

Meeting Summary

Event: Project Advisory Committee Meeting (PAC) #2

Date and Time: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Location: Zoom Online Meeting Platform

1. Attendees

PAC Members

Regina Barnes, Selectwoman, Town of Hampton
Jay Diener, Hampton Conservation and Commission
State Representative Michael Edgar
Eric Feldbaum, NH Division of Parks and Recreation
Lynn Larson, Hampton Beach Resident
Johanna Lyons, NH Division of Parks and Recreation
Seth McNally, NH Seacoast Greenway
Betty Moore, Hampton Historical Society
Senator Tom Sherman, New Hampshire State Legislature
Nancy Stiles, Chairman, Hampton Beach Area Commission
Jamie Sullivan, Town Manager, Town of Hampton
David Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)

Anthony King, Senior Design Engineer
Tobey Reynolds, Project Manager

Consultant Team

Keith Cota (HDR)
Roch Larochelle, Consultant Team Project Manager (HDR)
Phil Fusco (HDR)
Scott Peterson (HDR)
Kevin Slattery, Environmental Resources (HDR)
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, Historic and Environmental Resources (FHI Studio)
Marcy Miller, Public Involvement Manager (FHI Studio)
Laura Parete, Public Involvement Specialist (FHI Studio)

2. Presentation Overview (slides attached)

NHDOT hosted the second PAC meeting for the Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A) Project on Thursday, January 27, 2022, from 4:00 – 5:30 PM via the Zoom Online Meeting platform. Ms. Marcy Miller, Public Involvement Manager, welcomed the PAC members and reviewed the meeting agenda. She introduced Mr. Tobey Reynold's, NHDOT's new Project Manager, and Mr. Roch Larochelle, the Consultant Team Project Manager, followed by the other team members. She then provided an

overview of how to participate in the virtual PAC meeting. Mr. Larochelle and Ms. Miller provided a recap of the project and public outreach work, which included the first PAC meeting, data collection for natural and cultural resources, a public information meeting, survey and right-of-way research, the collection and analysis of traffic and safety data, the development of the draft Purpose & Need Statement, and a site walk with the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) and consulting parties. Ms. Miller summarized what the project team had learned from the feedback received through the interactive website and questionnaire.

Mr. Larochelle explained that the project development process includes identifying the issues and needs, alternatives development, iterative design, and implementation. Through the data collection process, the team has identified issues and needs, and they are now ready to begin alternatives development. Mr. Larochelle also provided an update on environmental project work. He stated that the project team established a preliminary Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the cultural resources analysis, submitted a Request for Project Review form to NHDHR, distributed agency contact letters, and conducted a site walk with NHDHR and consulting parties.

Mr. Larochelle provided an update on traffic and safety. He presented safety and crash data that was collected from the project area, which includes information about vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle crashes. He said that the data indicated the greatest number of crashes occurred where there were the highest turning movements. The majority of the crashes occurred in the summer months. They were more frequent on the weekends and between 3:00 and 5:00 pm.

Mr. Larochelle then presented information about traffic volumes and roadway operational conditions. He said data was collected in August 2021 and then adjusted to pre-Covid conditions. The highest volumes occurred in the midday hours on the weekends. He explained that the Team created a traffic model from the newly collected data to simulate conditions at intersections along the corridor during the weekend evening peak hour, between 6:00 and 7:00 pm. The model showed that the worst conditions occurred on Ocean Boulevard between C and G Streets. He then showed simulations of six intersections along the corridor. He said that the model will ultimately be used to evaluate the alternatives.

Mr. Larochelle then presented the draft Purpose & Need Statement. He explained the key considerations and influencers, the Purpose & Need definition and use, the draft Purpose & Need, and supporting goals and objectives. He said the Purpose & Need is the backbone of the NEPA process.

Mr. Larochelle concluded the formal presentation by explaining that the next part of the study will look at how the existing roadway, parking and walkways can be reprogrammed to balance all modes of transportation and that the next PAC meeting will be conducted as a workshop. He said the project team is still collecting the data needed to inform the study. He encouraged PAC members to review and provide comments on the draft Purpose & Need Statement. Mr. Larochelle reviewed the project schedule and stated that the next PAC Meeting is anticipated to take place in April 2022, pending feedback from PAC members on the draft Purpose & Need. A Public Information Meeting is anticipated in Summer 2022.

PAC members asked questions and offered comments both during and following the presentation. Questions are noted below in italics with responses made by NHDOT or the consultant team members. Comments are included at the end.

3. Discussion

Questions

Q – Was the Hampton Beach Area Commission (HBAC) invited to the cultural resources site review?

A – No. The purpose of the site review was to identify potential historic properties along the corridor that might warrant further study. NHDHR and Consulting Parties were in attendance. The project team can provide information on how to become a Consulting Party in the Section 106 process if organizations or individuals are interested.

Q – Will the presentation be available to participants?

A – Yes, the slides will be posted to the project website after the meeting.

<https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/hampton40797/index.htm>.

Q – Do you have a crash summary for North Beach segment?

A – Yes, it can be provided at the next meeting.

Q- If the number of lanes are reduced, can you assess how much traffic back-ups will increase?

A – The project team will analyze this through the traffic model during the study of potential alternatives. The project team will keep the PAC informed of this information.

Q - Will the existing conditions show the limits and encroachments on the highway?

A – Mr. Larochelle said the project team now has completed survey and will be able to assess potential encroachments for alternatives as may be appropriate. The base survey will help to facilitate discussion of special limitations at the next workshop session.

Q – When you look at redefining space north of Boars Head, will dedicated turn lanes be considered?

A - Yes, one of the design approaches will evaluate traffic movements and the need for designated lanes. The project team will be looking at all of this in the development of alternatives.

Comments

- HBAC requested that they be involved in future project activities.
- A PAC member said that there are many near pedestrian/vehicle collisions just past Church Street with vehicles speeding down the right-hand lane, zooming past the left-hand turning traffic.
- In the summer, the streets from P Street south are alternating one-ways. The project team said they would look at the time of year that crashes occurred to see if there's a correlation between the number of crashes and seasonal circulation patterns.
- Traffic speeds north of Boars Head are very fast. The model seems oriented toward keeping traffic moving, but residents and visitors in this area are concerned with slowing traffic down.
- A PAC member said it's surprising that there were not more accidents at the north end of the project area. People travel quickly between Winnacunnet and Boars Head. The project team noted one of the reasons is due to traffic volumes are significantly higher in the southern portion of the corridor, which contribute to higher crash rates. It was acknowledged that as volumes (vehicles) drop, travel speeds go up resulting in challenges for crossing pedestrians.
- Due to the lack of commercial uses around High Street, the peak traffic volume is actually in the morning.

Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A)

- There are no pedestrian refuges crossing from the west to the east side. Often at Highland Avenue, people make the left turn and go down the median parking lot to try and bypass traffic on Ocean Boulevard. Highland Avenue and Church Street are the most dysfunctional of intersections. People don't see others stopping in the road.
- A PAC member noted that there is a feasibility study underway evaluating the impact of a pier south of Boars Head. This could affect traffic in the area. Senator Avard initially considered putting a pier on top of the jetty at the entrance to Hampton Harbor, but this was dismissed because a pier in this location would be more likely to be damaged during storms. The project team asked for any updates, plans, sketches, etc. for the pier. The HBAC said they would send this information to the team.
- The original purpose of pier study was to make it accessible for people with disabilities. It seems that this might mean handicap parking will have to be available in the immediate area.
- The project team should investigate dedicated turn lanes north of Boars Head. Dumas Avenue allows residents to avoid the downtown when traveling south.
- The draft Purpose & Need does a good job of capturing community concerns.
- The State Park is missing in the Purpose & Need. The park contributes to traffic problems.
- Tourism and recreation are not the same as economic development.
- The project needs to consider the potential pier, as well as the bridge project to the south.
- The 10 Year Plan shows construction beginning in 2024. The Town needs a schedule and cost for the improvements so additional funds can be pursued in future 10 Year Plans.