

February 24, 2010

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

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: LYME
X-A000(887)
15695
NH 10 / East Thetford Road safety improvements study

DATE OF CONFERENCE: February 8, 2010

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Lyme Town Office

ATTENDED BY: <u>NHDOT</u>	<u>Others</u>
C. Green	N. Miller - UVLSRPC
M. Dugas	15 residents and officials (list attached)
A. Hanscom	

SUBJECT: Public informational meeting

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

C. Green explained that the current Federal highway funding law, known by its acronym of SAFETEA-LU, created the Highway Safety Improvement Program to identify highway safety issues and provide for modest safety improvements that would achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. New Hampshire receives \$5.5 million per year to implement modest safety improvements in locations where crash data indicates safety deficiencies. C. Green stressed that the HSIP is intended to be data driven; i.e., locations identified to use these funds must have a crash history to demonstrate a safety need.

As a requirement of the HSIP, NHDOT compiles an annual "5% Report" identifying the locations with the most severe safety needs. The NHDOT identified locations with the highest crash rates for roadway segments and highest number of crashes for intersections for each functional class of roadway. From the "5% Report" further analysis of the locations was used to narrow the number of locations to 30 of which this intersection was one of the 30 selected for further study. This intersection was not identified by the most recent "5% Report", but has been noted by the Town and NHDOT District 2 as a problem intersection. He explained that crash data received from the NH Department of Safety indicated very few crashes had occurred at the intersection. However, many in attendance felt that there have been more numerous crashes. Sean O'Keefe (Lyme PD) agreed with the residents' observations regarding crash frequency and offered to provide the Town's crash data to the DOT to support the need for improvements.

The attendees discussed their observations of the intersection's safety deficiencies.

- Intersection is located on the outside of a curve on NH 10.
- The pavement within the intersection is very wide and undefined.
- The proximity of several driveways (Stella's, park and ride, bank) create confusing traffic patterns and conflicts.
- The alignment allows high travel speeds from NH 10 SB to East Thetford Road WB.
- On the Common forms the fourth leg of the intersection and adds to the traffic conflicts.
- School traffic from the nearby elementary school queues along NH 10 at the start and end of the school day.
- Theresa Mundy noted that the intersection is very poor for bicyclists and pedestrians due to the wide pavement, high speeds, and the lack of crosswalks and sidewalks.
- Jeff Valence added that there is no pedestrian pathway between the school and the north side of NH 10 near the Common. He said that a working group is studying pedestrian access between the village and the Post Pond area (north of the village).
- Michael Hinsley (Lyme FD) said that the afternoon sun can blind traffic on NH 10 SB approaching the intersection. He suggested that traffic calming measures be implemented at the intersection, but noted that any improvements will still need to accommodate truck turns in and out of East Thetford Road. He also mentioned that the sight lines looking south from both East Thetford Road and On the Common are poor due to road alignment and vegetation.
- Simon Carr noted that On the Common is a popular shortcut between Dorchester Road and NH 10.
- Dan Brand explained that the expansive pavement leads to undefined travel paths and unpredictable movements. He reiterated that the sight distance to the south is poor, particularly for drivers who stop near the stop sign, which, because of the layout, is far from the edge of NH 10. He added that entering the intersection from the abutting driveways is most difficult, and that the utility pole directly opposite Stella's is too close to NH 10 for safety.
- Jack Elliot noted that the wide intersection pavement makes snow removal difficult and leads to large snow banks that further hinder sight distance. He reiterated that any improvements need to consider the many trucks that follow East Thetford Road to and from Vermont. Also, the annual Prouty Ride sends several thousand cyclists through the intersection on the second Saturday in July.
- The NH 10 speed limit drops abruptly from 50 mph to 30 mph on the approaches to the village. NH 10 lacks any gateway features to denote the approaching village, and the northbound speed limit drops within a wide and straight section of highway. All of these conditions result in higher than desirable traffic speeds through the village.
- Snowmobiles are allowed to cross NH 10 from Stella's to the Common, where they continue east to the Village Store for food and fuel.

The attendees discussed possible short-term improvement concepts. There was a very brief discussion of long-term improvements where most in attendance expressed opposition to traffic signals, while there was mixed support for a roundabout. There was a general consensus that in the short term East Thetford Road should be channelized and narrowed to calm traffic, define traffic movements, and intersect NH 10 at a right angle. Some felt that On the Common should be converted to one-way eastbound operation, while others added that the existing driveways should be combined wherever feasible to reduce access points within the intersection. It was agreed that improvements of this nature could be pursued as a short-term improvement. The realigned intersection would give the opportunity to provide a crosswalk and sidewalks as well as roadside snow storage. These improvement concepts were sketched upon an aerial photograph and will be further studied by the Department. There was some discussion whether it would be possible to realign East Thetford Road to traverse the western segment of the Common. C. Green indicated there might be historic implications regarding the impacts of the suggested realignment. The Bureau of Environment will review this.

The Department will proceed with an evaluation of the crash data to be provided by the Town to determine the intersection's eligibility for HSIP funding, and will study the improvement concepts further.

Submitted by:

Michael J. Dugas, P.E.
Chief of Preliminary Design

MJD/mjd

cc: W. Cass
C. Green
W. Lambert
A. Hanscom – District 6