed on the Lamprey River. **T. Puntin will coordinate with J. Foley to obtain the report.**

B. Howard indicated she would assist with providing a link on the town's website to the project website. **T. Puntin will coordinate with her on this matter.**

B. Howard noted there were two older gas station along the corridor that should be investigated for hazardous material. Rose's and one just north of Fogg Road. It was believed by the group that these were both mitigated and tanks removed. This will be investigated as part of the environmental documentation research.

### Design Concerns

It was generally agreed that there does not exist any significant concerns relative to horizontal/vertical geometry or drainage. The deficiencies are more operational and traffic related.

M. Wallace noted that there are significant “bottlenecks” travelling northbound just north of Fresh River Road and north of NH Route 27 . The traffic volume is heavy on Friday afternoons (northbound) and Sunday nights (southbound) from recreational traffic.

G. Dodge noted that bottleneck and lane reductions should be addressed.

*In correspondence subsequent to the meeting, J. Pouliot noted that exiting left from Lagoon Road is very difficult during peak traffic and results in significant delays.*

J. Foley was concerned about the impacts to the Lamprey River.

### Sidewalk/Pedestrian Facilities

It was noted that there was interest in having a sidewalk near Walmart, but this has since been constructed.

G. Dodge indicated that sidewalks are not a significant concern along the corridor. The existing facilities should be retained but he felt there should not be an expansion of the network.

B. Howard felt that sidewalks are appropriate for the southern segment but overall, this is not a bike/pedestrian corridor, it is more of a through way for commuters. She indicated concern over sidewalks adjacent to high speed traffic. She also noted the potential need for a crossing mechanism for bikes/pedestrians for NH Route 27 across NH Route 125 (east-west). She mentioned that she has observed pedestrians using the recreational trail to cross NH Route 125 (because of the presence of a pedestrian traffic signal.). She also mentioned that crosswalks should be considered at the signalized intersections as that is where pedestrians might be expected to cross.

J. Foley felt that there does not need to be emphasis on pedestrian traffic and asked what the pedestrian counts were. He did not feel people would want to spend a lot of money on sidewalks if there was no pedestrian activity.

D. Walker indicated he felt there were limited opportunities for pedestrian to cross NH Route 125.

It was discussed that this project may have stressed the need for pedestrian accommodations as a previous member of the Town Board of Selectman had wanted sidewalks though the corridor. However, this desire may no longer be a goal for the project.

## Bicycle Facilities

S. Bogle indicated that NH Route 125 south of NH Route 27 is a designated state bike route. *(It should be noted that the State does not designate bike routes. The NHDOT identifies recommended bike routes but all roads with some exceptions, e.g. interstate highways, should accommodate bicycles.)* He noted that there are shoulders along portions of this segment that can be utilized by bicyclists. However, these shoulders that are used as bike lanes do not continue through intersections that have right turn lanes. He felt that this issue should be addressed in the revised design of intersections. It was generally felt that only experienced bicyclists would travel this corridor and consistent shoulders could accommodate them.

G. Bedard pointed out that the Rockingham Recreation Trail may attract younger, less experienced or less confident riders.

T. Puntin indicated that the project includes the review of the Lamprey River Bridge for potential widening to accommodate widened shoulders for bicycle and pedestrian use. The project also includes the study of a potential standalone bridge adjacent to the existing structure versus widening the Lamprey River Bridge.

S. Bogle noted that since the start of COVID 19 there has been an increase in trail use.

It was noted that there should be some consideration for connections to access the local business in the vicinity of the rail trail.

D. Walker noted there were limited opportunities for crossings of NH 125, which is why there is likely such heavy use of the crossing at the rail trail.

D. Walker noted that the design should be based on what the Town envisions for the corridor; not just what is out there today. This is a chance to have an impact on the use.

S. Bogle noted that the paint markings at the Rockingham Recreational Trail are worn away and asked about the maintenance of the markings. *Subsequent to the meeting a follow up discussion with the NHDOT Bureau of Traffic identified that for this location, the markings are maintained by the New Hampshire Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (NHDNCR) and not the Town of Epping.*

**S. Bogle will reach out to DG Cycle Sports located on Railroad Ave in Epping, not far from the recreational trail, to inquire of any bicycle related concerns or issues.**

### Roundabouts

It was felt in general that there are no significant local concerns or strong opinions relative to roundabouts. Some in the meeting expressed personal thoughts relative to the size and operation of roundabouts. The roundabout in Lee (NH Route 125 and US Route 4 intersection) was discussed. Some find it difficult to navigate the Lee roundabout, while others indicated that it is a substantial improvement (to capacity) over the previous traffic circle.

### Municipal Projects

J. Pouliot indicated that the Town intends to construct water and sewer on NH Route 125 from Wendy's north to Bluebird Storage. He indicated that provisions have been made on the Lamprey River Bridge (sleeve) for the new lines. The timeframe for construction will coincide with the NH Route 125 project. W Johnson indicated there are several options as to the how the water/sewer project can be incorporated into the NH Route 125 project. *She has had subsequent correspondence with him outlining the options and will have a follow up meeting with the NHDOT Design Services section to further discuss the options.*

J. Pouliot indicated that the Town will be undertaking the reconstruction of Railroad Avenue.

### Next Meetings/Steps

W. Johnson indicate she would like to present the project to the Town and local officials in the Fall. Ideally, the presentation would be in conjunction with a Board of Selectman meeting.  
**T. Puntin and W. Johnson will coordinate with the Town.**

Submitted by:



Anthony Puntin

cc: Attendees

### Attachments

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Meeting Presentation

**Epping 29608**  
**Public Advisory Committee Meeting #1**  
**Agenda**

**Date:** July 30, 2020

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

**Location:** via Zoom

**Attendees (invited):** Greg Dodge – Epping Town Administrator  
Jim Pouliot – Superintendent of Water and Sewer for the Town of Epping  
Chief Mike Wallace – Epping Police Department  
Brittany Howard – Epping Town Planner  
Dave Walker – Rockingham Regional Planning Commission  
Scott Bogle – Rockingham Regional Planning Commission Bike/Ped  
Joe Foley – Lamprey River Advisory and Epping Planning Board  
Jen Kimball – Regional Economic Development Center  
Wendy Johnson – NHDOT  
Gerry Bedard – NHDOT  
Tony Puntin – BETA Group, Inc.

1. Individual Introductions
  - a) Role/responsibility within project
  - b) Role/responsibility within community
  - c) Any other parties, such as abutters, who should be on the committee?
  
2. Project Advisory Committee
  - a) Why are we here?
  - b) Committee's role/responsibility
    - a. Represent the Community
    - b. Be a Liaison to the Community
    - c. Provide Guidance for the Design Team
  - c) Correspondence and communication protocol
    - a. Public Involvement Plan
    - b. Project website: <https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/epping29608/index.htm>
  - d) Meeting procedures and guidelines
  
3. Project Location and Background
  - a) Limits of work
  - b) Current status
  - c) Funding
  
4. Project Needs and Objectives
  - a) Capacity improvements

- b) Operational improvements
- c) Complete streets and context sensitive solutions; balance the needs of all users (motorized and non-motorized)
- d) Access management

5. Project Development Process

6. Project Status

- a) Traffic counts
- b) Alternatives investigation
- c) Public outreach and participation
- d) Environment assessment and documentation
- e) Are there any needs or concerns we should be considering in the design?

7. Project Schedule

- a) Design, permitting, and construction

8. Open Discussion

- a) PAC Member input
- b) Next steps
- c) Next meeting