

June 8, 2010

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

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** LACONIA  
X-A000(884)  
15691  
US 3 & NH 11B Safety Improvements

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** June 3, 2010

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Weirs Community Center, Laconia

**ATTENDED BY:** NHDOT  
Craig Green  
Michael Dugas  
Steven Babalis  
Mark Morrill

(See Attached Attendees List)

**SUBJECT:** Public Informational Meeting

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

C. Green explained that this intersection had come to the Department's attention through studies undertaken as part of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). He also mentioned that the City has been studying improvement alternatives for several years. He explained that the current Federal highway funding law, known by its acronym of SAFETEA-LU, created the HSIP to identify highway safety issues and provide for modest safety improvements that would achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. New Hampshire receives \$5.5 million per year to implement modest safety improvements in locations where crash data indicates safety deficiencies. He stressed that the HSIP is intended to be data driven; locations identified to use these funds must have a crash history that demonstrates there is a safety need. The intersection of US Route 3 and NH Route 11B was identified as one of the 30 locations eligible for HSIP funding.

A public informational meeting was held in August 2009. At which meeting the public identified numerous issues and concerns to be considered with this project, including the following:

- The intersection experiences heavy summertime traffic.
- The existing geometry is unconventional, resulting in driver confusion and vehicle conflicts.

- The project is located in an archeologically sensitive area. A historic bridge spans the Weirs channel east of the intersection on US 3. Beneath the easterly approach to this bridge are the remains of the preceding bridge.
- Donna Jean's Diner abuts the southwest corner of the intersection. On the southeast corner, there is a vacant commercial lot.
- The intersection lacks pedestrian facilities.
- The intersection is located in the view shed of Lake Winnepesaukee.
- Stormwater runoff is a concern on US 3 south.
- The accident report indicated from 2005-2008 there have been 21 accidents with 14 of them as right angle crashes.
- The stone wall running alongside US 3 east inhibits the Donna Jean's Diner's drive sight line.
- Interim intersection improvements were requested, either in lieu of the proposed reconstruction, or to improve conditions until the improvements are built.

Since the last meeting, the Department has collected survey, environmental resources information, approximate Right-of-Way, utility locations, and traffic data.

Mike Dugas explained that three alternatives were introduced at the last public informational meeting. Two signal configurations and a roundabout were presented. Modeling suggests that the two signal configurations would operate poorly since adequate auxiliary lane storage cannot be provided due to the limited Right-of-Way and the proximity of the historic bridge to the intersection. The roundabout modeling suggests that a single lane roundabout could function adequately for opening and horizon year summer traffic volumes.

A preliminary roundabout design was presented. The roundabout would have a diameter of 120', and its entries, exits, and truck apron would be designed to accommodate tractor-trailers with 53' trailers, which are permitted to travel US 3. (For comparison, the Meredith roundabout on US Route 3 and NH Route 106 (Parade Road) is 130' in diameter and the downtown Plymouth roundabout is 110' in diameter). The Donna Jean's Diner driveway would access directly into the roundabout. The vacant commercial parcel is proposed to have two points of access, a full access driveway on NH 11B and a 'right in' only driveway on US 3 south. Pedestrian facilities are provided on all legs. The sight distance looking left from the diner's driveway would be unchanged, but exiting vehicles would only have to merge with one way circulating traffic. A small acquisition would be required from parcel #8 (vacant commercial parcel), owned by Weirs Boulevard Realty Trust. Three utility poles and one push-pole will need to be relocated. Currently an underground telephone line runs across US 3 and up NH 11B. Its location and depth are being investigated and could delay the project up to a year if relocation is required.

Two construction traffic control plans were displayed showing how traffic would be maintained during construction. Two phases are anticipated. Both of which would require the temporary use of parcel #8 for detour routes.

Catherine Goodmen reviewed the environmental and natural resource findings. The concrete arch bridge is eligible for the National Register, however, the project will have no impact on the bridge. The roundabout is anticipated to improve air quality and will not increase noise levels at the intersection. Lake Winnepesaukee is listed by NHDES as an impaired water body. The project will reduce impervious surfaces by approximately 2,200 square feet and thus will reduce the stormwater volume discharged to the channel. Wetland impacts should be minor, and are associated with the construction of the new drainage outlet. The only rare specie known to occur within the project limits is the Bald Eagle. No impacts upon its habitat are anticipated. There are three hazardous material remediation sites within the vicinity of the project, which will be monitored as the design proceeds to determine their impact on the project.

## Questions and Concerns

Question: It was inquired how long would it be till construction began and how long would the project take.

Answer: Craig Green responded it is anticipated it will require two construction seasons to complete the project. The project schedule is complicated since it will need to avoid the high summer traffic volumes. The construction start date has not yet been determined since it is dependant on whether an underground telephone line relocation is required.

Concern: Luke Powell, Laconia DPW, cited concerns regarding the type of truck apron and curbing used in the proposed project. The cobblestones at the Meredith roundabout have a history of popping out and the truck drivers have suffered tire damage from striking the vertical curbing.

Answer: Craig responded a concrete apron is right now the preferred option for this roundabout. In order to reduce damage to tires from the vertical curbing, the curbing edge will be beveled.

Question: A resident inquired about the purpose of the vertical curbing.

Answer: Craig responded the curb is needed to define vehicle travel paths through the intersection and to control stormwater runoff.

Question: It was asked if in conjunction with the project, since utility poles are being relocated, whether it would be possible to have the overhead utilities relocated underground.

Answer: Craig commented that in the past, municipalities have worked in conjunction with the DOT projects to relocated utilities underground, but the municipality is responsible for the costs of such operations, which can be substantial.

Concern: A resident asked whether the center island would be available for landscaping and if it is, would water service be provided in the center.

Answer: Craig commented that it is common for the center islands to be landscaped (by the municipality or local civic groups) and to have water service for landscaping purposes. It's anticipated one will be included with this project.

Question: It was requested for a more in-depth explanation why the signal options were less desirable.

Answer: Craig and Mike Dugas responded that the intersection's proximity to the historic bridge does not provide enough storage length to address the turn movement onto NH 11B. If a signal were installed, during the peak hours, the queue from the turn lane would spill back beyond the auxiliary lane length and cause congestion in the Weirs. US 3 south would also experience long queues since a lot of green time would have to be given to US 3 West and NH 11B legs.

A resident inquired if the signal study included having the signals in flash mode during the off peak hours.

Craig responded that it is not the DOT's practice to install lights and have them on flash mode during off peak hours. Some municipalities utilize this philosophy for selected signals under their jurisdiction. This has also been done in a few locations with steep grades where the signals are set to flash mode during winter storms.

Question: A resident asked if installing flashing beacons to help direct proper movements had been investigated.

Answer: Mike responded that the Bureau of Traffic had investigated installing flashing beacons as an interim improvement. The bureau found that it was not feasible to install lights in a manner that would help direct movements at this intersection so that they are naturally perceivable.

Comment A former planning board member explained that he had witnessed many of the safety studies done at this intersection. He felt that a roundabout was the most appropriate option available.

Question: It was inquired if it would be possible to acquire additional funding if the project ended up costing than what was initially allocated. If so, where would the funding come from?

Answer: Craig commented that the additional funding would be available from the HSIP.

Question: A resident inquired whether the suggestion from the last meeting to extend the island on the west US 3 approach to better delineate the yield condition for the left turners had been investigated.

Answer: Mike responded that the Bureau of Traffic had modified the pavement markings as an interim safety improvement. The intent of extending the existing median island was to create a short left turn lane for southbound traffic turning onto NH 11B. However, there is insufficient width to create this layout between the median island the bridge retaining wall.

Comment: It was noted that the existing intersection has many signs. Consolidating the sign package at the intersection to reduce clutter could create a more desirable situation as an interim improvement.

Answer: Craig noted that the Traffic Bureau did consolidate the signage when they recently painted the intersection.

Comment: Several other alternative design solutions were suggested for the final construction and interim improvements, including the following:

- Construct an overpass to allow US 3 northbound traffic to pass over the intersection. (This was judged to be very expensive, would impact substantial private property, and would be out of character for the area.)
- Add flashing beacons to the yield sign to better highlight the sign.
- Replace the standard yield sign with a neon light version or other illuminated sign.

Submitted by:

/S/ ON FILE

Steven J. Babalis  
Preliminary Design Section

SJB

Noted by: M. Dugas

cc: W. Cass, M. Morrill, C. Green

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

**PROJECT** Laconia: US 3 / NH 11B intersection safety improvements

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**LOCATION** Weirs Beach Community Center

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**PROJECT NO.** X-A000(884) 15691

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Federal State

Name	Agency or Address	Comments
Luke Powell	Laconia DPW 27 Bison Ave, Laconia	
Shanna B Saunders	Planning Dept	
Seth Creighton	Laconia Planning Dept	
PAUL MOYNIHAN	LACONIA DPW	
Warren Hutchins	Laconia Planning Board	
CARROLL STAFFORD	PENDLETON BEACH Rd, Lae.	
JACK STEPHENSON	22 HOOK RD, G1 LEFONO 03249	WANT OVERPASS, AS SUGGESTED 8-'09
Denise Kozlarski	PO Box 5144, Weirs Beach	03247
VICTORIA MAKRIS	NASWA RESORT	I would like a short term relief implemented
DANA F. QUINN	WOODSIDE Cottages	
LES SCAUSTEK	LAZY E Motel/MY 608 WEIRS BLVD	
Linda Schyster	"	Please try to avoid major construction June, July + August
Renate Marcoux	25 FOSTER AVE, W.B. N.H	
Richard Marcoux	25 FOSTER AVE WEIRS BEACH	Constantly during off season
Ava Dyle	686 ENDICOTT ST NORTH WB	
Don Richards	22 Timber Lane	P.B + Weirs Com. Park Pass.
Mike Seymour	10 Emerald Dr., Laconia	
Cynthia Lepre	164 Endicott St, East B, Laconia	
PAUL J. COLLINS	1152 WEIRS BLVD	
Michael Kitch	Humidaily Sun	
PIERRE BRUNETTE	15 PARK STREET, LAKEPORT	Former P.B. BOARD MEMBER
Neal Boutin	107 Tower St, Weirs	opposed
Reenda Baer	CITY Laconia Councilor	
Armand Bolduc	CITY Laconia Councilor	
Greg Krytycki	LACONIA CITY Councilor	

David Chinian 1207 Weirs Blvd Realty Trustee, Direct Site Abutter, 978-852-9808