

## Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A)

### Meeting Summary

**Event:** Project Advisory Committee Meeting (PAC) #6

**Date and Time:** Thursday, August 10, 2023, 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Location:** The Seashell Complex, 180 Ocean Boulevard, Hampton, NH

### 1. Attendees

#### PAC Members

Johanna Lyons, NH Division of Parks and Recreation  
Nancy Stiles, Chairman, Hampton Beach Area Commission  
Jen Hale, Hampton Department of Public Works  
Dave Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission  
Jay Diener, Hampton Conservation Commission  
Alex Reno, Chief, Hampton Police Department  
Mike Edgar, NH State Representative  
Betty Moore, Hampton Historical Society  
Lynn Larsen, Hampton Beach Resident  
Senator Debra Altschiller, Senate District 24  
Jamie Sullivan, Town of Hampton

#### New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)

Tobey Reynolds, PE, Project Manager  
Anthony King, PE, Senior Design Engineer

#### Consultant Team

Roch Laroche, PE, HDR  
Kevin Slattery, HDR  
Keith Cota, PE, HDR  
Audrey Beaulac, PE, HDR  
Debbie Finnigan, PE PTOE, HDR  
Marcy Miller, FHI Studio  
Leah Beckett, FHI Studio

#### Public

James E Paer, Hampton Police  
Stephen Blanche  
John Gebhart  
Linda Gebhard  
Pat Bushway  
Patrick Cocoran  
Bob Preston, Hampton Beach Area Commission

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### 2. Presentation and Discussion

NHDOT hosted the sixth PAC meeting for the Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A) Project on Thursday, August 10, 2023, from 4:00 – 5:30 PM at The Seashell Complex, 180 Ocean Boulevard, Hampton, New Hampshire. Tobey Reynolds, NHDOT's Project Manager, welcomed the PAC members. He said that the last meeting, held in November 2022, focused on the revised intersection options. Mr. Reynolds discussed the agenda which included:

- 1) Welcome / Introductions
- 2) Project Recap
- 3) Natural & Cultural Resources Update
- 4) PAC Meeting #5 (11/17/2022) Review
- 5) Public Open House (2/25/2023) Review and Feedback
- 6) Alternatives Update
  - a. State Park Dr Intersection
  - b. Highland Ave to Boars Head
  - c. Dumas Ave to Winnacunnet Rd
- 7) Next Steps

Roch Larochelle, of HDR, introduced the key project members from NHDOT, HDR, and FHI Studio and provided a recap of recent work since the last PAC meeting. He outlined the PAC, public, and agency meetings that have occurred since the inception of the project. Currently, the development process is at the development and analysis of the reasonable range of alternatives. He noted the project is separated into three segments totaling 3.3 miles in length. He discussed natural resources noting that the team is still discussing the 6(f) boundary limits for Hampton Beach State Park. He added that there will be a Cultural Resources coordination meeting in September 2023.

Mr. Larochelle provided a summary of the February 2023 public open house. He noted 136 members of the public signed in and the team received nearly 100 written comments. He provided an overview of the questionnaire feedback and he summarized the feedback that came via the comments.

Audrey Beaulac, of HDR, next presented the alternative design options. She first discussed State Park Road. (Option 1): One Lane Roundabout (Ashworth Avenue U-turn Maintained). She noted this alternative provides for a roundabout, while maintaining the Ashworth Avenue U-turn. This concept provides good pedestrian crossing opportunities at the roundabout while removing left-turn conflict points at Ocean Boulevard southbound to Epping Avenue with Ocean Boulevard. northbound to Harbor Road.

Ms. Beaulac next discussed State Park Road (Option 2): Unsignalized (Ashworth Avenue U-Turn Maintained), beginning with parking and pedestrian crossing and movements. Jen Hale, of the Hampton Department of Public Works, asked about trailer access and parking. Ms. Beaulac answered that trailers currently use the grass area between NH Route 1A and Old Ocean Boulevard. She added information on how trailers would cycle through to park in this option which includes leaving the State Pier, getting

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back on Route 1A north and turning left onto Harbor Road and Old Ocean Boulevard to park. Ms. Hale stated that this design would function for passenger cars but might be challenging for trailers. Old Ocean Boulevard will have two lanes of traffic. Ms. Hale asked more questions about whether U-turns would be attempted around the southern end of the proposed raised median island by Harbor Road by drivers trying to access the Ocean Boulevard NB. Ms. Beaulac responded that it might be possible if congestion is minimal and that the geometry would be reviewed to discourage such movements.

Ms. Beaulac next presented the Refined Corridor Options for the section between Route 101 East (Highland Avenue) and Route 101 West (Church Street). The prior recommended corridor option presented had seawall parking throughout with adjacent travel lanes for cars, bikes, and pedestrians. She noted the team is now offering an alternative (hybrid) for limited seawall parking only between Highland Avenue and Church Street with the remainder being center parking between Church Street and Boars Head. She noted operational benefits for the traffic signal controls at Church Street and Highland Avenue as well as the improvements to pedestrian crossings between Church Street and Highland Avenue. The left turn and southbound queues would be shorter in these alternatives with the parking lot exit to the north of the Church Street intersection. Reverse direction capabilities would be available through the southern end of the center parking area just north of Church Street.

Police Chief Alex Reno expressed concern that a single lane heading northbound from Church Street would be problematic in the event of an emergency evacuation. Chief Reno said he supports three lanes of traffic but feels it should be easier to get out of town than into it. Several attendees suggested that bike lanes (and shoulders) could be used as emergency evacuation travel lanes.

Nancy Stiles, of the Hampton Beach Area Commission, said Ocean Boulevard to Boars Head needs views and that seawall parking will limit the views of the ocean and noted her strong opposition to the parking area shift. Mr. Reynolds answered that the team has heard this concern from several PAC members. He added that while most of the comments the team has received on this were against shifting seawall parking, some members of the PAC and public supported it. He added that people are also less likely to cut through the parking lot with the seawall parking concept. He said this alternative will function well from a traffic perspective. While center parking would offer a safer mid-block crossing compared to crossing four traffic lanes, it could potentially create conflicts for pedestrians. This design reflects the removal of some phases of traffic signals to improve congestion including the removal of the parking lot exit from the signal. Ms. Hale and Representative Mike Edgar both expressed their support for beachside parking as a safer alternative for pedestrians going to and coming from the beach.

Ms. Beaulac next presented a second alternative for center parking between Highland Avenue, Church Street and Boars Head Avenue. This option provides egress and access that optimizes traffic signal operations and results in south to north traffic flow from Highland Avenue to a point centered between Highland Avenue and Church Street and north to south traffic flow from the same point and north to Church Street. A raised pedestrian crossing median would be provided in the middle of the parking area to limit through vehicle access. A community public attendee expressed concern this this layout as it would create multiple loops around the area to drive each parking lot looking for a place to park.

A member of the public asked why the parking entrance at Church Street an exit was not also. Ms. Beaulac answered that this would require another signal head and phase in the Church Street signal system and therefore result in more delays. Debbie Finnigan, of HDR, also noted this additional signal

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head would face the same direction as the signal heads for Ocean Boulevard northbound and would create some confusion for vehicles traveling north through the parking area and on Ocean Boulevard as they may look at the wrong signal head. A member of the public asked if a smaller space in the center parking lot could be reutilized as motorcycle parking. Keith Cota, of HDR, discussed the concept of maximizing efficiency to get into and out of the lot, as well as coordinating traffic access and maintaining priority traffic management at the signals. He explained that this design works well for pedestrian crossing movements because there are two separate sections of pedestrian crossings (staged crossing), with shorter crossing times for each leg. Ms. Stiles thanked the engineers for this option, as it is a way to make the beach more visually accessible to the public.

Ms. Beaulac proceeded to present two alternative layouts between Dumas Avenue and Winnacunnet Road. One option provides for adjacent travel lanes separated from the parking lot by a retaining wall and median. The second option provides for separated travel lanes split by a retaining wall and median. The parking lot in the second option would be adjacent to the northbound travel lane against the seawall. The retaining wall in both options would replace the paved slope that exists between the travel lanes now. The first option with the separated parking area would allow for head in parking as the bike lane would be adjacent to the travel lanes and away from the parking area providing improved safety as vehicles back out of the parking spaces.

A member of the public asked if residents staying in houses near the proposed retaining wall would be able to cross the retaining wall and guardrail. The answer was yes, there would be pedestrian access meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) criteria for access (ramp and optional stairs) to the beach through the retaining wall.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

### 3. Attachment (presentation)