



## Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Below

Date/Time: March 13, 2003 6:30 PM

Project No.: 51272

Place: Plaistow Library

Re: NH 125 Plaistow-Kingston 10044-B  
Advisory Task Force Meeting #8

Notes taken by: Marty Kennedy

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### **Attendees**

*ATF Committee:*

Glenn Greenwood, RPC  
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT  
Mark Heitz, Kingston  
Leigh Komornick, Plaistow  
Don Briggs, Kingston  
Tim Moore, Plaistow

*Others:*

Senator Morse  
Ralph Sanders, NHDOT Dist 6  
Dave Walker, RPC  
Mike Dugas, NHDOT  
Don Sargent, Plaistow Water  
Marty Kennedy, VHB

### **Committee Business**

Glenn Greenwood opened the meeting and welcomed all of the Committee members to the eighth ATF meeting. Glenn asked for a motion to adopt the 1/30/03 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. He noted that the right-of-way plans are complete and that we are on schedule to advertise the project in September. The report of the Commissioner is ready for signature. The meeting of the Special Committee will be scheduled in the near future.

### **Access Management**

C. Waszczuk provided a brief introduction to the discussion on access management and said that based on feedback received at the access management public meetings, where concerns were voiced with the raised median, a modified plan has been prepared for the purpose of discussion

tonight. The modified plan incorporates directional median openings that allow left-turns to exit NH 125, but does not allow left-turn movements to enter the roadway. The directional median was suggested by Chief Briggs and is used in Florida. C. Waszczuk cautioned that the Department has some reservations with this modified concept and still feels the previous raised median concept offers the greatest measure of safety, which is especially important as the corridor continues to develop and traffic continues to increase.

C. Waszczuk stated that there are some significant issues associated with the directional median openings including:

- Reduced safety as compared to the raised median
- Need to compromise on design standards such as reduced deceleration lengths
- May lead to uncontrolled u-turns and/or unintended movements
- Will be difficult to plow and maintain
- May limit opportunities for median openings at future developments

Marty Kennedy presented a PowerPoint presentation which include a review of the project need, project goals, definition of access management, a discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of the directional median concept, and then proceeded to present and describe the modified access management plan.

M. Kennedy reminded the attendees of the project goal, which is to provide physical roadway improvements that are aimed at addressing corridor deficiencies, improving capacity, and enhancing safety. In addition, the access management plan will enhance corridor mobility and access, preserve capacity, and enhance long-term safety. The plan is aimed at addressing the existing corridor congestion (congestion results in the diversion of traffic onto local roadways) and reducing the number of vehicle accidents. The corridor experienced 297 accidents between 1996 and 2000. M. Kennedy also reminded the Committee that the population of Rockingham County is expected to increase by 40 percent over the next 20 years, which will exacerbate the traffic problems along the corridor.

M Kennedy restated our definition of access management:

*Access Management balances mobility and access, so as to improve the efficient movement of traffic while enhancing the safe and efficient access to/from abutting properties.*

M. Kennedy stated that the original plan provided two through lanes in each direction from East Road to the intersection of Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road. Most of this segment, with the exception of the area just north of Main Street in Plaistow, would have a raised center median. Left-turn lanes would be provided at each of the signalized intersections (East Road, the Drive-in site, Danville Road, Main Street, Old County Road, Roadstone Drive, and Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road). The plan for the segment north of the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection would be to maintain a single lane in each direction, widen the shoulder area where needed, and to provide left-turn lanes at major intersections. The northern segment would not be median divided.

M. Kennedy proceeded to reiterate the details of the original plan including the locations of proposed traffic signals, connector roadways, jug handles, and breaks in the median for emergency vehicles. Marty identified the connector roadways that would be constructed as part of the corridor project. Those roadways included: the connector road on the east side of NH 125 opposite the old Drive-in site in Plaistow and the proposed frontage roadway that would connect Kingston Road to the new signalized intersection opposite Roadstone Drive.

M. Kennedy said that there was principally one issue that we heard "load and clear" at the access management meetings and that was that the raised median could adversely impact businesses along the corridor. He mentioned that Chief Briggs had touted a "Florida Concept" that he had learned from Florida transportation officials. M. Kennedy explained that he has since been in touch with the Florida officials and that Marty and the Florida DOT have exchanged access management information. He presented a graphic from the Florida DOT that showed a directional median break, which allows left turn access into a parcel, but prohibits left turns out. Marty explained that we had said at the January 30, 2003 ATF meeting that we would take a look at these directional medians and where possible incorporate them into the access management plan. The modified plan incorporates these directional median breaks.

Before presenting the modified plan, M. Kennedy discussed the benefits and drawbacks of the directional median. He stated that the directional medians provide primarily one benefit, which is improved access to businesses. In contrast, Marty presented an extensive list of drawbacks including:

- Increased Conflicts – Increased Accidents
- Reduced Deceleration and Taper Lengths
- Potential for Wrong-way Travel
- Difficult and Costly to Plow and Maintain
- May Limit Future Development
- Potential Issue of Fairness
- Requires Driveway Consolidation Agreements

With that, M. Kennedy described the modified plan noting that the plan maintains the continuous raised median island south of NH 121A due to the density of driveways and proposed frontage road. We have applied the directional median concept along the segment that extends from NH 121A to Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road. He also reviewed the criteria that Florida uses in establishing the median openings. He explained that the Florida DOT criteria for access management corridors allows for some deceleration to take place in the through lane, which reduces the deceleration length.

M. Kennedy explained that this concept is a compromise between the continuous raised median and the two way left turn lane. He noted that 5 openings are shown between 121A and Old County Road, 4 openings between Old County Road and Roadstone Drive, 2 openings between Roadstone Drive and Debra Road, and 4 openings between Debra Road and Hunt Road for a total of 15 openings. He noted that of the 40 parcels located between NH 121A and Hunt Road:

- Seventeen parcels would have direct left turn access,
- Ten parcels could be provided left turn access through an adjacent parcel,
- Three parcels would have access through a signal on an adjacent street,
- Seven parcels could be provided access to a signal through a potential future connector road, and
- Three businesses would not have direct left turn access (near relocated Debra Rd). However two of these properties are close to the proposed signal where u-turns would be allowed.

### **Comments/Questions/Discussion**

Glenn Greenwood felt that the modified plan provides too many median breaks. He said that he realized that he was the one who said at the last ATF meeting that he was not sure that we needed the median in Kingston, but now he feels that allowing so many opportunities to turn left into businesses defeats the purpose of access management.

Chief Briggs disagreed; he felt that the modified plan is a good solution. He feels that long stretches of the raised median tend to increase travel speeds. The median breaks, should enhance safety by reducing travel speeds.

Mark Heitz stated that from the "Town's perspective" there needs to be a compromise between the raised median and access to properties. The Town has been hearing adamant opposition to the raised median from the abutting business owners. Mr. Heitz felt that the modified plan was a good plan, but suggested that perhaps the number of median breaks could be reduced by providing additional connections between parcels. There was a lengthy discussion on ways of encouraging property owners to provide easement agreements to abutting properties. It was suggested that a property owner would be more willing to provide the easement voluntarily if the owner felt that doing so would enhance his chances of having the median break in front of his property. C. Waszczuk felt that the Department would not be able get involve in that type of process. It would be better for these types of negotiations to occur through the local planning process.

Ralph Sanders from District 6 expressed the District's concern with the directional median breaks; particularly with the difficulty the Department would have with plowing them. The Department's standard plow truck would not be able to reverse direction from the left-turn lane. This would require the Department's trucks to enter private driveways to turnaround, which is problematic.

Dave Walker also expressed concern with the number of median breaks. He questioned whether it would be safer to have fewer median breaks and allow u-turns, rather than providing so many median breaks.

Tim Moore thought the plan was reasonable and believes that motorists would become familiar with the operations of the median breaks.

Following some discussion, the modified concept plan was laid out on long tables and all attendees had an opportunity to review the plan. After much discussion, it was the general consensus of those in attendance that the directional median was a good solution, however the plan should be modified again in an effort to reduce the number of median breaks. It was suggested that some of the median breaks close to Newton Junction Road, such as Total Recon, Route 125 Commercial Center, and the Trailer Place could be eliminated. It was also suggested that since there will be a jug-handle at Walton Road, it was not necessary to provide a break at the nearby Driving Range.

Representatives from Kingston took with them the acetate overlay showing the locations of the directional median breaks. They said that they would review the median break locations and provide any additional ideas.

Glenn Greenwood stated that he would poll the committee members on the next meeting date. He would target a Thursday evening in June and would reserve a location.

**Motion to adjourn.**