

Meeting Summary

Event: Project Advisory Committee Meeting (PAC) #1

Date and Time: Thursday, October 29, 2020, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Location: Zoom Online Meeting Platform

1. Attendees

PAC Members

Jameson Ayotte, Chief, Hampton Fire and Rescue
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
Cathy Silver, Hampton Beach Resident
Dott Ferrari, Hampton Beach Resident
Nancy Stiles, Chairman, Hampton Beach Area Commission
Jamie Sullivan, Town Manager, Town of Hampton
David Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission
David Allen, Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders
Bill Kennedy, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH
Chris Jacobs, Hampton Department of Public Works

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT)

Bill Cass, Assistant Commissioner
Anthony King, Senior Design Engineer
Marc Laurin, Senior Environmental Manager
Jennifer Reczek, Project Manager
Pete Stamnas, Director of Project Development
Trent Zanes, Roadway Section Group Leader

Consultant Team

Rick Plenge, Consultant Team Project Manager (HDR)
Rosie Jaswal, Consultant Team Deputy Project Manager (HDR)
Kevin Slattery, Environmental Resources (HDR)
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, Historic and Environmental Resources (FHI)
Marcy Miller, Public Involvement Manager (FHI)
Laura Parete, Public Involvement Specialist (FHI)

2. Presentation Summary

NHDOT hosted the first PAC meeting for the Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A) project on Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 4:00 – 5:30 PM via the Zoom Online Meeting platform. Ms. Jennifer Reczek, NHDOT Project Manager, and Ms. Marcy Miller, Public Involvement Manager, welcomed the PAC members. Ms. Miller introduced key project team members, reviewed the meeting agenda, discussed the role of the PAC on the project, and provided an overview of how to participate in the virtual PAC meeting.

Ms. Reczek explained that the members of the PAC each represent a different group in the community and that the project team wants to hear their feedback. She explained the importance of the PAC spreading project information to the community and helping to inform the design process. PAC meetings will be held virtually, for now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be assessed on a meeting-by-meeting basis. PAC meetings will be held at different milestones or when the team has new information to share.

Ms. Reczek provided an overview of the project's background and objectives. She discussed the 2018 Master Plan, project development, and the initial study limits. Ms. Reczek explained that the primary objectives of the project are to improve safety and mobility for all users, improve parking, bike/pedestrian mobility, drainage, minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources, and support the economic needs of the community. Ms. Reczek paused to ask if the PAC had questions or comments. Questions and comments are noted later in this document.

Mr. Rick Plenge, Consultant Team Project Manager, discussed the project design approach. He explained that the project began in late Summer 2020 and the team recently started collecting data. The team is identifying a comprehensive list of transportation and environmental issues, which will help inform the project's Purpose and Need. As the project progresses, the team will develop conceptual alternatives, which will be shared with the PAC and public to gain their feedback. Once a design is selected, it will advance to the Final Design phase.

Ms. Miller provided an overview of community outreach efforts for the project. She explained that a postcard was distributed to approximately 2,700 residents and businesses along the corridor in August 2020. The postcard advertised a short community survey and a link to an interactive map, where people can provide specific comments or questions in areas of interest. Ms. Miller provided a summary of the data collected on the interactive map and the survey results to-date. Ms. Miller paused to ask if the PAC had any questions or comments. Questions and comments are noted later in this document.

Ms. Reczek concluded the formal presentation portion of the meeting by explaining the next steps. She said the project is in the data collection phase. The project team is collecting the data needed to inform the study. She encouraged the PAC to send community surveys, data, and information about previous work in the area that they feel would be helpful to the project team. Ms. Reczek reviewed the project schedule, stated that the survey would be available through the end of this year, and encouraged PAC members to help spread the word about the survey to the community.

Following the presentation, PAC members asked questions and offered other comments. 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 – Can you provide the link for the 2018 Hampton Beach Area Mast Plan?

A – Ms. Reczek posted the link (<https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/hampton40797/index.htm>) to the 2018 Master Plan in the meeting chat box.

Q – With regards to federal funding, is the study area limited to the state side of Ocean Boulevard or are you considering both sides of the road?

A – We are looking at both sides of the road and sidewalks all the way down to the seawall for this project.

Q – If we should receive money from the federal government, what is the earliest we can anticipate that the engineering will be done?

A – With the federal funding, there is an extensive planning and public outreach process that is required. The aspect that takes the most time is evaluating alternatives and vetting them with stakeholders before deciding on a preferred concept. The final design phase is typically a more streamlined process.

Q – Are you looking at 2023-2024 for a construction timeframe?

A – We are looking to meet the 10-year timeframe. Right now, we are looking at 2023 but that may be a challenge. The way the Master Plan was approached, the work for the project will largely remain in the state ROW. If there are area impacts outside of the ROW, that will add time to the schedule. One element that could be a potential challenge to staying within the ROW is stormwater treatment.

Q – I hope we have resort grade improvements. Large events happen in Spring/Fall that close the roadways. Do not lose sight of that. In addition, more people are moving here year-round. Many seek overnight parking since there is a town ban. We need to have some sort of agreement. Winter maintenance (e.g., snow removal) must be addressed. How can we improve the corridor for people with special needs? We need to have a conversation about entrances along the North Beach seawall. We cannot hold the ocean back forever. Is it sustainable to keep all stairwells open? We are looking at putting guard rails in our capital budget request. We can hold off, but not forever.

A – Thank you for these comments. We acknowledge that we need to have a more in-depth discussion on these items. NHDOT will plan to coordinate with State Parks and the Town to begin discussions about a maintenance agreement.

Q – It occurs to me that when you propose a public meeting about this, it is hard to sort through concerns of the various areas. I wonder if that can be broken down for specific areas of the roadways? I do have 29 surveys from people from Boars Head Terrace and halfway up Winnecunnet. Lynn will collate surveys and provide them to Jennifer or Marcy.

A – Any information that you can share is appreciated. Regarding public information meetings, we can have stations for different segments of the corridor or breakout rooms if concerns are largely geographically based.

Comments

- The project team should support visitor needs, such as bathrooms and support facilities.
- Thank you for using the 2018 Hampton Beach Area Master Plan as adopted to inform the study.
- It is good to stress that the engineering is 3.3 miles and the construction approved in the 2018 Hampton Beach Area Master Plan is only approved for one mile. It is up to all of us to get more money in for the other sections of the project.
- A particular concern thinking out 5-10 years is taking on the maintenance and recognizing the State wants the town to enter a maintenance agreement. This is not your standard project. It is a unique situation with a state park. I would like to see what that typical maintenance agreement would look like and what the State would expect the scope to be. Street sweeping, sidewalk clearing, snow removal, etc. I am asking where the line will be drawn. Meaning lighting, trash collection, maintenance of new bathrooms, stormwater. I would like to know what I am about to face.
- Tom Sherman sponsored a meeting of North Beach residents. He complimented Lynn Larson for her survey. The areas of greatest concern had to do with safety. The lack of crosswalks, curb heights, in ability to cross the median and drag strip. The construction on this section is not in the 10-year plan. There is a huge amount of safety issues that Lynn and her North Beach residents have brought forward. We should prioritize safety from the beginning of the Ocean Boulevard Project. Please consider safety first, out-of-the-box design second.
- The rotary at Winnacunnet is dangerous. Signage is lacking. People from out-of-town get confused. Speeding is an issue. Some of the plans included parking. The town is concerned about its potential role in any potential maintenance agreement. The north beach is not considered the main beach, but people already drift north because of parking. There are not any services up there, other than lifeguards. We cannot invite additional crowds if we do not have additional services.
- We need to consider short-term safety issues on Ocean Boulevard, particularly during the upcoming winter.
- The focus of this meeting or future meetings should not be about maintenance agreements, but they should be addressed through the project before it is finalized.