

MAST ROAD INTERSECTIONS PROJECT

Steering Committee Meeting No. 3 Summary of Discussion

The Steering Committee met to discuss the Mast Road Intersections Project. The proposed project is intended to improve two intersections along Main Street (NH Route 114) at High Street (NH Route 13) and Elm Street and at Pleasant Street (NH Route 13).

When: Tuesday, July 9, 2013
7:15 PM – 9:00 PM

Where: Goffstown Town Hall, Room 106
16 Main Street
Goffstown, NH

Committee Members (Full Committee)

In Attendance: Larry Brown – Community At Large Representative
Don Ball – Community At Large Representative
Ray Taber – Community At Large Representative
Beverly Powden – Community At Large Representative
Dave Smith – Community At Large Representative
Cynthia Boisvert – Main Street Program Representative
Ruth Gage – Historic District Commission Representative
Collis Adams - Selectmen Representative
Brian Hansen - Planning Board Representative

Staff Members and Others

In Attendance: Robert Browne – Goffstown Police
Meghan Theriault – Town Engineer
Carl Quiram – Public Works Director
Jennifer Phillips - Library Board of Trustees
Michael Long - McFarland Johnson (MJ)
Brian Colburn – MJ

1. Previous Meeting Summary – MJ opened up the meeting by asking if anyone had any comments regarding the previous meeting summary. No additional comments were received.
2. The purpose of this meeting was to allow the Committee to discuss the alternatives in depth and attempt to reach consensus on a preferred alternative at each location. MJ and Goffstown staff presented some new and updated information and answered a number of questions. MJ stated that it is apparent that there is simply too much traffic volume within the Village and downtown areas of Goffstown for any option that has only one lane in each direction to be able to function at an acceptable level of service during the morning and evening peak hours. It is clear that in

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order to move the projected volumes through Town, while still allowing the crossroads to access Mast Road/Main Street, it would be necessary to provide two lanes in each direction. A roadway of this size is not possible given the current historic and residential context of this area of Town.

3. Pleasant Street Alternatives Discussion – MJ presented a revised matrix with updated cost information for each alternative. MJ also reviewed the traffic modeling data and provided information with regard to the queue lengths predicted by the model using existing traffic volumes.
 - a. There was much discussion about all three options, but in particular, the “no-build” and roundabout options were discussed and questioned. It was generally felt by the Committee that the traffic signal option was not consistent with the overall character of this area of Goffstown, and so this alternative should not be selected.
 - b. The intersection does not have a history of crashes and does not appear to be a serious safety problem. There is no history of crashes with injuries as well.
 - c. The Committee felt that the crosswalk at Union Street, although somewhat outside the scope of this project, should be considered. The “No-Build” Option includes the relocation of the crosswalk further away from East Union Street to try and increase the sight distance so that eastbound vehicles can see pedestrians in the crosswalk better. The roundabout option would provide crosswalks on all legs providing a safer option, albeit one that is even further away from Union Street. The Committee had concerns that pedestrians would try to cross at East Union Street anyway. Some members suggested that the slope be cut back to allow better vision, however this would require an easement or agreement with the property owner to make the modification.
 - d. The roundabout option is projected to cause long queues on westbound South Mast Road during the evening peak hour. There was some concern by the Committee that motorists would try to bypass the queue by using East Union Street. This is unacceptable as East Union is very narrow and residential in nature.
 - e. One concern with the No-Build Alternative is the ability of left turning vehicles on South Mast Road/Main Street to queue while still allowing northbound vehicles to pass by on the right. MJ developed this alternative with this concern in mind as the roadway has been narrowed, but it will maintain sufficient width to allow through vehicles to continue on unimpeded.
 - f. After much discussion, it was decided that each member of the Committee should voice their opinion as to which option they support. Five members voiced their support for the “No-Build” alternative, while three members supported the roundabout option

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(although they felt that angled parking should not be considered further as part of this option). Most of the reasoning in choosing the “No-Build” option centered on the lack of crashes in the existing configuration, coupled with the long queues expected if the roundabout were implemented. While it is true that roundabouts in general are the safest intersection option, in this location there is no history of crashes, significant or otherwise, causing the majority of the Committee members to select modifications to the existing layout as their preferred alternative (No-Build).

4. North Mast Road/High Street/Elm Street/Main Street Intersections Alternatives Discussion – As with the Pleasant Street Intersection, MJ presented a revised matrix with updated cost information illustrating pertinent information about each of the alternatives developed at this intersection.
 - a. There was some discussion about all the options, but it was clear that there is very little support for a traffic signal option at this location. The combined intersection has met warrants for a traffic signal since at least 1987, providing an indication of the length of time that this intersection has been problematic. A signal at this location would run off one controller and would be coordinated to allow traffic to move sequentially on each leg. However, even though the traffic signal would control traffic it would create long queues, and it was generally felt by the Committee that the traffic signal option was not consistent with the overall character of this area of Goffstown, and so this alternative should not be selected.
 - b. The roundabout options create long queues as well and, as at Pleasant Street, would require two lanes on some legs to operate at an acceptable level of service. The full roundabout alternatives would require relocating the library, which is included in the estimated cost. Generally, the Committee felt that these options would be very difficult to gain approval and implement, partially due to the need to relocate the library.
 - c. The Committee also felt unfavorably toward the NHDOT Traffic Signal options. These alternatives would require removal of a number of parking spaces as well as being inconsistent with the character of the downtown area.
 - d. A new option utilizing a one way loop was discussed. This option would turn Main Street and a portion of North Mast Road into a one way roadway with two lanes heading westbound. A return loop would be formed utilizing streets such as White Street, Church Street, and Depot Street, or even creating a new roadway that would connect with Depot Street. MJ modeled both High and Elm Street and determined that a traffic signal would still be needed at Elm Street during the evening peak to allow traffic to enter without

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forming excessive queues. Some members of the Committee felt that this option would hurt downtown businesses. This option would require additional study as it is well outside the scope of this study. It was decided that Carl would meet with NHDOT to determine if the scope could be expanded to gather the information needed and determine if the one way loop would work.

- e. The traffic calming option was discussed as well. It was made clear that this option would not solve the traffic capacity and movement issues that exist at the intersection. In addition, in order to accommodate large trucks, the pedestrian islands cannot be raised and therefore would not provide the additional refuge that a raised island might. This option could provide additional definition to allow pedestrians to be more visible, as well as helping to provide an indication that drivers need to reduce speed, especially as they enter the downtown area from the west. MJ was asked to modify the current layout to include better definition of driveways at Sully's in combination with on street angle parking as was shown in the Village Planning Committee Report of 2008.
 - f. After much discussion the Committee decided to recommend that the Traffic Calming Option be pursued as the preferred option, but that it be considered an interim solution. As mentioned above, Carl will meet with NHDOT to investigate the possibility of studying the one way option to determine its feasibility.
5. Requirements for the Public Alternatives Workshop
 - a. MJ asked that members of the Committee attend the meeting to voice their opinions and reasoning behind their choice of a preferred alternative
 - b. MJ will refine the Traffic Calming option in the area of Sully's as well as minimizing the length of crosswalks as much as possible.
 6. Next Meeting (Public Alternatives Workshop) will be at the Goffstown High School on July 30, 2013 at 6:00 PM

These notes were prepared by MJ.