

August 28, 2017

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** SWANZEY  
X-A000(889)  
40485  
NH 32 / Sawyers Crossing Road Intersection Safety Improvements

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** July 20, 2017

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Swanzey Town Hall, Swanzey

**ATTENDED BY:** NHDOT  
Michael Dugas  
Michelle Marshall  
Frank Linnenbringer – District 4

(See Attached Attendees List)

**SUBJECT:** Public Informational Meeting

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

M. Dugas explained that this project evolved from a road safety audit conducted at the Town's request in 2013 to investigate their concerns with the safety of the intersection. The RSA team investigated the safety issues and determined that the key safety concerns at the intersection are caused by the relatively high traffic speeds on NH 32 as it passes through the intersection (which is a concern for drivers and pedestrians), and the unconventional and antiquated design of the intersection that can confuse unfamiliar drivers. The RSA developed two potential improvement concepts including a contemporary 'T' intersection design controlled by a stop sign, and a roundabout. Since the RSA, this project has been included in the NHDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and additional investigations have been made on these two improvement concepts.

M. Dugas explained the environmental screening that has been started for the project and described the Section 106 process, including an explanation of consulting parties. No attendees expressed an interest in becoming a consulting party to the Section 106 process.

M. Marshall explained the two preliminary design alternatives:

1. 'T' intersection: Reconfigure the existing intersection to a conventional 'T' layout with NH 32 as the major axis and Sawyers Crossing Road as the minor under stop sign control. Sawyers Crossing Road would be widened to provide separate left and right turn lanes. This design would eliminate the existing

antiquated layout, but would not address the high speeds on NH 32. This design also would not improve the safety of pedestrians crossing NH 32.

2. Roundabout: Reconfigure intersection as a modern roundabout with a diameter of approximately 130'. This design would efficiently handle present and future traffic volumes, and reduce the speed of all vehicles through the intersection thus providing a safer environment for all users.

M. Dugas explained that both options could include improvements to the existing sidewalk network, but would be contingent upon the Town agreeing to maintain the sidewalks. If the Town is agreeable to accepting maintenance of the sidewalks more discussions will be needed among the DOT, Town, and school district to determine the details and limits of the sidewalk improvements. He stated also that the preliminary road and sidewalk layouts have been designed to avoid impacting the stone walls on the west side of Sawyers Crossing Road. It appears that both proposed improvement alternatives would result in small impacts to Town and school property, which will need to be discussed further.

Alternative 1 would cost approximately \$500,000 while alternative 2 would cost approximately \$850,000. The construction would be funded by federal HSIP funds. Assuming that the DOT and Town can reach a consensus promptly on the preferred alternative and resolve right of way issues, the project is currently scheduled to be let for bids in November 2018. This would allow construction to begin in the spring of 2019. Construction should be complete by the end of the 2019 construction season.

### **Questions and Comments**

- There currently is a sign inside the triangle that says “Town of Swanzey” and they would like it reinstalled once the project is constructed.
- How large is the proposed roundabout compared to the other one recently constructed in town? Answer: About the same size. During the detailed design of the intersection we will try to reduce the roundabout diameter to minimize impacts.
- Why is the stop sign concept an improvement (there still will be delays)? Answer: The T-intersection with a stop sign will reduce the confusion factor by making vehicle movements more predictable. Traffic stopped at the stop sign will experience delays (as they do today) during the busiest times of the day. This design will also not address the speeding concerns on NH 32.
- Will traffic continue to speed through the intersection along NH 32? Answer: The roundabout option will slow all traffic through the intersection. Typical speeds within the roundabout are 15 to 20 mph.
- Attendees had concerns regarding the location of Simeneau Drive in relation to the intersection. Answer: M. Dugas stated that the Town is able to limit access to the road if desired for safety reasons. For example, access could be limited to entrance only to avoid the risk of exiting the street so close to the intersection. However, he also stated that if the roundabout alternative were implemented, the lower speeds resulting from the roundabout would likely address the safety concerns.
- The School asked when the construction would be. Answer: Construction would begin in spring at the start of construction season and be completed by the end of the year. Traffic will be maintained during construction, but those details have

not yet been determined. The DOT will also work with the school to minimize disruptions due to construction while school is in session.

- Fire Chief stated the roundabout option is the best option to move traffic through the area during peak volume times.

Support for the roundabout alternative was nearly unanimous; no attendees supported the ‘T’ intersection alternative, while one attendee felt that no work was warranted. M. Dugas stated that it would be helpful for the Town, if it is willing, to provide a letter endorsing one of the alternatives. (The Planning Board formally endorsed the roundabout alternative on 8/10/17.)

Submitted by:

Michelle Marshall  
Preliminary Design Section

MJD

cc: P. Stamnas  
W. Oldenburg  
J. Kallfelz  
M. Town of Swanzey  
T. Murphy – Southwest Region Planning Commission