

February 26, 2007

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: PELHAM 14491
(NH 111A, Improvements to Town Center Intersections)

DATE OF CONFERENCE: February 15, 2007

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Pelham Police Community Conference Room

ATTENDED BY: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OTHERS

Chris Waszczuk
Craig Green
Bill Oldenburg
Trent Zanes

Kerrie Diers, NRPC
Working Group Members
(See Attached List)

SUBJECT: Working Group Meeting # 3

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Introduction

Chris Waszczuk welcomed everyone to the third Pelham Working Group Meeting, and began with team and working group member introductions. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to come to consensus on the Vision Statement; discuss preliminary studies of the traffic and accident history; discuss low cost short-term improvements; and discuss the screening criteria.

Jeff Gowen noted that the Town had named two new Working Group members, Jim Lamontagne and Clifton Hayes. He also indicated that the Town had agreed to extend the Working Group member appointments to June 2008. Sergeant Brian McCarthy sat in the Working Group meeting for the Police Chief Haglund.

Vision Statement Discussion

Kerrie Diers led the discussion on the Vision Statement. The Department had taken the Working Group's brainstorming ideas for a vision statement from the last meeting and some of the ideas sent in for a vision statement from the Working Group members, and put a draft Vision Statement together for the Working Group members to work from. There was considerable discussion on what the vision for the character of the town should be. The debate consisted of whether the character in the Town center should be considered "rural" or "built up". The consensus of the Working Group was the character should be referred to as "small town". The following is the Vision Statement that consensus was reached by the Working Group:

The Pelham town center will be enhanced by changes to multiple intersections, which will make the town center safer and more welcoming to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. These changes will enhance and preserve the small town character, historic setting and community aesthetics. Traffic movement for all approaches through the Pelham Town center will flow at a slow, steady, safe, and efficient manner for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.

Gateway treatments will provide an announcement to drivers that they are entering the Pelham Town center. The Town center will become a focal point that has connectivity and amenities, which contribute to a sense of "place", history, and pride.

Preliminary Studies Discussion

Bill Oldenburg led the discussion of the traffic and crash data. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission had taken traffic counts on approaches to the Town center and completed turning counts at the intersections as well. The traffic counts were taken in January and February 2007, for the AM and PM peak periods. The data indicated the peak traffic appeared to be commuter type of traffic. The traffic counts were entered into a traffic-modeling program, which showed the Working Group members a graphic picture of what the existing traffic condition was and the back-ups on each approach of the intersections. The model showed considerable back-ups occurring on the side roads; particularly on Marsh road, as vehicles queued back to Gibson Drive and the Village Green.

The Department also ran computer model analyses on potential solutions for the Main Street and Old Bridge Street intersection, based on comments that had come out of the October 19, 2006 Place making exercise (i.e. four-way stop and signalization without additional lanes). The analysis demonstrated that a four-way stop at the Main St./Old Bridge St. intersection would back up traffic in front of the fire station, and would exacerbate the Marsh Road backups. An analysis of signalizing the Main St./Old Bridge St intersection, without any additional lanes, indicated traffic back-ups on Old Bridge Street would extend past the Marsh Road intersection. An analysis for signalizing the Marsh Road/Old Bridge Street intersection also showed extreme intersection back-ups.

The Working Group suggested that the Common Road/Main Street intersection should be evaluated for signalization. They also asked if the school letting out created higher traffic volumes at the intersections. Mr. Oldenburg felt the traffic during the peak commuting hours was higher. He suggested that if the solution could address the peak commuting hours, the solution would be able to handle the traffic during the period when the school let out.

It was stated that Mr. Thibault had developed a conceptual traffic control plan for the area in the past. It was asked if we could model that concept for a future meeting. Mr. Oldenburg stated that we could model Mr. Thibault's concept for the next meeting. Mr. Thibault made additional copies of his conceptual plan available to the Department.

The crash data showed over a 4-year period there were 49 accidents (see attached), most of which occurred at the two major intersections. Most of the accidents consisted of cross traffic failing to yield the right-of-way or misjudging the gap in oncoming traffic, and being hit by the through traffic.

Low Cost Options

There was some discussion on potential low cost solutions. One suggestion was to reroute traffic onto other town roads, similar to the temporary routes used during the floods. There was concern that this would send traffic onto Town roads with unsafe intersections or safety problems. Mr. McCarthy indicated that when traffic was temporarily diverted onto Willow Street during the floods, it required police officers at each end of Willow Street for safety reasons.

The Working Group suggested closing Old Bridge Street and sending traffic up to Main Street. The Department agreed to evaluate this idea.

The Working Group also suggested that Gibson Drive be made two-way, and signing be added to direct traffic to NH 38. It was also suggested to sign traffic to use Willow Street to NH 38. These ideas will be evaluated.

The Working Group suggested another low cost option might be to provide gateway signing announcing the Town center as well as providing information showing Town services and Town facilities.

Screening Criteria

The Working Group was given a list of screening criteria categories (attached) to review to determine their applicability for the area and whether any categories needed to be added or removed. The screening criteria will be used to evaluate the conceptual alternatives to determine which alternatives should be eliminated and which ones should be carried forward for further design. The screening criteria will be developed from the screening criteria categories at the next Working Group meeting. The Working Group was asked to review the categories and to e-mail any changes to Chris Waszczuk.

Assignments for the Working Group Members

- Review the screening criteria categories to see if there should be additions or deletions.
- Think about additional ideas for low cost solutions
- Brainstorm alternative concepts for the Town center. The Department will be developing two alternatives (i.e. Roundabout alternative and signalized intersections with lane separation alternative) that had been recommended in previous preliminary studies completed for the area.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Working Group will be held on May 17, 2007, at the Police Training room.

Submitted by:


Craig A. Green, PE
Administrator, Highway Design

Noted by: WJO, CMW

cc: J. Moore
C. Green
Tom Gaydos, Pelham Town Administrator

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PELHAM 14491 Working Group Meeting

Attendance List February 15, 2007

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

	Joyce E. Mason	Council on Aging
	Phil Currier	Hist. Soc. & Cong. Church
	Father Bob	St. Pats
	Herman Hanson	Veterans
✓	Eleanor Burton	Schools
	Marc Duquette	Center Resident
✓	Linda Stecchi	Center Resident
	Shirley Sutton	Center Resident
	John Crane	Pelham Funeral Home - Business
	Michael Marion	Center Business Owner
X	Leo Thibault	Former NRPC Commissioner
	Mary Robin Bousa	Planning Board
✓	Dave Hennessey	Zoning Board of Appeals
	Paul Dadak	Conservation Commission
✓	Jean-Guy Bergeron	Selectman/State Rep
	Hal Lynde	Selectman
	Tom Gaydos	Town Administrator
	Evan Haglund	Police Chief
✓	Mike Walker	Fire Chief
✓	Jeff Gowan	Planning Director
✓	Jim Lamontagne	Citizen
✓	Cliff Hayes	Citizen
✓	Tim Roache	NRPC
	Linda Wilson	NHDHR
✓	Chris Waszczuk	NH DOT

NHDOT AND NRPC STAFF

✓	Kerrie Diers	NRPC - Facilitator
✓	Craig Green	NH DOT - Admin. Highway Design
✓	Bill Oldenburg	NH DOT - Preliminary Design
✓	Trent Zanes	NH DOT - Preliminary Design
	Kevin Nyhan	NH DOT - Environ. Coordinator

Pelham 14491
Crash Summary

Study Period: 6/2002 to 11/2006
Total Accidents: 49

Severity	Number	% of Total Crashes
Property Damage Only:	37	76%
Injury:	11	22%
Fatality:	1	2%

By Intersection		
Windahm Rd/Old Brdige St & Nashua Rd/Main St	30	61%
Old Bridge St & Marsh Rd	18	37%
Unspecified	1	2%

Collision Types:		
Rear	3	6%
Left Turn	1	2%
Intersection	43	88%
Right Turn	1	2%
Other	1	2%

Day of Week			
Monday	5	10%	
Tuesday	7	14%	
Wednesday	6	12%	67%
Thursday	8	16%	
Friday	7	14%	
Saturday	10	20%	33%
Sunday	6	12%	

Time of Day		
AM	14	29%
PM	35	71%

Improper Vehicle Action		
Failure to Yield Right-of-Way	36	73%
Driver Inattention/Distracted	5	10%
Disregard of Traffic Control Device	3	6%
Driver Inexperience	1	2%
Other	1	2%

Pelham 14491
Crash Summary

Weather

Clear	31	63%
Cloudy	10	20%
Rain	6	12%
Fog	1	2%
Unknown	1	2%

Month

January	6	12%
February	4	8%
March	2	4%
April	3	6%
May	2	4%
June	2	4%
July	6	12%
August	4	8%
September	6	12%
October	5	10%
November	4	8%
December	5	10%

Number of Vehicles

One	2	4%
Two	45	92%
Three	2	4%

Pelham Town Center Project

SCREENING SUMMARY

Project Problem Statement

The Pelham Town Center is divided by multiple intersections containing high volumes and speeds of local and regional commuter traffic, creating congestion that negatively affects safety resulting in unacceptable delays. This detracts from the historic character and setting of the Town Center. No "sense of place" exists that promotes community pride or encourages activities that attract pedestrians and groups of people to gather. This area lacks alternative routes, gateway, and traffic calming features that introduce and highlight the historic character of the town center. The area is marked by inadequate pedestrian/ bicycle connectivity and amenities, and a complete lack of on-street parking, descriptive signage, and lighting.

Project Vision Statement

The Pelham town center will be enhanced by changes to multiple intersections, which will make the town center safer and more welcoming to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. These changes will enhance and preserve the rural character, historic setting and community aesthetics. Traffic movement for all approaches through the Town center will flow at a slow, steady, safe, and efficient manner for all modes of travel. Gateway treatments will provide an announcement to drivers that they are entering the Town center. These combined with the changes to the intersections, will create a catalyst for other changes, that contribute to the sense of a Town center and destination that will be the pride of the community, and encourage activities that attract pedestrians and groups of people.

Category	Score				
	VP	P	N	G	VG
Access					
Aesthetics					
Community Resources					
Economic Vitality					
Historic and Archeological Resources					
Implementation					
Mobility					
Natural Environment					
Public Health					
Quality of Life					
Residential Neighborhoods					
Safety					
Support					
Transportation Choice					

The concept satisfies all element of the Project Vision Statement	Unreasonable	Reasonable
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Pelham Town Center Project SCREENING CRITERIA

The purpose of screening is to evaluate whether a concept is effective in addressing the problems and goals defined for the project. The following criteria will be used during the planning phase to determine if a concept is reasonable and should be included in the range of reasonable alternatives. The criteria are arranged into fourteen categories that are summarized on the previous page.

Scoring Criteria				
(VP) – Very Poor	(P) - Poor	(N) - Neutral	(G) - Good	(VG) – Very Good
Fatal Flaw Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Benefit	Substantial Benefit
Serious Degradation	Degradation	Not Applicable	Improvement	Substantial Improvement
Unreasonable	Opposition	No Impact	Enhancement	Reasonable
Strong Opposition			Support	Strong Support

Access

- Evaluate the access provided to and from Businesses.
- Evaluate the access provided to and from Town Services.
- Evaluate the access provided to and from Residents.
- Evaluate the access provided to and from Commuters.

Comments:

Category Score

Score				
VP	P	N	G	VG

Aesthetics

- Evaluate the views of the adjacent residential areas.
- Evaluate the views of Town Center from the adjacent residential areas.
- Evaluate the views from the Town Center.
- Evaluate whether the unique character of the Town Center is complemented.

Comments:

Category Score

Score				
VP	P	N	G	VG

**Pelham Town Center Project
SCREENING CRITERIA**

Implementation

- Evaluate the cost.
- Evaluate the ability to implement in phases over a period of time.
- Evaluate the ability to maintain mobility and access during construction.

Comments:

Category Score

Score				
VP	P	N	G	VG

Mobility

- Evaluate the effectiveness to provide mobility for commuters to and from the region during peak periods.
- Evaluate the effectiveness to provide mobility for local traffic movement during peak periods.
- Evaluate the effectiveness to provide for the movement of goods and services in the region.
- Evaluate the effectiveness to provide mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Comments:

Category Score

Score				
VP	P	N	G	VG

Natural Environment

- Evaluate the effect on known or potential habitat for endangered, threatened or special concern plant species based upon NH Natural Heritage Bureau mapping.
- Evaluate the effect on large forest blocks, existing agricultural farms and prime soils for forest land and agriculture.
- Evaluate the effect on surface waters, aquifers, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas.

Comments:

Category Score

Score				
VP	P	N	G	VG

