



**Meeting  
Notes**

Attendees: See Below

Date/Time: July 21, 2003 7:00 PM

Project No.: 51272

Place: Kingston Town Hall

Re: NH 125 Plaistow-Kingston 10044-B  
Kingston Public Officials Meeting

Notes taken by: Senan P. Murdock

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**Attendees**

*Kingston Officials*

Kevin Burke, Select Board Chairman  
Mark Heitz, Selectman  
Peter Broderick, Selectman  
Ellen Faulconer, Planning Board  
Marilyn Bartlett, Planning Board  
Don Briggs, Police Chief  
Norman Hurlly, Fire Chief  
Leslie Hume, Kingston Safety Committee  
Richard St. Hilaire, Road Agent  
Craig Federhen, Historic District  
Commission  
Ken Briggs, Town Engineer

*Others:*

Glenn Greenwood, RPC  
Chris Waszczuk, NHDOT  
Mike Dugas, NHDOT  
Mike Burlage, NHDOT District 6  
Tim Moore, Plaistow, ATF  
Ed Putnam, State Rep-Hampstead  
David Welch, State Rep - District 79  
Fred Sullivan  
Barbara Polletta, Rockingham News  
Senan Murdock, VHB  
Marty Kennedy, VHB

**Introduction**

Kevin Burke, the Select Board Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to tonight's Select Board meeting. He explained that the only item on the agenda tonight is a presentation by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) on the improvements to NH 125 in Kingston. He introduced Chris Waszczuk of the NHDOT.

**Project Background, Deficiencies, Project Need**

Chris Waszczuk thanked everyone for attending and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the planned upgrade of NH 125 and specifically to discuss the improvements proposed within the town of Kingston. He reviewed the Public Participation Process and explained that an

Advisory Task Force has been set up to guide the development of the project and includes officials from both Plaistow and Kingston. C. Waszczuk introduced the members of the Advisory Task Force Committee (ATF). He explained that to date there had been a total of nine ATF meetings, six Access Management meetings, as well as a few Public Officials meetings.

C. Waszczuk described the six-mile project limits, which extend from East Road in Plaistow to NH 111 in Kingston. He proceeded to discuss the project history and the project need. In describing the project goals, C. Waszczuk expressed a need to address deficient sections of the roadway, to improve capacity, enhance safety, relieve congestion, and to enhance the safe and efficient access to abutting properties. He noted close to 300 accidents were recorded along this section of the corridor during the 5-year period between 1996-2000.

C. Waszczuk noted that in addition to the physical roadway improvements that would be necessary to address deficiencies, improve roadway and intersection capacity, and improve safety; access management was needed to preserve the corridor capacity, improve corridor mobility, and enhance long-term safety. C. Waszczuk noted that some of the tools being investigated as part of the access management plan for the project include:

- Appropriate spacing for signalized intersections.
- Use of left turn lanes to eliminate left turn movements occurring from the through travel lanes.
- Use of medians to eliminate uncontrolled left turns.
- Use of connector or service roads to minimize points of access.

C. Waszczuk reviewed the feedback received at previous public access management meetings, where the primary concerns involved the raised median, perceived increased travel time, and difficulties for truck and emergency vehicles. He explained that some of these concerns have been addressed to a certain degree with the plan being presented tonight. He introduced Marty Kennedy of VHB to discuss the specific access management considerations in Kingston for the NH 125 corridor.

### **Access Management**

Marty Kennedy presented a PowerPoint presentation that included 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 reviewed 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 explained 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 stated the 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 in Plaistow to the intersection of Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road in Kingston. Most of this segment would have a raised center median. Left-turn lanes would be provided at each of the signalized intersections (Roadstone Drive, Debra Rd, and Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road).

M. Kennedy proceeded to review 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 roadway that would be constructed in Kingston as part of the corridor project. He also identified potential future connector roadways that would not be constructed as a part of this project. He explained that these future connectors would be a part of the comprehensive access management plan. The town would be able to use this access management plan as a tool when parcels are developed in the future.

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 of Kingston 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. 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 - Potential for Increased Accidents
- Reduced Deceleration and Taper Lengths Required
- 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 we have applied the directional median concept along the segment that extends from Plaistow/Kingston town line 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 required length of the left turn bay.

### **Proposed Concept Plan**

Senan Murdock provided a description of the proposed concept plan. He reviewed the existing conditions along NH 125, including the roadway widths, number of lanes, and signal locations. Senan described the proposed improvements beginning at the Plaistow/Kingston town line. He noted the following:

The 5-lane section proposed on NH 125 in Plaistow will be extended to the north and match into the 5-lane section that will be constructed at the realigned Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection. This 5-lane section will consist of two through lanes in the northbound direction, two through lanes in the southbound direction, and a 20' raised median island, which would provide for protected left turn lanes in each direction at major intersections. North of Hunt Road, the proposed concept tapers down to a two-lane section, (two twelve-foot lanes with 10-foot shoulders = 44'). In this area, the proposal involves widening the shoulders for approximately 1.25 miles to just south of Stoneybrook Rd. In the vicinity of the southerly entrance to Meeks Rd, there are a lot of turning movements. In this area, it is proposed to construct a 3-lane section, which will provide for a center turn lane for left turning vehicles entering the Shell station, Meeks Rd, and also the campground. S. Murdock explained that the overall width of the road would still be 44', and would consist of three 12' lanes, with 4' shoulders on each side. S. Murdock noted that this is similar to what exists today at Old Coach Road, and Folly Brook Terrace to the north.

S. Murdock explained that the majority of the widening is proposed equally to both sides of the road to minimize and balance impacts to the abutting properties. He identified one section in Kingston, between Dorre Road and Debra Road, where the widening is proposed to be shifted entirely to the west by holding the edge of pavement on the east side. This was done to avoid impacts to the cemetery opposite Dorre Road, and to avoid impacts along the east side in the vicinity of Colonial and Debra Roads. S. Murdock noted that there is ledge on the west side as the ground rises up. On the east side the ground drops off quickly. He explained that the widening transitions back to an equal widening on both sides through the curve to the north of Debra Road, and remains this way to the northerly limit of the project.

S. Murdock described the proposed concept in more detail at each of the intersections. He noted the following:

- The existing intersection of Kingston Road and NH 125 is proposed to be relocated to the north and aligned opposite Roadstone Drive to form a 4-way signalized intersection. Single lane approaches will be constructed on Kingston Road and Roadstone Drive. Properties adjacent to this new Connector would have driveways constructed giving them direct access to the signalized intersection.
- Minor approach work will be needed at Dorre Road in order to match the proposed improvements.
- Happy Hollow Road will be extended westerly to a realigned 4-way signalized intersection with Debra Road. The southerly connection of Colonial Road/Route 125 will be discontinued and a turnaround will be constructed. Single lane approaches will be constructed on both side roads. A slip ramp will also be constructed in the northwest quadrant of the intersection that will allow trucks headed in the southbound direction to reverse direction at the signal.
- Another truck turnaround will be constructed just north of the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection, on the west side. This will allow trucks headed in the NB direction to pull into an exclusive left turn lane, wait for a gap in traffic, turn into the jug handle and proceed south.

- The widening on NH 125 will match into the proposed improvements recently constructed at the southerly end of Old Coach Road. At the northerly intersection, Old Coach Road will be widened slightly, to provide the proper width to accommodate single unit trucks. We are also proposing to remove the pavement that is within the existing ROW and narrow the existing driveway to Reynold's Sales.
- We are proposing to close the northerly end of Meeks Road and provide a turnaround at the dead end. The northerly end has poorer geometry and steeper approaching grades than the southerly end. This will also eliminate the need for a proposed left -turn lane on Route 125 at the northerly Meeks Road intersection. The resulting layout will provide a 10' shoulder that will permit northbound through vehicles to bypass left turning vehicles accessing the RV dealership on the west side of NH 125. This will also make better use of the center-turn-lane proposed at the south end of Meeks Road. We are also proposing to slightly realign the Shell driveway to line up opposite Meeks Road. The southerly intersection of Meeks Road is proposed to be widened slightly to accommodate single unit trucks.

S. Murdock explained that as part of this project we are looking at trying to minimize the number of conflict points along the corridor by consolidating and relocating driveways, and to also try and better define existing driveways. He briefly reviewed some of the driveways that were being relocated and consolidated. This was followed by a review of directional median break locations along NH 125.

S. Murdock noted that there will be some right-of-way acquisitions and easements needed to construct this project. At this time it appears that there will be approximately seven properties that will need to be acquired in Kingston. There will also be a number of strip land acquisitions. In addition, to allow for construction there will be some construction easements that will be required and some future maintenance easements.

Before opening the meeting up to comments and questions, Chris Waszczuk briefly reviewed the project development process, the revised construction estimate, and discussed tentative dates for future meetings. He also reviewed recent developments with funding and the State's Ten Year Plan.

### Comments and Questions

**Comment** - Representative Welch thanked the Chairman and said he was delighted to see the project moving forward. He noted that there are a lot of loose ends with respect to future connector roads. Some of these are located on properties that are currently for sale. He asked when these properties would be purchased? What should these people do now if they have a property up for sale?

**Response** - C. Waszczuk explained that parcels that are currently being redeveloped are being coordinated with the project to ensure that the developments will not conflict with the goals of this project. He explained that the intent is for the blue future connectors to be constructed by the developers as land is developed. If it were not possible for them to be constructed, an easement would be required. The Department is not proposing to build these connectors or purchase right-of-way for these connectors as a part of this project.

**Comment** - L. Hume asked where she could see the actual schedule that describes the funding levels between 2005 and 2015.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that it is available in the draft Ten Year Plan that was provided to GACIT on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the Rockingham Planning Commission would have a copy.

**Comment** – L. Hume stated that at the last ATF meeting the funding would have been provided for the project to be completed in 2010. She asked what has pushed the project out to 2015?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that there are a lot more projects in the Ten Year Plan than there is funding available. Chris suggested that interested parties get involved in the GACIT meetings that will be held this fall and advocate for the project.

**Comment** – L. Hume asked if the Department still expected construction to start in Plaistow. If so, when could they expect construction to begin in Kingston?

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that the Department would want more discussions with the communities to identify where the high priority areas are. After the Hunt Road /Newton Junction Road intersection, it would make sense to begin at the southerly end and work north; however, more input is needed.

**Comment** – L. Hume stated that she would like to see more specific discussions with the landowners regarding the future connector roadways. She asked if there was anything in the schedule to facilitate this.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that this effort should be a shared responsibility and that he would look to the Advisory Task Force to help facilitate these discussions with the landowners.

**Comment** – L. Hume asked what the current schedule is for the reconstruction of the Hunt Road/Newton Junction Road intersection.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk said that this project is scheduled to advertise this fall. Construction could begin by late fall or early next year. He mentioned that there are some right-of-way issues that are still outstanding and he would be able to provide a better update at the end of the month.

**Comment** – Norman Hurley, Kingston Fire Chief, expressed his concern over the delays that this project has seen. He remembers this project starting back in the 1960's. He also stated that he was concerned about closing the northerly end of Meeks Road. He has a 34-foot long tanker that will need to be able to negotiate the SB left turn at the southerly Meeks Road entrance.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk suggested that the people in attendance, that would like to see the project completed within a more reasonable schedule, call or write their Executive Councilors and legislators. He noted that unfortunately, funding shortfalls are not just a statewide issue; they're a national issue. Also, he noted that we would be sure to accommodate fire truck access at Meeks Road as a part of the design.

**Comment** – Ken Briggs, Town Engineer, noted that if the future connector roads shown on the plan in blue do not get built as a part of this project, it may be difficult for private developers to get the required dredge and fill permits. He also suggested removal of the guardrail on NH 125 near Landscaper's Depot.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that developers would be required to go through the environmental permitting process and get the necessary permits. He explained that these connector roads are not vital to the operation of the roadway, but rather they serve as an important planning tool for when and if these parcels are redeveloped.

**Comment** – One of the Selectmen referred to a letter stating that the Plaistow-Kingston project was included in the State's Ten Year Plan during the mid 1970's. Noting the Representatives in attendance, he suggested they make some phone calls to help push the project along. He also noted that the NH 125 corridor is going to be what drives the tax base for the town of Kingston. He doesn't want to see developers going to other towns such as Brentwood and Epping as a result of this project getting pushed out to 2015.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk noted that the estimated project costs have increased significantly from the original programmed amount of \$10 million. He explained that this additional required funding in the amount of approximately \$12 million is what is shown (in the draft 10-Year Plan) as not being funded before 2015.

**Comment** – Mark Heitz, Selectman, asked the Department to elaborate on why the estimated construction cost has increased from \$8.5 million in 1995 to \$22 million.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk explained that back in 1995 this project was very conceptual and didn't involve the various elements of the project that are currently envisioned. A portion of the increase has been due to inflation. Also, as the concept has developed, and different elements been identified, better estimates have been developed.

**Comment** – Representative Welch commented that he didn't remember a 20' raised median island as a part of the project back in the mid 90's. He suggested that the median has contributed to the increased costs.

**Comment** – A comment was made regarding how much money has been used to construct bike paths. It was suggested that the Transportation Enhancement funding for projects such as sidewalks and bike paths would be better used to upgrade the roadway system.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk stated that he would need to check the 10-year plan to see what portion is allocated to Transportation Enhancement projects.

**Comment** – Ellen Faulconer asked if the estimate is in present day dollars, or if it has been projected to the future year.

**Response** – C. Waszczuk said that the estimate is in present day dollars.

**Comment** – N. Hurley expressed his support for the raised median island. He mentioned that his first day of work with the Fire Department involved a head on collision on NH 125, and he stated that he feels a raised median is the way to proceed in terms of safety.

C. Waszczuk thanked the Kingston Board of Selectmen for their comments and for the opportunity to present the project to them. He mentioned that the next ATF meeting would be on August 28.

cc: J. Brillhart  
C. Waszczuk  
M. Dugas  
M. Burlage, District 6  
M. Kennedy, VHB  
G. Greenwood, ATF  
Kingston Selectboard