



## Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Attached List

Date/Time: September 5, 2002 7:00 PM

Project No.: 51272

Place: Kingston Town Hall

Re: Kingston 10044-C  
Public Informational Meeting # 2  
Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road

Notes taken by: Marty Kennedy

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### **Introduction**

Chris Waszczuk welcomed everyone to the second public informational meeting on the proposed improvements to NH 125 at the intersection of Hunt Road and Newton Junction Road. Chris explained that this second public informational meeting was being held to address issues raised at the 6/27/02 informational meeting. 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".

### **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 within 20 years. 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.
- During the process of developing a proposed concept that will safely handle the projected traffic, and to the extent possible, minimize impacts to abutting properties; there were some other important resources that we needed to avoid or minimize impacts to. These included historic properties and wetlands. At the last meeting we identified properties that were potentially eligible for the historic register. Since then, this group has been narrowed down and the following properties have been deemed eligible for the historic register (#11Guptill, #28 Stukas-Stark, #27 Kneeland, #23 Leate, #26 cemetery, and this historic district along Newton Jct. Road). The majority of the wetlands are on the west side of the road, and any mitigation for these impacts will be accounted for under the overall project.

Senan noted that, based on issues raised at the June public informational meeting, some modifications to the plan have been made. The changes are as follows:

- In an effort to reduce impacts in front of Doggett Jewelry the horizontal alignment of Route 125 has been shifted slightly to the west. The alignment of Route 125, at the intersection, is unchanged. The horizontal curve to the north was extended back approximately 20' in order to shift Route 125 approximately 10' to the west at the far corner of the property. The alignment transitions back to the previous design just in front of Kingston Motors.
- We also investigated options to reduce impacts to the Nilsson property by shifting the proposed Hunt Rd/Newton Jct. intersection 15' to the south and transitioning back to the original design through the curves to the east and west of the intersection. This design shifts the proposed edge of pavement 10' further from the house. There is an increase in impacts to the historic property along Hunt Rd in the southwest quadrant of the intersection (The Guptill House), but the State Historical Preservation Officer has indicated that these additional impacts are reasonable and acceptable in order to reduce the impacts to the Nilsson property.

Senan noted that we are trying to minimize the number of conflict points along the corridor by consolidating and relocating driveways in certain areas. For example, at Kingston Motors we are proposing to convert the existing driveway off Route 125 to right in only. Vehicles would exit through the traffic signal at the intersection. At the Swasey property, we would also propose something similar, by making the drive off Route 125 a right-in and right-out only and constructing a new driveway onto Kasher Drive so that parcel would have full access onto Route 125. A similar side street connection would be provided to the Guptill House. We propose to consolidate the two drives at A Well Kept Secret on Newton Jct. Road. We also propose closing the Hair Salon driveway and providing connection through the Trailer Place drive.

There will be some right of way takings and easements required in order to construct this project. There would be two total acquisitions. There will also be a number of strip land takings. In addition, once construction starts there will be some construction easements that will be required and some future maintenance easements.

A couple of other alternatives have been looked at, which were suggested at the June Public Informational Meeting.

- We investigated the possibility of trying to preserve the buildings on the east side of Route 125. In order to do this we looked at setting the proposed edge of pavement at the location that would provide adequate sight distance for vehicles on Newton Jct. Road.
  1. With this concept, the Guptill house would have to be moved.
  2. Route 125 Commercial Center would likely be a complete acquisition because the driveway grade could not be matched.
  3. Total Recon/Water Consultant would likely be a complete acquisition because the driveway grade could not be matched.
  4. There were significant impacts to the parking and circulation in front of Kingston Motors. Retaining walls would be required and the right in driveway would need to be eliminated.
  5. There would be a modest increase in wetland impacts.
  6. The pumps at the gas station would still be impacted by the work on Newton Jct. Road. Access to Bayberry Variety would still be problematic. The existing driveways would need to be discontinued with new access provided to the north of the building.

The impacts with this concept would be greater and likely more costly than the current proposal. In addition this alternative is not the least damaging environmentally prudent alternative that minimizes impacts to resources in the area.

- We also investigated the design of a 4-lane section on Route 125 through this intersection. The 4-lane section would consist of a left-turn lane and two through lanes in the northbound direction, and a left-turn lane and a single through lane in the southbound direction.
  1. This alternative eliminates future expansion possibilities, locks you into this design. You could not add an additional lane to the west without impacting the same properties this alternative seeks to save.
  2. The possibility of a northbound U-turn is eliminated.
  3. Peak hour vehicle queues will increase from 225' to 475' (just about double) in the southbound direction.
  4. The house at the southeast corner would still need to be acquired (Mastroianni building)
  5. The proposed edge of pavement would move 6.5' closer to the historic house (Guptill house).
  6. Retaining walls would be required at Kingston Motors and at Route 125 Commercial Ct.
  7. Access to Bayberry Variety would still be problematic. The pumps would still be impacted by the work on Newton Junction Road. The current driveways would need to be discontinued with new access provided to the north of the building.

Although this Alternative preserves the Bayberry Variety Building, it would substantially impact the property and its operation, still requires acquisition of Mastroianni Building, and increases impacts on the west side of NH 125. This Alternative also adversely impacts traffic operations at the intersection, precludes a vital access management component of permitted U-turns at signalized intersections, and eliminates future expansion possibilities at a critical intersection.

### **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** – Mr. Duval asked if we would be providing lane separation ( a two lane approach) on Hunt Road. He is concerned that traffic will back-up along Hunt Road.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that based on the traffic volume projections, the additional lane is not warranted. Chris noted that the Department is taking enough right-of-way to accommodate additional widening if it is needed in the future. M. Kennedy noted that the plan addresses the safety and operational needs at the intersection while minimizing the amount of roadway widening (impact).

**Comment** – Mr. Geoffroy of Kingston Foreign Auto asked if we could install the traffic signal without widening the roadway.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk responded that installing a traffic signal without realigning the existing offset intersections would result in an inefficient operation. M. Kennedy added that the widening is needed to provide adequate storage along Route 125. Vehicles stopped under the red phase with the traffic signal would experience long delays with only a single lane.

**Comment** – Mr. Duval asked why the Guptill House couldn't be moved.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk reiterated the Guptill House is a historic resource and that the NHDOT is obligated to minimize impacts the property.

**Comment** – Mr. Swasey suggested that the NHDOT should look to balance the impact of abutting businesses with that of the traveling public. You should install the traffic signal without the roadway widening. Mr. Swasey is opposed to the raised median at the intersection. He referred to the NH 125/NH 121A intersection, which does not have a raised median. The median will create problems for plowing in the winter.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk briefly reiterated the benefits of access management and suggested that many businesses will have problems in the future as traffic continues to grow if an access management plan is not implemented. As for the reference to the NH 125/NH 121A intersection Chris explained that that upgrade was an interim solution. Chris also made the point that we are still developing the overall corridor access management plan and that we are striving to enhance access the safe and efficient access to businesses along the corridor.

**Comment** – Ms. Hume pointed out that many alternatives were considered and she felt that the plan was the safest and best solution.

**Comment** – Mr. Duval asked how emergency vehicles would be able to get through the intersection. He felt that the vehicles stopped at the signal on the Hunt Road approach would block an approaching fire truck.

**Comment** – C. Waszczuk explained that an opticom system would be provided at the signal. The opticom would clear vehicles in the direction that the emergency vehicle is approaching the intersection.

**Comment** – Rep. Walsh asked why the median couldn't be ended prior to Swasey's driveway.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk again explained the benefits of access management and showed how for this particular parcel, the plan provides full access/egress at Kasher Drive in addition to right-in/right-out onto Route 125. He emphasized that a consistent philosophy for access management needed to be maintained in order for the concept to be implemented and viewed as fair for all of the abutting property owners. Once special exceptions are introduced then the access management concept will fall apart.

**Comment** – M. Geoffroy asked if 4-lanes and the median are carried all the way to the Massachusetts line, where is the traffic going to go?

**Response** – M. Kennedy explained that an unbroken median would not extend through the entire corridor. In fact there will be many opportunities for turns throughout the corridor. We are still

developing the overall access management plan and will be presenting that overall plan at upcoming meetings.

**Comment** – Mr. Briggs noted that he supports the improvements at Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road but cautioned that there were still issues with the raised median that needed to be resolved.

NOTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

cc: J. Brillhart  
C. Waszczuk  
M. Dugas  
M. Kennedy, VHB  
Kingston Selectboard