



MEETING MINUTES

Hooksett U.S. 3/NH 28 – Project 29611

WSP 10 Al Paul Ln, Suite 103, Merrimack, NH 03054 Tel: (603) 324-0891

Date: October 24, 2023

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Hybrid meeting: Zoom webinar and in-person at Hooksett Town Administrative Office Building, Town Council Chambers

Re: Public Informational Meeting #2

Attendees:

NHDOT

David Smith, Project Manager

Tobey Reynolds, Assistant Director of Project Development (former Project Manager)

Sarah Healey, Design Engineer

John Evans, Bureau of Environment

Dena Rae, Bureau of Right-Of-Way

WSP

Liviu Sfintescu, Project Manager

Tim Higginson, Deputy Project Manager

Erin Willians, Project Engineer

Matt Grote, Project Engineer

Delia Makhetha, Public Involvement Lead

Attendees

5 participants via Zoom webinar

42 participants in-person

Meeting Discussion:

David Smith, NHDOT Project Manager welcomed everyone, introduced the project team from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and WSP, the consulting firm and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Liviu Sfintescu, WSP Project Manager continued the meeting by presenting the project. The full presentation is available on the NHDOT project website: <https://www.dot.nh.gov/projects-plans-and-programs/project-center/hooksett-29611>

- Resident on Mammoth Road expressed sidewalk is necessary along Mammoth Rd and concerned about the raising traffic volume. Giving Pinkerton Academy Derry Roundabout as example, he proclaimed that the proposed roundabout at Mammoth Rd would not work with sidewalks. Adding

more lanes on Route 3 would increase traffic speeds and cause more accidents.

- Raymond Ayotte (resident of Manchester Manor, Embassy Ave) is concerned that residents exiting Embassy Ave can only take a right-turn. There is poor sight distance when looking left near the driveway entrance. Shuttle's Auto body shop is currently out-of-business. Proclaimed that Fire Department's trucks (15-20) travel up and down the corridor throughout the day. It is considered that with the increase in the traffic the corridor will not be safe for pedestrians or bicyclists. Also raised a concern asking, "Why should the Hooksett taxpayers spend money on reconstructing the road when there aren't any accidents or real problems?"
- Steven Mandeville lives behind Crown Trophy on Alice Ave. He has lived in the area since 1971 and has been an on-call fire fighter for Hooksett for 49 years. Expresses that Route 3 doesn't have any problem and doesn't need a fix. Expresses that a left turn to Manchester Manor is a problem. Explained his son walks to work at Shaw's Plaza and it is very challenging.
- Steve Lawrence (owner of Pro Technologies) working on Route 3 for past 10 years, is concerned about the proximity of signals north of Martins Ferry. Expresses that widening may cause more issues to the north creating traffic backups. Median island is considered a disaster for the business. Mentioned that the 5-lane alternative will promote higher speeds and that he prefers the 3-lane alternative. Agrees with the idea of making the roadway pretty with a median and plants on it that would render the roadway nice and safe. Suggested creating aesthetic gateway into town with landscaping.
- Tony Crawford (Circle T car wash) proclaims that he paid a consultant to analyze the median addition; claims the median can cause the death of his business. Bulk of businesses can continue even with the median but not a car wash. 6 out of 10 of his customers are driven by an impulse stop in. Asked for a median cutout.
- Kurt Kendell (Twins Smoke Shop) expressed that the median addition and the construction duration could affect his business. Not happy with the idea of the roundabout but agreed that it would be better to have 2 lanes in each direction.
- Dr. Gerber (Hooksett Family Eye Care) says that median will move the traffic to Mammoth Rd which will add more challenges. Expresses that constructing a median would close their business and disagrees with sidewalk on both sides. Expresses concern with tax increase due to Town maintenance. States a roundabout will create a winter traffic issue with the hilly surroundings. Traffic signals are not currently synchronized, recommends fixing this issue. Also recommends adding sidewalks on Mammoth Rd instead of Route 3.
- Mark Cusson resident for past 50 years familiar with traffic issues states the congestion happens only 3 to 4 hours a day and that's an issue mostly to the north of the project. Median will cause issues 24 hours a day. Widening the section from Alice Ave to Martins Ferry Rd will funnel more traffic to the traffic signals at Kmart and Shaw's, which will create more bottlenecks in this section. The removal of the center turn lane is an issue.
- Tom Osborne (Osbornes Farm & Garden) opened in 1987 on Rte 28 bypass and recently moved to Cinemagic Way to grow. 914 transactions were recorded Saturday before Mother's Day. Questioned if any traffic study was done on Cinemagic Way since 2019? Where will the traffic go? 60 % of the traffic comes from Manchester and U-turns at Mc Donalds would be a nightmare. When Cinemagic Way will experience 200 cars at a time for the next major movie release, the median will be an issue.
- JR Hoell (State Representative/Genesis Systems, LLC) is the owner of the vacant lot next to Carrington Farms. Concerned about the median and with truck traffic turns around the roundabout (thinks that the roundabout is too small). Most businesses are not pedestrian generators. Is it possible to construct only one sidewalk? Also thinks that the cinema serves a lot of traffic and should have a

median opening.

- Michelle Canning (Pro Technologies) is concerned about the property access and the project taking parking. Location serves as hub for their fleet, and this would create access issues for them. This would be a signed death warrant for business.
- Bud Paquette (Paquette Pools & Spas) mentioned there are a lot of tractor trailers accessing the property, agrees with the 5-lane design and thinks more lights are required along the corridor. Has concerns with the roundabout.
- Denise Sepessy (lives on Francis Avenue and works at Enterprise) is concerned with the median island maintenance, and with the impacts of Route 3 widening. Thinks that if no left turns are allowed on Route 3, more traffic will be diverted to Alice Ave.
- Jessica Frail (resident on Route 3) agrees with most of the project. Questioned whether older traffic projections have proven realistic? Questioned whether residents and business owners can vote for the preferred alternative. Can improvements to the signalized intersections be considered as a compromise to widening the entire corridor? Can the project team put up another survey?
- Paquette Pools & Spas mentioned that no business owners are in favor of the median island. Requested that the working group includes business owners and residents, concerned with how trucks would navigate roundabouts.
- Alice Manville (resident on Alice Avenue) mentioned that speeds north of exit 9 are a big issue, the speed limit is 30 -35 and the vehicles travel at 50 mph. Concerned with U-turns at Alice Avenue and the speeds that may be encouraged by the 5-lane alternative.
- Tim Sherhan (resident of Granite Hills) opposes widening Route 3 and the roundabout, Town should figure out a way for maintaining traffic on I-93.
- Gale Brown questioned how the project will improve access from Embassy Ave, expressed that nobody in the room received the online survey.
- Dave Smith (NHDOT Project Manager) noted the project history and that the project has progressed through working group meetings and is trying to balance the concerns expressed in the previous online survey with the impacts. The Department is not trying to force a project onto the community. The intent is to find a solution that balances safety, congestion, and business impact. Roundabouts throughout the State are effective but something to get used to.
- Resident questioned why the signals were not fixed?
- Resident on Embassy Ave concerned with access to/from Route 3.
- Ann Smith (resident on Elmer Avenue) concerned with access to Urgent Care from Alice Ave, agrees with one sidewalk. Concerned with the traffic entering the roundabout from Mammoth Rd. Also concerned with widening the corridor and thinks that traffic to the north will get worse.
- Allyson Bodell (resident on Mammoth Road) concerned with tremendously increased traffic, trucks move fast, and she can't get out of the drive. U-turns at Mc Donalds are a concern. The lane drop north of Shaw's is also a concern.
- Gary Weber (resident for past 5 years) commented that businesses are the heart of Hooksett, and that the roundabout would increase travel time for emergency vehicles. Mentioned that the current median island design would not work.
- Ray Ayotte suggested another meeting to share all thoughts.
- Resident of the Stone House (1253 Hooksett Rd) doesn't think that a fix is needed, concerned with the median and would support a 5-lane section without a median.
- Marlene Osborne concerned with the cost of construction, said no pedestrians are present on the corridor. Is the project as proposed worth the construction cost and 3 years of chaos of construction?

Suggested to try minor improvements first.

- Mark Cusson suggested to move the roundabout to Shaw's, remove the traffic light at K-Mart that is not needed and to widen the road to 2 lanes in each direction north of Shaw's. He would like to be part of the working group.
- The Department appreciated the comments from public. Stated that the project team will analyze the comments received, suggest a path forward and present a revised approach at a future public meeting. The project team will consider adding business owners to the working group.

Meeting adjourned.