

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

### Meeting Summary

**Event: Project Advisory Committee Meeting (PAC) #4**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, October 25, 2022, 4:00 – 6:00 PM**

**Location: Hampton Town Hall, Hampton, NH**

#### 1. Attendees

##### PAC Members

Johanna Lyons, NH Division of Parks and Recreation  
Seth McNally, NH Seacoast Greenway  
Betty Moore, Hampton Historical Society  
Nancy Stiles, Chairman, Hampton Beach Area Commission  
Jen Hale, Hampton Department of Public Works  
Dave Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission  
David Hobbs, Chief, Hampton Police  
Michael McMahan, Chief, Hampton Fire  
Meredith Collins, NH Division of Parks and Recreation  
Lynn Larsen, Resident  
John Nyhan, Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cathy Silver, Resident

##### Members of the Public

Marylin Morgenthau, Resident  
Sue Vermette, Resident

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

Tobey Reynolds, PE, Project Manager  
Anthony King, PE, Senior Design Engineer  
Trent Zanes, PE, Roadway Section Group Leader

##### Consultant Team

Roch Larochelle, PE, Consultant Team Project Manager, HDR  
Keith Cota, PE, HDR  
Audrey Beaulac, PE, HDR  
Debbie Finnigan, PE PTOE, HDR  
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, FHI Studio  
Marcy Miller, FHI Studio

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### 2. Presentation and Discussion

NHDOT hosted the fourth PAC meeting for the Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A) Project on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at the Board of Selectmen’s Meeting Room at Hampton Town Hall, 100 Winnacunnet Road, Hampton, New Hampshire. Tobey Reynolds, NHDOT’s Project Manager, welcomed the PAC members and introduced the project team members. Mr. Reynolds reviewed the agenda and provided a short recap of the team’s efforts since the last PAC meeting in May 2022. He explained that at the May 2022 meeting the team introduced several corridor options, noting advantages and disadvantages of each. He provided an overview of the study area limits noting that that project is divided into three segments, each about one mile in length. He also provided an overview of the project purpose, need, and goals.

Mr. Reynolds next discussed the goals of this meeting. He said the team would provide an update on data collection efforts for natural and cultural resources, discuss the refined corridor options, and present information on intersection options. He stated that the team is interested in receiving feedback from the PAC on the presentation materials.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, of FHI Studio, discussed cultural resource coordination. In particular, she described a December 2021 site walk with the NH Division of Historical Resources and consulting parties. She said the team completed a site walk memo in May 2022 and completed a Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment. She reviewed the identified properties that could warrant further evaluation if they would be impacted by the corridor improvements. She stated that the project team will do additional documentation if it appears that an alternative will affect one of the properties.

Ms. Dyer-Carroll next discussed the parkland in the study area, noting that Hampton Beach State Park is a Section 6(f) property (having prior use of federal funds). She explained that the Section 6(f) boundary along the project corridor is unclear; the team has submitted a proposed Section 6(f) boundary to the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation. There will be continued coordination with the U.S. National Park Service on this. John Nyhan, with the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce, questioned how the Section 6(f) boundary is determined. Ms. Dyer-Carroll answered that the mapping of the State parks in 1980s documentation is not entirely clear. Johanna Lyons, with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation, stated that the Hampton State Park boundary extends from the Hampton Harbor Bridge up to Boars Head. There was additional discussion on whether the area to the low-tide mark is owned by NH Division of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Roch Larochelle of HDR then took over the presentation.

Mr. Larochelle described the corridor options development process, noting that the team presented three options at the May 2022 meeting. Option 1 is a No Build option, Option 2 includes continuous bike lanes all through the corridor, and Option 3 is a separated bike path. He stated that he would not be discussing Option 1 (No Build) during the meeting even though it will be carried forward in the NEPA documentation.

During Mr. Larochelle’s recap for Segment 1, Nancy Stiles, with the Hampton Beach Area Commission, questioned the meaning of the hatch marks on the cross sections. Mr. Larochelle explained the hatch mark represents a four-foot shoulder. Jen Hale, with the Hampton Department of Public Works, stated that visitors currently park there now, and it is not a formally designed parking area. Others questioned

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whether the westerly shoulder would be better served as a wider pedestrian walkway. Mr. Larochelle stated that the shoulder would be used for snow storage and drainage flows. He added that under Option 2 for Segment a seven-foot sidewalk is accommodated with a four-foot landscaped buffer.

During Mr. Larochelle's recap of Segment 2, Betty Moore, with the Hampton Historical Society, asked how wide the bike lanes are proposed to be in Option 2. Mr. Larochelle explained that under Option 2 the bike shoulder would be seven feet adjacent to the on-street parallel parking. Under Option 3 for a separate, two-way bike facility, it would be five feet in each direction for a total width of ten feet. Jay Diener, with the Hampton Conservation Commission, asked about the impact on traffic from reducing to one lane in each direction. Mr. Larochelle explained that two lanes is needed for northbound traffic flow due to the number of conflict points and entering and exiting traffic. Less than two lanes will cause excessive backup. Under Option 3 in Segment 2, a PAC member stressed the importance of separating bicyclists from pedestrians. Mr. Larochelle acknowledged that conflicts will be an issue with beach pedestrian traffic crossing the dedicated bike lanes which can cause safety concerns.

Mr. Larochelle provided a summary of Segment 3. He noted that Option 3 with the dedicated separate bike path would likely reduce the sidewalk width from ten feet to six feet. He presented a summary matrix of the initial corridor review and concluded that Option 1 (No Build) does not meet the project purpose and need. The project team recommends that Option 2, with two alternatives, move forward through the corridor analysis. The general difference between the two alternatives is where the parking is located for Segment 1 Ashworth Avenue to Boars Head, either in the center of the corridor or next to the seawall. Option 3 would have greater Section 6(f) and business impacts, as well as reduced sidewalk widths and operational safety issues between the bike lanes and pedestrian crossings.

Mr. Larochelle next presented the refined corridor options. Discussion on the refined options is described below.

### *Dover Avenue to Haverhill Avenue*

Lynn Larson, a Hampton resident, asked if there would be continuous bike lanes down to the bridge. Mr. Larochelle confirmed that this is correct. Ms. Lyons asked for more information on parking. Mr. Reynolds answered that the team is comfortable that the number of parking spaces can increase to a total of 41 spaces from 39 existing, but this will need to be reviewed as final design is completed. This is proof of concept, and there will be refinements based on comments. He added that some current parking spaces are only 7.5-feet-wide. This concept assumes all future spaces will be the standard eight feet wide. Keith Cota, of HDR, added that the team will also assess through a review of parking standards, how many and where to accommodate handicap spaces, so dimensions may shift slightly as well as the final count of overall spaces. Ms. Hale asked if there will be an opportunity to review crosswalk locations. Mr. Larochelle answered yes, in the next refinement in the design phase.

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### *Haverhill Avenue to I Street*

Mr. Larochelle said that the parking spaces, shown in orange, would mimic the existing parking layout. The typical section will consist of a two-foot west side shoulder, two ten-foot-wide northbound travel lanes adjacent to a seven-foot bike lane and the parallel parking. A minimum eight-foot sidewalk will be accommodated on both sides of the roadway. Here, the team is looking to balance the needs of businesses and beach users. He stressed that this project is slightly different than many NHDOT projects, in that the sole purpose is not simply to move traffic. Ms. Larson suggested considering accommodations for additional bicycle parking.

### *I Street to D Street*

Mr. Larochelle explained that this section incorporates the same two ten-foot travel lanes and seven-foot bike lane adjacent to parallel parking and five feet adjacent to the westerly sidewalk with the incorporation of a flex zone area which provides a westerly pavement width (eight- to ten-feet-wide) for business loading and unloading from I Street to F Street. This flex zone will reduce the westerly sidewalk to a minimum width of five feet along the Casino Ballroom complex. Additionally, in front of the Casino Ballroom, there is no parallel parking along the eastern side of the roadway and the bike lane is reduced to five feet wide. He noted that the team could consider different treatments here with adjustments to the flex zone. Cathy Silver, a Hampton resident, said that the town puts up fences here in the summer that drastically reduce the width of the sidewalk. Ms. Hale stated that analysis of this section will find the five-foot sidewalk may be too narrow and noted that the walkway within the Casino complex is not a public walkway. Mr. Larochelle answered that while the fencing works to prevent unmarked mid-block pedestrian crossings, there may be other items, such as planters, that can be considered but may require adjustments to the corridor widths. Mr. Larochelle said that the public sidewalk in front of the casino is currently five feet wide. He added that the team does not want to encourage cars in the flex zone. The goal is to bring speeds down in this section of roadway. He agreed that the team can re-evaluate the typical section in this area.

### *D Street to A Street*

Mr. Larochelle stated that this section would have two northbound travel lanes, provide a five-foot bikeway and easterly parking with anticipation of maintaining the same number of parking spaces. He added that there is a wide sidewalk along the seawall (up to 24 feet) that can be maintained. The westerly side will accommodate the flex zone that consists of a ten-foot loading/unloading zone and a five-foot sidewalk. Fire Chief Mike McMahon suggested the proposed five-foot sidewalk on the business side is too narrow. Mr. McNally expressed concern for the risk exposure to the bikers with the opened area between traffic and parking maneuvers. He inquired as to whether some protective bicycle lane can be provided. Mr. Larochelle answered that there may be extra room along the diagonal parking zone to consider a roadway shift to provide additional sidewalk width and a raised median between the bike lane and the parking area. There was discussion that the flex space is poorly defined, and planters to control pedestrian crossing locations probably would not be suitable for this space. Mr. Larochelle answered that the team will reconsider the use of the flex zone and review options that may allow for wider sidewalks along the westerly side, a dedicated zone that can provide pedestrian control barriers (either permanently or seasonally installed) and alternatives to minimize bikeway conflicts which can be presented at a future meeting. Mr. Larochelle said that the PAC was welcome to submit ideas as well, with the goal to control pedestrian traffic and crossing. Ms. Lyons stated that any pedestrian barrier has a width and that the space must come from somewhere.

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Ms. Hale suggested that a permanent barrier should be considered where the road widens at A Street. A PAC member questioned placing the barrier on the bike lane side. Mr. Larochelle answered that this would not provide the same safety benefit for pedestrians, especially families, but that it could reduce bicycle conflicts with parked cars. Ms. Lyons suggested that some of the flex zone areas serve as pedestrian zones and that the loading zones could be placed on the lettered streets. Mr. Reynolds answered that the team can consider this as well as potentially recommending limiting deliveries to certain times of the day. Mr. Nyhan added that the businesses have and will continue to be respectful. The deliveries that are harder to limit are Amazon Prime, UPS, etc.

Police Chief David Hobbs suggested consolidating the parking in a structure and giving the current space to people walking, bicycling, and shopping. Ms. Hale suggested the team consider setting limitations on how parked cars can exit spaces. Mr. Larochelle answered that the team will look at alternate concepts.

### *Highland Avenue to Church Street*

Mr. Larochelle explained that there are two alternatives proposed through this area. Alternative 1 would move the parking to along the seawall and Alternative 2 would maintain parking in the center between the northbound and southbound lanes. Alternative 1 proposes to add approximately 11 extra parking spaces, and Alternative 2 proposes to eliminate approximately three parking spaces compared to existing conditions. In both alternatives, the seaside sidewalk width would be maintained (approximately nine to ten feet in width), two northbound lanes and one southbound lane (ten feet wide in Alternative 1 and nine feet wide in Alternative 2) are proposed along with five-foot bikeways and an eight-foot-wide westerly sidewalk in Alternative 1 and a five-foot wide westerly sidewalk in Alternative 2.

Ms. Stiles suggested reviewing the Hampton Beach Area Master Plan, noting that in it 110 people spoke against the seawall parking, largely because it reduces the view of the ocean while driving northbound along Ocean Boulevard. Mr. Nyhan said one advantage of the seawall parking is its proximity to the beach and safety benefits for pedestrian crossing points. He added the importance of considering the opinions of visitors coming to the beach, not just the people who live across the street. Chief McMahan said that he and Chief Hobbs think that moving parking to the east is a safer option. Mr. Reynolds noted that the project will bring the two alternatives forward to allow for public input on the options as a decision is formed.

### *Church Street to Boars Head*

Mr. Larochelle stated that this section is an extension of the Highland Avenue to Church Street section with two alternatives proposed in this area: Alternative 1 would move the parking to along the seawall and Alternative 2 would maintain parking in the center between the northbound and southbound lanes. Alternative 1 proposes to add approximately eight extra spaces, and Alternative 2 proposes to eliminate approximately seven spaces. In Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, there would be five-to-seven-foot bike lanes and eight-to-ten-foot sidewalks in each direction, similar to the prior section.

Mr. Diener suggested that there is substantial ocean splash over in this area which might pose a concern for the seawall parking alternative. Mr. Reynolds responded that it may be easier to close the parking lot if needed rather than to close the roadway. Chief Hobbs said that moving parking would keep the water out of the travel way. Seth McNally, with the NH Seacoast Greenway, said that it's best to separate

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bicyclists from cars. Ms. Larson said she hates the idea of blocking the view of the beach with the parking lot and asked if there could be an elevated walkway. Ms. Silver said that people like to see the water.

### *Boars Head to Dumas Avenue*

Mr. Larochelle stated that this area is more constrained due to the narrower right-of-way. He explained that in this section it is proposed to reduce the northbound and southbound barrels to one lane each (ten-foot wide) with a five-foot bikeway and sidewalks with the inclusion of a ten-foot raised median island. Consideration of a roundabout at Dumas Avenue will provide opportunity for access management in this area. Mr. Larochelle noted that there is no parking there now and none is proposed. Mr. McNally said the design should try to separate the bikes from the cars on the curve because it's dangerous.

### *Dumas Avenue to Winnacunnet Road*

Mr. Larochelle stated that this section has the complications of elevation between the northbound and southbound travel ways. He noted that there are two alternative approaches proposed in this area, both of which reduce the travel way to a single lane each direction. Alternative 1 proposes diagonal head in parking along the seawall and Alternative 2 proposes parallel parking along both sides of the roadway. Alternative 1 proposes a reduction in parking spaces of approximately 16 spaces, and Alternative 2 proposes a reduction in parking spaces of approximately 38 spaces over the existing available spaces in this section. In both alternatives, there would be five-foot bike lanes and a sidewalk (five to eight feet wide on west side and ten feet on the east side) in each direction. Both alternatives would provide a wider median to accommodate the elevation adjustments between the two travel ways and would allow for consideration of pedestrian ramps for roadway crossings.

Mr. McNally suggested a median separation between the parking and travel way in Alternative 1 with a single entrance to the parking, similar to that proposed north of Winnacunnet Road. Drivers would enter one area and leave in another area. Mr. Larochelle stated that the team will consider it. Mr. Cota discussed some of the challenges in this area with the elevation adjustments. An attendee asked if drivers can parallel park on both sides of a one-way road. Mr. Larochelle answered that in the existing condition there is parallel parking along both sides of each travel way direction. In Alternative 2, median side parallel parking for both the northbound and southbound directions is not proposed. Ms. Larson said that the bike lane along the west side may be obstructed due to the residents who live here, who would have to back out through the parking area and the bike lane under Alternative 2. Another PAC member stated that the seawall parking would also be problematic for local residents who park there during storm events that result in back flooding along the tidal wetlands because spray over the seawall could damage the vehicles. This may leave them no option for localized parking during flood events. Another PAC member suggested moving the bike lane to the seawall side of the beach side parking to provide separation between bicycles and the vehicular traffic.

### *Winnacunnet Road to 5<sup>th</sup> Street*

Mr. Larochelle said that the one alternative proposed in this area would maintain one 11-foot travel lane in each direction adjacent to a five-foot bike lane and would accommodate a five-foot sidewalk on the west side and provide separated angled parking toward the seawall while maintaining the ten-foot-wide existing sidewalk adjacent to the seawall. This parking arrangement proposes to add four parking spaces over the current configuration.

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### *5<sup>th</sup> Street to High Street*

Mr. Larochelle noted that this area is more constrained due to a narrower right-of-way width. He said within this section a single 11-foot wide northbound and southbound lane will be accommodated with a seven-foot-wide southbound bike lane, five-foot-wide westerly sidewalk, and street access diagonal parking along the seawall with a five-foot dedicated lane for bikes. The existing ten-foot walkway along the seawall will be maintained. The northbound bike lanes would not have barrier-separation from the vehicular and parking traffic.

Mr. Larochelle stated that the proposed parking in this area would be reduced by 23 spaces to allow for pedestrian crossings through the diagonal parking. He noted one option was to consider rear-end parking instead of head-in parking for this parking arrangement. He discussed the benefits and challenges of rear-in angle parking and noted that it will allow for safer exiting of the diagonal parking with an improved view of traffic and bicycles. Mr. McNally said this is preferable to wide open spaces with no pavement markings. Ms. Silver noted that residents may object to the headlights shining into their houses when drivers back into spaces. Ms. Larson said that this may work better between Dumas Avenue and Winnacunnet Road because the roadway is wider.

### 3. Next Steps

Because of time constraints, Mr. Larochelle stated that the team would plan another PAC meeting in November 2022 to discuss the intersection options. He encouraged the PAC to review the options and come to the meeting with questions. He said that the project team will revisit the schedule and likely plan a public meeting in December 2022 or January 2023. Ms. Stiles stated many permanent residents may not be here in the middle of winter. She asked how much of the \$9 million had been spent. Mr. Reynolds said that he could provide that information.

### 4. Attachment (presentation)