



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: See Below

Date/Time: January 30, 2003 6:30 PM

Project No.: 51272

Place: Kingston Town Hall

Re: NH 125 Plaistow-Kingston
Advisory Task Force Meeting #7

Notes taken by: Marty Kennedy

Attendees

ATF Committee:

Glenn Greenwood, RPC
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT
Merilyn Senter, Plaistow
Leigh Komornick, Plaistow
Don Briggs, Kingston
Tim Moore, Plaistow
Ellen Faulconer, Kingston

Others:

Ken Briggs, Kingston
Leslie Hume, Kingston
Dave Walker, RPC
Mike Dugas, NHDOT
Marty Kennedy, VHB
Rich St. Hilaire, Kingston

Committee Business

Glenn Greenwood opened the meeting and welcomed all of the Committee members to the seventh ATF meeting. Glenn asked for a motion to adopt the 9/26/02 ATF meeting notes. The motion was moved, seconded, and accepted without modifications.

Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road

Chris Waszczuk briefly summarized the status of the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection project including the feedback received from the November 7th Public Hearing. Chris noted that there was fairly widespread support for the project at the Hearing. However, there were a number of issues raised that we are currently addressing. The most significant issues related to drainage and the raised median.

Chris noted that the final design is underway and that right-of-way plans should be ready in mid-February. Final project approval has not been received yet; but is envisioned in the near

future once the report of the commissioner is finalized and a meeting with the Special Committee scheduled.

Chris discussed the drainage issues on Kalman, Sullivan, and Route 125 Commercial Center parcels. We are looking to send any new roadway runoff south of the intersection to a detention basin on the Sullivan property, which will outlet near the rear of the property. Sullivan has previously expressed an interest to sell the parcel to the State. New roadway runoff north of the intersection will be primarily directed to an existing wetland on the Early property. Drainage calculations were developed, which reflected a minimal increase to, in most cases, reduced flow onto the Kalman, Route 125 Commercial Center, and fronting portion of the Sullivan parcel. Also, no net increase in the wetland area on the Early property is envisioned from the added runoff directed to that location.

As for the raised median, Mr. Swasey and Mr. Doggett expressed stern opposition at the Public Hearing. The Department is considering reducing the length of the median so as to allow access to their property. If the median were shortened to reflect a similar length as the proposed median to the south, the Department would not construct an expanded parking area and new driveway onto Kasher Drive. Safety would not be substantially compromised since the left turn queue length would still be protected and the site generates a low volume of traffic today. Should the site be re-developed or a change of use pursued, the Town of Kingston by virtue of the access management regulations in the Master Plan can restrict access off NH 125 or redirect access to Kasher Drive. Chris asked the Committee how they felt about shortening the median.

L. Hume was concerned with shortening the median given the implications to what we are trying to do throughout the corridor. M. Senter also expressed a concern with the precedent it would set for the overall access management plan. T. Moore suggested that this situation is somewhat unique given that it is located at the northernmost extent of the median area and therefore he didn't see a problem. G. Greenwood noted that any future change in use on the Swasey parcel would likely require the owner to provide his primary access onto Kasher Drive.

E. Faulconer and L. Hume stated that in the interest of moving the project along, they would support the median being shortened. This was the general consensus of the Committee.

Project Status

C. Waszczuk briefly touched on the project need and the issue of the raised median. He said that he would hold off on discussing the project schedule until later in the meeting - once we have the discussion on access management.

Chris distributed a copy of the Purpose and Need Statement that was developed previously by the Committee. Chris reviewed the statement with the Committee and stressed that this is an opportunity to improve the corridor's capacity and safety, address the traffic congestion, and enhance safe and efficient access to abutting properties. In order for the plan to be successful, we will need the support of the Committee. Chris noted that we have spoken with the Florida DOT and continue to compile studies on medians and their safety and operational benefits as well as studies on potential economic impacts, which show that the economic impacts are generally minimal.

L. Komornick noted that her concern with the median is that the project is limited to north of East Road. She would like to see a center median installed along NH 125 all the way to the state line. E. Faulconer said that she understood that the reason why this project's study area was not extended further to the south was that it potentially would have delayed the project.

G. Greenwood also suggested that issues south of the state line in Haverhill might have complicated the project.

Access Management

M. Kennedy stated that the primary concern that was raised at the December 4th and December 12th access management meetings was the raised median. Marty noted that at the Kingston meeting, Leslie Hume and Chief Briggs each spoke and expressed their concern with the median. Chief Briggs suggested that we look at how the Florida DOT handles access management. Marty stated that he has contacted the Florida DOT and spoke with Mr. Gary Sokolow – the person responsible for their access management program and the author of their Median Handbook.

In reviewing the pros and cons of the access management plan, Marty reminded the Committee that the idea of the access management plan was first developed as part of the original feasibility study. It was the general consensus of the community at that time that a good access management plan would provide the necessary mobility, while providing safe and efficient access to existing and future properties. It was also expected that doing so would allow the project to be developed with less widening (fewer lanes) in the long term than would otherwise be needed.

Marty reiterated that the focus of the plan was to provide well spaced traffic signals along the corridor with connector roadways or internal connections between abutting parcels so as to accommodate most of the left-turn movements at signalized intersections. Marty reminded the Committee that the NHDOT was willing, as part of a good access management plan, to accept a Level of Service E condition during the peak hours of the day along the northern segment of the corridor. Typically, the NHDOT would require at least an LOS D condition. To meet this standard would require the entire corridor to be widened to two through lanes in each direction.

Marty explained that an LOS E condition for a roadway segment, unlike an intersection, is not necessarily viewed by a motorist as a serious problem. For example, NH 125 north of Kingston Road is currently processing up to 1,000 vehicles in one lane in one direction during the peak hour. This volume is projected to increase to 1,430 vehicles under our 20-year design condition. He noted that these volume levels reflect a steady stream of traffic, which as long as there is little or no side friction operates from the driver's perspective, acceptably. The problem comes in when turning movements at driveways and side streets are introduced into the traffic stream. Traffic operations and safety are compromised with uncontrolled turns. The access management plan addresses this issue.

The median, in combination with the connector roads and internal connections, serves to consolidate side street volumes at specific locations along the corridor. Without a means of consolidating turning movements some of the side streets, such as Roadstone Drive would not meet the minimum threshold for signal warrants and therefore we would not be able to install a traffic signal.

In response to a question by L. Hume, Marty explained that we are confident that we can address the emergency vehicle access issue and in addition we are looking at a directional median break (Florida Concept) that can provide left-turn access onto some driveways.

Marty noted that we have spoken with the Florida DOT and have exchanged quite a bit of material on access management. We sent them the NHDOT's video on access management and shared with them what we are proposing on NH 125. Florida DOT liked what we were proposing and provided us with statistical data that they had collected on the safety

enhancements of medians and on economic impacts. Material on the economic impacts was distributed to Committee members.

L. Hume also asked why we couldn't provide frontage roads along NH 125 in Kingston. Marty showed a tissue tracing of a typical frontage road that if placed near and parallel to NH 125 would have substantial property impacts. Leslie asked if the connections could be made to the rear of the parcels. Marty noted that we are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) where we need to demonstrate that the project can be constructed with minimal impact. Constructing roadways to the rear of parcels, which may encourage development on back parcels without addressing the access issues on the corridor, would be a hard sell to the resource agencies. K. Briggs noted that there might be large wetland impacts as well. Chris suggested that if there were a specific area that made sense, we would consider it. However, we would need the cooperation of property owners. Committee members should take the lead and speak with property owners.

G. Greenwood said that he is convinced of the need for the raised median in Plaistow, but is less convinced of the need in Kingston. Glenn also noted, that a good signing plan will be needed in the areas where raised medians are placed. M. Kennedy agreed that a signing plan is an important component of an access management plan and suggested that we could bring some examples to the next ATF meeting of the type of signing that we are talking about.

Schedule

C. Waszczuk stated that we would take a closer look at the directional median breaks and present suggested locations for these breaks at the next ATF meeting. We would like to have the support of the Committee before we have our next public meeting. The date of the next ATF meeting was set for March 13th.

L. Komornick suggested that we meet with the Plaistow Planning Board to get their thoughts on the access management plan. Chris agreed and will work with Leigh to schedule a date.

Motion to adjourn.

Cc: J. Brillhart
C. Waszczuk
M. Burlage (District 6)