



**Meeting  
Notes**

Attendees: See Attached List

Date/Time: June 27, 2002 7:00 PM

Project No.: 51272

Place: Kingston Town Hall

Re: Kingston 10044-C  
Public Informational Meeting  
Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road

Notes taken by: Marty Kennedy

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**Introduction**

Chris Waszczuk welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the reason for the meeting was to discuss the proposed improvements to NH 125 at the intersection of Hunt Road and Newton Junction Road. The project is part of the overall larger Plaistow-Kingston Route 125 project (which begins at East Road in Plaistow and continues to Main Street in Kingston). The Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection has been separated out of the main project and deemed a high priority by both communities to accelerate forward due to the many safety problems associated with this location. An Advisory Task Force, made up of officials from both towns, has been formed to help guide the development of the overall Plaistow-Kingston project and the subject project.

C. Waszczuk proceeded to explain the public participation process. He stated that this project (Hunt Rd./Newton Junction Rd.) would have its own separate course of open public meetings and its own environmental documentation process separate from the "main project".

In addition to the ATF meetings and access management meetings for the main project, the Department envisioned holding three general public meetings for this project; a Public Officials Meeting was held on March 14<sup>th</sup>, tonight's meeting, which is referred to as a Public Informational meeting, and a formal Public Hearing will be held to find occasion for the project. Should the project's layout be approved subsequent to the Public Hearing, the project will then proceed forward to final design, right-of-way acquisition, and ultimately to construction. Normally, the Public Hearing will conclude the open public meeting forum of the project.

### **Project Background, Deficiencies, Project Need**

C. Waszczuk explained that Route 125 is a major north-south corridor with traffic volumes ranging from 13,000 to 23,000 vehicles per day. Route 125 is designated as a principal arterial highway and is part of the National Highway System (NHS), reflecting its importance to the statewide and regional transportation system.

A feasibility study was completed in September of 1999 for the segment of Route 125 extending from the East Road intersection in Plaistow to the Kingston/Brentwood town line. The study identified several operational, safety, and access related deficiencies including:

- Lack of access control
- Absence of left-turn lanes
- Poor or insufficient illumination
- Poor alignment and sight lines in various segments
- Poor configuration or lack of definition at some intersections
- And poor level of service at unsignalized intersections.

Some of the interim improvement projects, which were recommended in the study, that have been completed include:

- Signalization and widening at the New Boston Road intersection
- Widening to provide a left-turn lane at Old Coach Road
- Widening to provide turn lanes at NH 121A

The feasibility study placed a high priority on the need to improve the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection. The offset intersection configuration, relatively high traffic volumes, limited visibility, long delays, and high number of accidents, all contribute to the need to upgrade the intersection.

C. Waszczuk emphasized that the design developed to date is a conceptual alternative and the Department is seeking input on the design. Several complete property acquisitions, driveway consolidations and driveway access restrictions are proposed with this plan to improve the safety and operation of the intersection.

### **Proposed Scope of Work**

Senan Mudock provided a brief description of the presentation materials on display, including the plans, profiles, typical cross sections, noting the color coding of the various features. Senan noted that:

- The project limits begin approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile south of Newton Junction Road and proceed northerly, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to the northerly limit of approximately 500 feet north of West Shore Park Road and matching into the recent construction completed as part of the Old Coach Road intersection improvement project.
- This section of Route 125 is currently a 2-lane roadway (one lane in each direction) with 4 to 6 foot wide shoulders. Hunt Road and Newton Junction Road are also two lane roadways with single lane approaches to the intersection and shoulders widths of 1 to 2 feet.
- Existing traffic along this section of Route 125 was recorded at approximately 15,000 vehicles per day (vpd) and is projected to grow to approximately 22,000 vpd by 2024. A review of accident records revealed 33 accidents in the vicinity of the intersection during the 5-year period of 1996 through 2000. Currently both side street approaches to the intersection experience long delays and operate at LOS F during the peak hours of the day.
- The proposed improvements for this section of Route 125 consist of a 5-lane cross section that will accommodate two through lanes with a protected left-turn lane in each direction.

Newton Junction Road will be realigned opposite Hunt Road creating a conventional four-way signalized intersection.

- Several design issues and controls were discussed including the existence of historical properties, wetlands and other environmental resources, steep driveway grades, and numerous access points.
- As part of the project, the Department is proposing some access management actions including improving the spacing of intersections, reducing the number of intersections, providing protected left-turn lanes, installing a raised median, and consolidating access points.
- The project will require the acquisition of properties located along the east side of Route 125 (A residence located at the southeast corner of the Newton Junction Road intersection, and the Bayberry Variety Citgo, located on the northeast corner of the Newton Junction Road intersection). In addition, strip land acquisitions will be needed along the corridor to accommodate the roadway widening. The width of the strip acquisition will vary from several feet up to a maximum of approximately 40 feet along the various parcels. Easements will also be required for construction and future maintenance.

### **National Historic Preservation Act & Consulting Party Solicitation**

Chris Waszczuk explained that for all projects with federal involvement: Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Department is directed to identify historic properties, evaluate their historic significance, assess the impact of the project on them, and minimize that impact when possible. Historic and cultural resources can include buildings, structures such as bridges, building groups, landscapes, and archaeological sites that are generally more than fifty years old. The Department is in the process of completing the architectural surveys and Phase I of the archaeological surveys for the project area.

To date, historical properties identified as potentially eligible include all sites designated with an "H" on the plans (the property in the southwest quadrant of the intersection, a small historic district east of the intersection on Newton Junction Road, a property north of the intersection located at the corner of Kasher Drive, and two properties located in the vicinity of West Shore Park Road). No archaeological resources have been identified to date.

The Federal Highway Administration and the NH Division of Historic Resources will continue to review the project's impacts on the resources in the area as the historic and archaeological studies and design proceed. These agencies will continue to assess the level of impact and review the means by which they may be minimized.

C. Waszczuk also requested that if anyone has knowledge of other historic and/or archaeological resources in the project area and are aware of additional groups with historical interests that they please notify the DOT.

The Federal Section 106 regulations have recently been revised to include an offer to owners of historic properties directly affected by a project or agencies that possess a direct interest in the historical resources within a project area, an opportunity to become more involved in an advisory role through meetings and commentary. These parties may become what are known as Consulting Parties to the Section 106 process. Interested parties should indicate their interest in writing to the Federal Highway Administration, in care of Harry Kinter, Special Projects Manager, Realty Office, Federal Highways, 179 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH. In the letter, the project name and number should be indicated at the top for reference.

### **Project Schedule and Cost**

Chris concluded the presentation by explaining that the project is included in the State's 10-year Transportation Improvement Program as a Federal Aid project. The project will be funded with 80% federal funds and 20% state funds. The total construction cost for the project is currently programmed at \$1.75 million.

The schedule, which is highly dependent on the comments received tonight and the amount of work required to address those issues, is targeting a November 2002 date for a Public Hearing.

### **Comments/Questions**

**Comment** – A concerned citizen commented that if Route 125 were widened to a 5-lane section, increased traffic speeds would result.

**Comment** – It was questioned why didn't the property owners have prior knowledge of these plans?

**Response** - C. Waszczuk explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting is for the abutting property owners and the general public to view the plans and provide input. The displayed plans are conceptual and subject to revision based on input received.

**Comment** – A concerned citizen questioned when the project would be constructed?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that, originally, the project was targeted for construction to begin in late 2003/early 2004, but is more likely not to occur until 2004.

**Comment** – Mr. Nilsson, abutting property owner, questioned whether impacts to his septic systems and the impact of roadway runoff on the property have been considered? He questioned whether Newton Junction Road could be shifted south to reduce the large impact on his property?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk requested a plan of the septic system be provided to help identify its location and stated that the Department will look into those issues.

**Comment** – Ms. D. Krauklin, abutting property owner, questioned why is the entire Guptill property historic? Isn't the building the only thing that is historic?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that the cultural resource agencies (Federal Highway Administration and the NH Division of Historic Resources) have suggested that the entire property, not just the building, is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**Comment** - Ms. Jewett questioned why were raised medians proposed?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stressed the safety (national studies show decreased accident rates) and access control benefits (i.e. physical separation between opposing traffic, protects left turn queues, prevents unrestricted left turn movements) of providing the raised median.

**Comment** – Mr. Swasey, abutting property owner, questioned why is the schedule for this project being advanced ahead of the main project? The Hunt Road/Newton Road project should be delayed, not advanced to resolve abutting property owner issues. He explained that from his experience, there are no delays and no backups at the intersection. It only takes 2 to 3 minutes to cross Route 125 today from his driveway (Swasey property). Five lanes will increase speeds, the existing layout calms traffic. Access management will negatively impact businesses. He commented that undue impacts are proposed to be imposed on the abutting properties along the east side of NH 125 at the expense of avoiding the historic Guptill property.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained and M. Kennedy confirmed that studies and experience at the intersection confirm that long delays exist exiting Hunt Road and Newton Junction Road. As traffic in the area continues to increase, longer delays will be evident. Also, the intersection needs to be fixed to improve safety and eliminate the hazardous confusing movements, which are a result of the intersection configuration.

Several citizens in attendance commented that they use the intersection routinely and expressed that the intersection is very dangerous, being the site of numerous accidents and close calls and is difficult to exit from the side roads.

**Comment** - Attorney Jim Morris (representing Bayberry Variety) questioned what does it mean that the Guptill property is potentially eligible as a historic resource?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that Federal law states that properties which are determined to be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, are viewed in the same manner and afforded the same measure of protection as properties currently listed on the Register.

**Comment** – Attorney Morris questioned if the property is only eligible, can the owner redevelop the property after the Department has preserved it by avoiding it and impacting other properties?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that no restrictions presently exist which would prevent the owner from re-developing the property unless the Department purchased and placed a preservation easement onto the property. At this time, the Department is not prepared to pursue a preservation easement since measures are being taken to avoid and minimize impacts to the property and the expense of such an easement would not serve a highway function.

**Comment** - Mr. Doggett expressed concern with the proximity of the proposed road to his business (Doggett Jewelry) and the potential increased vibration caused by the closer traffic. He also questioned the need for the improvements and the proposed signalization citing present long delays evident at signalized intersections elsewhere along Route 125. He suggested a temporary trial operation simulating a traffic signal be conducted with a police officer at the intersection today as a test to see how long the back-ups and delays will be with a signal

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that the present narrow two-lane section of NH 125 with the existing offset configuration of the intersecting roads would not provide an appropriate accurate test without the proposed widening in place. The proposed additional lanes at the intersection provide the necessary storage capacity to reduce vehicle queues and delays. Also, the proposed intersection layout is designed to accommodate the future twenty-year traffic projections for the area.

**Comment** - Mr. Doggett expressed concern that the driveway relocation from NH 125 to Kasher Drive will adversely affect his business. He questioned the need for the relocation.

**Response** - C. Waszczuk explained that a raised median extending from the intersection to Kasher Drive was proposed. The driveway relocation afforded an opportunity to provide the property unrestricted access to NH 125 in both directions utilizing Kasher Drive. The Department will investigate also providing a right in, right out driveway connection to the property from NH 125.

**Comment** – Mr. Mastroianni, abutting property owner, questioned how will the roadway widening affect Kingston's 100-foot setback regulation?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that the intent of the setback was to keep the roadside clear for the future widening. The Town will need to reexamine the regulation after the widening is completed. Mr. Heitz, Chairman of the Selectboard, confirmed the setback intent and acknowledged that the Town will re-evaluate the setback after project completion.

**Comment** – Ms. Krauklin, abutting property owner, questioned whether there would be additional public meetings prior to the formal Public Hearing?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that given the number of issues raised tonight, the Department would likely hold another informational meeting prior to the public hearing.

**Comment** – An interested citizen questioned whether there is a critical time period for the project to move forward so as not to lose federal funding?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk replied that federal funds have been programmed for the project and that a critical timeframe to use those funds does not exist.

**Comment** – Attorney Jim Morris (representing Bayberry Variety) questioned whether providing only one through lane in the southbound direction would be sufficient? Mr. Morris also questioned why the intersection offset could not be maintained with the installation of two traffic signals to minimize property impacts to the area.

**Response** – M. Kennedy explained that the 5-lane cross section was needed to accommodate the future design year traffic volumes. Providing only a single through lane in the southbound direction would result in longer delays and vehicle queues throughout the intersection. Also, installing two offset traffic signals would result in a very inefficient operation with long clearance intervals and increased delays and queues.

**Comment** – Ms. Ellen Faulconer, Vice-Chair of the Kingston Planning Board and member of the Highway Safety Committee, emphasized the importance of this long overdue improvement and the need to maintain the project schedule. Ms. Faulconer explained that this intersection location has been viewed as a priority project by not only the Town of Kingston but other Towns in the region. Ms. Faulconer stated that she did not support reducing the scope of the project, emphasizing that the improvements are needed.

**Comment** – Mr. Mark Heitz, Chairman of the Selectboard, expressed support for the proposed improvements and the project schedule. He stressed that a safety problem exists that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

**Comment** – Mr. Norman Hurley, Kingston Fire Chief, expressed support for the improvements citing this intersection as the third problem intersection identified by the Town in need of being addressed. Other recently improved intersections (New Boston Road, Old Coach Road) are now much safer and operate much better since the improvements were completed.

**Comment** – Ms. Titcomb, an abutting property owner on Newton Junction Road, questioned whether any mitigation is possible to address oncoming vehicle headlights directed at residential homes with the proposed curve on Newton Junction Road.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk indicated that the Department would investigate the issue. It may be possible to include some landscaping to screen the oncoming headlights.

**Comment** Chief Donald Briggs, Kingston Police Chief, noted that he asked Mrs. Guptill if she was interested in having her house moved back on the property. She stated that she was not. The Chief said that he supports the planned improvements.

**Comment** – Ms. S. Giannetti questioned how would traffic be maintained during construction?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk indicated that a detailed traffic control plan will be prepared as part of the final design effort for the project subsequent to the Public Hearing and project approval.

NOTED BY: C. Waszczuk, M. Dugas