

## Meeting Summary

**Event: Public Information Meeting (Public Meeting #3)**

**Date and Time: Tuesday March 5, 2024 5:30 - 8:30 PM**

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

### 1. Attendees

#### Members of the Public

153 members of the public signed in including several Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members:

- Johanna Lyons, NH Division of Parks and Recreation
- Michael McMahon, Chief, Hampton Fire
- Lynn Larsen, Hampton Beach resident
- Chuck Rage, Village District Commission
- Jamie Sullivan, Hampton Town Manager
- Jen Hale, Hampton Department of Public Works
- Nancy Stiles, Hampton Beach Area Commission
- Mike Edgar, House District 21
- Cathy Silver, Hampton Beach resident
- Jay Diener, Hampton Conservation and Commission

#### Project Team

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)

William Cass, PE, Commissioner

Tobey Reynolds, PE, Project Manager

Loretta Girard Doughty PE, Project Manager

Trent Zanes, PE, Roadway Section Group Leader

Anthony King, PE, Senior Design Engineer

Dan Prehemo, PE, Roadway Section

#### Consultant Team

Roch Larochelle, PE, Consultant Team Project Manager, HDR

Keith Cota, PE, HDR

Audrey Beaulac, PE, HDR

Debbie Finnigan, PE, HDR

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, AICP, FHI Studio

Marcy Miller, AICP, FHI Studio

### 2. Meeting Format

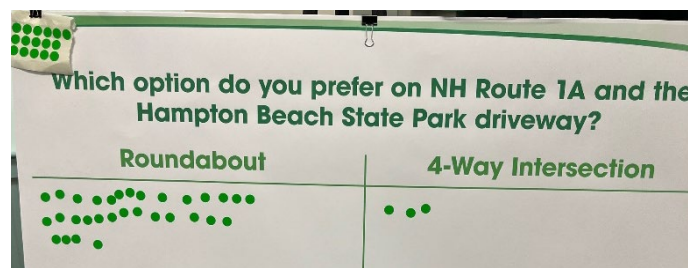
The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) hosted a Public Information Meeting for the Hampton 40797 Ocean Boulevard (NH Route 1A) Project on Tuesday March 5, 2024, from 5:30 –

8:30 PM at The Seashell Complex at 180 Ocean Boulevard, Hampton, NH. The meeting was attended by over 153 members of the public. Twelve members of the project team participated in the meeting.

### 3. Open House

There were boards around the room which displayed information and/or questions on the following:

- The proposed engineering improvements along the entire corridor;
- Visualizations of current conditions and proposed improvements at select locations along Ocean Boulevard including:
  - O Street,
  - M Street,
  - B Street,
  - Highland Avenue,
  - South of Boar's Head,
  - Boar's Head, and
  - North of Dumas Avenue.
- Preference on improvements at the NH Route 1A & Hampton Beach State Park Driveway (31 attendees prefer a roundabout, three (3) attendees prefer an unsignalized intersection)
- Project Schedule, Next Steps, Stay Involved



The boards of the proposed engineering improvements and presentation are available online at <https://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/hampton40797/>.

### 4. Presentation

Tobey Reynolds, of NHDOT, welcomed the attendees. He noted that the meeting turnout was higher than expected. He said that there will be another public informational meeting in late spring/early summer 2024 and the team will investigate hosting it in a larger meeting space. He stated that NHDOT recently applied for a federal RAISE discretionary grant to fund some of the project construction. He said that, if awarded, the grant will have clear timeframes for the allocation of the funds. NHDOT will find out in June 2024 if they are awarded the grant. The goal is to keep the planning and design process moving forward.

T. Reynolds said that NHDOT is managing and leading the work because it is located on a state route but this project was requested by the community for the community. He introduced Loretta Girard Doughty of NHDOT, who will assume his role as Project Manager moving forward. He described the role of the PAC.

Roch Larochelle, of HDR, next introduced the key project team members. 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 provided a summary of recent work and the project development progress since February 2023. He provided an overview of the public feedback received during and shortly after the February 2023 public open house, which 136 members of the public attended. There were dozens of verbal comments and 63 written comments submitted during the meeting, and several more emailed to the team in the weeks after the meeting.

R. Larochelle provided an update on natural and cultural resources. He displayed the draft 4(f) boundaries as well as the 6(f) properties, including the Hampton State Pier property and Hampton Beach State Park area. He added that the potential National Register eligibility of the Casino and a historic district on Ocean Boulevard are being investigated.

Audrey Beulac, of HDR, next presented an alternatives update. She stated that the alternatives are similar to what was presented a year ago, with some changes. She began with the southernmost portion of the corridor, noting that the Seabrook Hampton Bridge project went to bid, and construction will begin soon.

### *State Park Road to Ashworth Avenue*

A. Beulac discussed a roundabout option at the State Park driveway noting that it would reduce congestion and provide safer pedestrian crossings because distances to cross are shorter, and the traffic moves more slowly through a roundabout. The biggest difference between the roundabout and the four-way intersection option, also presented, is the increased pedestrian safety for the roundabout option.

### *Ashworth Avenue to Haverhill Avenue*

A. Beulac discussed adding a northbound bike lane, maintaining two lanes of traffic, and formalizing parallel parking along the right side where possible. She discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard at O Street, noting the pedestrian bump outs at crosswalks.

### *Haverhill Avenue to I Street*

A. Beulac stated that the parking spaces, shown in orange, would mimic the existing parking layout. The typical section would consist of a two-foot west side shoulder, two ten-foot-wide northbound travel lanes adjacent to a seven-foot-wide bike lane and an eight-foot-wide parallel parking lane. Eight-foot sidewalks are proposed along both sides of the roadway. She discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard at M Street, noting the pedestrian bump outs at crosswalks.

### *I Street to D Street*

A. Beulac stated that the current concept proposes permanent fences as pedestrian barriers, however the final barrier type is still to be determined. She noted by widening the sidewalk to approximately 10 feet, it would become a safer travel space for pedestrians. There is an eight-foot parallel parking lane proposed along this section of Ocean Boulevard as well.

### *D Street to Ashworth Avenue (North)*

A. Beulac stated that there would be two northbound travel lanes and a bike lane along this segment. The existing 90-degree head in parking is proposed to be revised to be 45-degree head in parking to reduce the required backout lane width and to provide a widened western sidewalk. The proposed option also provides a raised separation island between the 45-degree parking and the northbound travel lanes. The western sidewalk in this area varies in width from XX-feet to 16-feet-wide. She presented the option to install a permanent pedestrian barrier (e.g., fence, landscaping, etc.) along this segment to prevent pedestrians crossing at unmarked locations. She noted the final barrier type is still to be determined. She discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard at B Street.

### *Ashworth Avenue (North) to Church Street*

The option presented proposes two northbound travel lanes and two southbound travel lanes, with center angled parking. The Highland Avenue and Church Street intersections would be signalized and the entrance and exit to the center parking lot between the intersections would be moved away from the intersections and would provide access and egress to the lot off the Ocean Boulevard travel lanes instead. A. Beaulac discussed a visualization showing potential improvements at the Highland Avenue intersection.

### *Church Street to Boar's Head*

A. Beaulac stated that the proposed layout in this area includes keeping the existing center parking but adjusting the spaces near the exits to improve sight distances. There would be a reduction in the number of crossovers, or U-turns. The proposed option along this segment includes northbound and southbound bike lanes and sidewalks along both sides of the roadway. In this area, there would only be one northbound travel lane. The second lane is not required for capacity. There would be two southbound travel lanes. She discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard just south of Boar's Head, noting the type of barrier shown between the parking area and travels has not been finalized.

### *Boars Head to Dumas Avenue*

This segment presents a single travel lane proposed in each direction, a raised median with shoulders between the median and travel lanes and bike lanes and sidewalks in each direction. A. Beaulac discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard through Boar's Head.

### *Dumas Avenue to Winnacunnet Road*

This segment presents one travel lane and one bike lane in each direction located where the existing southbound travel lanes are. The median parking would be moved to a parking area where the existing northbound travel lanes are, adjacent to the seawall. A. Beaulac noted pedestrians would not have to cross vehicular traffic to get to-and-from the beach. There would be a small retaining wall, with ADA compliant pedestrian ramps, to manage the grade differential. A. Beaulac discussed a visualization showing potential improvements along Ocean Boulevard north of Dumas Avenue.

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

This segment presents a single lane in each direction with northbound and southbound bike lanes and front-in angled parking on the seawall side, separated by a raised median (no need for a retaining wall). There would be formalized sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

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

This segment is a single lane in each direction with bike lanes and front-in angled parking on the seawall side. There would be bike lanes and sidewalks along both sides of the roadway.

A. Beaulac next provided a parking summary, noting a net decrease of 20 spaces throughout the corridor. She added that the largest increase is between Dumas Avenue and Winnacunnet Road. She presented an Ocean Boulevard / Church Street traffic simulation to successfully demonstrate the ability to eliminate one of the northbound lanes north of Church Street. The visualization modeled weekend peak future traffic conditions and assumed all parking spaces were full and left the parking area at the same time. The proposed signal will help mitigate the congestion in this area. Removing access points to the parking lots will also mitigate congestion along the roadway. During emergency evacuations, the northbound

roadway can be converted to two northbound travel lanes, as needed, by utilizing the shoulder and bike lane.

T. Reynolds next discussed the concerns about the recent flooding. He described what this project can and cannot do to minimize water damage and road closures in the future. NHDOT can incorporate features into the project that are reasonably within the Purpose and Need, such as catch basin and manhole improvements. NHDOT can evaluate installing a solid barrier wall but is hesitant to create a bathtub effect on the roadway should water breach the seawall. He noted that the Winnacunnet roundabout can be moved further away from the ocean, making it less susceptible to accumulation of flying debris. Moving the roadway leading into Boar's Head westerly has also been considered.

T. Reynolds presented approximate project costs, noting that the project team is currently at 25-30% design. Segment 1 (State Park Road to Nudd Ave) estimated costs are expected to range between \$10-15 Million, Segment 2 (Nudd Ave to Dumas Ave) costs are expected to range between \$14-18 Million, and Segment 3 (Dumas Ave to High Street) costs are expected to range between \$16-18 million. He said that the current Long-Range Plan allocates \$7.3 million for the project. The RAISE grant, if awarded, can provide an additional \$25 million for the project. NHDOT would likely use that \$30 Million to prioritize Segments 1 and 2. Without the RAISE grant, NHDOT will likely focus funding on Segment 1. He noted the preliminary design and environmental documentation efforts will cover the whole project (all three segments).

T. Reynolds discussed the project schedule and next steps. He stated that there will be another public information meeting in late spring/early summer of 2024 and a public hearing the summer of 2024.

## 5. Group Discussion

### Questions

Q – Will there be loading zones for the businesses between I Street and F Street?

A – There will be no formal loading zones. There are several options for deliveries. There is an option to make the curb mountable for delivery trucks. Deliveries can also be targeted for the early morning hours, which could make the left travel lane available due to low traffic volumes during this time. Side roads would also be an option for unloading.

Q – What can be done for deliveries at Church Street and Boar's Head? The shoulder will be available to guests checking in as well. Who will have the right-of-way?

A – It will be a balance, as there is not unlimited space. The shoulder and bike lane can be used for temporary uses as needed. All users will have access and will have to share the space.

Q – From Little Boar's Head north to just past Winnacunnet Road, does parking make sense near the wall considering the waves that splash over the wall?

A - This parking is similar to the existing parking further north. It is better to have parking close to the seawall, rather than within the roadway. It will also allow for the travel lanes to remain open as less debris would likely reach the northbound lanes as compared to existing conditions.

Q - What is the need to add parking spaces north of Dumas Avenue? Can the single northbound travel lane here handle the traffic?

A – As far as the northbound travel on Ocean Boulevard near Church Street, 50% traffic turns onto Route 101 and 50% continues north on Ocean Boulevard. Thus, one lane can handle the traffic, especially in combination with other planned improvements. With planning and coordination, the bike lane could be converted to a second lane for emergency evacuations.

Q – Will parking be included in the final plan / design?

A - Yes, NHDOT is working to provide parking where parking exists today.

Q – Can NHDOT consider a barrier between the angle in parking and the sidewalk north of Dumas Avenue, as cars often occupy part of the sidewalk space?

A - NHDOT has planned an additional four feet of buffer between the angle in parking and adjacent sidewalk.

Q - There are eight cut throughs between the Ashworth Hotel and Rocky Bend. Removing these will exacerbate congestion as drivers will be stuck behind cars waiting for a parking spot. Would NHDOT reconsider adding some of these back in?

A –NHDOT may reconsider one or two more cut throughs, but not all eight. Each cut through would require the removal of additional parking spaces and with each cut through added there is additional traffic conflict points added reducing the safety and efficiency of the roadway.

Q – Where will all the crosswalks be located? Specifically, will there be a crosswalk between Dumas Avenue and Boar's Head?

A - The exact locations of all crosswalks have not been finalized in the design process yet. If the design continues to be progressed as shown, there would be an opportunity for a crosswalk in this location.

Q - Can additional crosswalks be installed as a traffic calming measure?

A - Possibly, but they need to be installed at locations that pedestrians would be expected to cross at. They should not be installed to solely calm traffic.

Q – Can NHDOT consider texturized and reflective crosswalks?

A - Yes.

Q - Can NHDOT consider raised crosswalks?

A – This is something for NHDOT to discuss as a possibility. Also known as speed tables, these have shown to improve pedestrian safety and act as a traffic calming measure. However, their application needs to be carefully considered. The traffic speed should be relatively low, truck traffic should be very low, they impact the free flow of traffic, and efficient winter maintenance is impacted.

Q - Is it possible to install and paint some of the crosswalks first (e.g. Dumas Avenue)?

A – Possibly. NHDOT will investigate this. *Subsequent to the meeting the Traffic Bureau notified the team that the crosswalks will be painted prior to the fourth of July this year.*

Q – Can NHDOT consider installing flashing pedestrian signals at crosswalks?

A – Yes, but NHDOT must first determine which intersections warrant these lights.

Q – Would NHDOT consider speed humps, particularly north of Winnacunnet Road?



A – Speed humps are an option, though they have not been installed on any other state roads in New Hampshire yet. Additional enforcement will be required to monitor speeds as well.

Q - Will there be traffic calming north of Winnacunnet Road?

A – The roundabout at Winnacunnet Road will slow traffic. North of the roundabout, the roadway will become one lane each direction with a bike lane and a raised curb with a sidewalk. That will make the corridor feel a little tighter and can help reduce speeds. This is a difficult area to slow speeds because the roadway is straight and sight lines are generally good.

Q – Can NHDOT arbitrarily put stop signs in?

A – No, as there are requirements for stop sign installation.

Q – Will there be bike lanes from Winnacunnet Road to 5<sup>th</sup> Street?

A – Yes.

Q - Can bike lanes be used for emergency parking?

A – This has not been discussed yet but could be considered. Currently median parking is used for this.

Q – What can be done to keep bicyclists off the sidewalk?

A – This is typically an enforcement responsibility, but adequate bike lanes and signage will encourage more cyclists to stay off the sidewalks.

Q – How wide will the sidewalks be on the west side near the store fronts?

A – They will be variable (12-18 feet) in width.

Q - Will there be a 7-inch curb at all sidewalks?

A - Yes.

Q – Will the median be raised around the Boar’s Head section of roadway?

A – The area between Boar’s Head and Dumas Avenue will have a raised median.

Q – Will the northbound pavement at the Ocean Boulevard / Church Street intersection be painted when there are improvements?

A - The pavement will have painted lane markings in the proposed improvements.

Q – Has the project team conducted traffic simulations for summer traffic through two roundabouts?

A – The traffic volumes have been reviewed and the roundabouts work with the proposed volumes. Simulations have not been completed yet.

Q – Can NHDOT consider adding other roundabouts (e.g., in the North Beach area) to slow traffic?

A – A roundabout may not be warranted in this location. In addition, there may not be adequate right-of-way to construct a roundabout.

Q – Will it be necessary to move utilities?

A – Yes, there will be some poles that will need to be relocated. The poles that need to be relocated will be identified later in the design process.

Q – Could utilities be placed underground?

A – The NHDOT will not require the utility company to relocate underground. However, if the utility owner or local community wishes to bury aerial facilities, NHDOT will work with them to include it in the contract at their cost.

Q – Are the manholes functional north of Winnacunnet Road?

A – As far as we know, yes. These will be looked at for improvements during the later stages of design and construction.

Q – Stormwater coming onto the road from the beach entrances is a problem and could get worse in areas where there will be a height differential between the road and parking. Has NHDOT considered adding additional storm drains on the road to allow water to flow back out easily?

A – This is a good comment. NHDOT will consider this.

Q – When will the storm damage be cleaned up?

A – This will occur incrementally. It may take a while, as there is a lot of damage.

Q – Can the gully be used for stormwater management?

A – There will be drains in the gulleys. The curb and wall will help with some of the stormwater management. There are limited options to control marsh floods, especially when groundwater is high.

Q – Can NHDOT recreate the jetties at each of the beach entrances? This can make it less likely that the road turns into a river.

A – There have been some studies related to climate change, but NHDOT is unsure jetties were looked at and work beyond the seawall is not in the scope of this project.

Q – How does NHDOT determine which section has higher priority for limited funding? Why is Segment 1 a higher priority than Segments 2 and 3?

A – NHDOT believes that the most benefit can be obtained in Segment 1 because this is the area with the most use and most conflicts.

Q – If the project does not receive full funding, will property taxes go up?

A – No, this project will be federally funded.

Q – When will the Seabrook-Hampton Bridge be under construction and will there be overlap with this project?

A - The bridge will be under construction until June 2028. There may be some overlap, particularly at the Hampton Beach State Park roundabout.

Q – Can you consider the use of speed bumps to slow traffic?

A – Installing speed bumps has not been an acceptable practice on State highways due to hampering winter maintenance. Given this location and the limited winter storm events, NHDOT may consider installing speed tables at crosswalks.

Q – Can you consider putting all-way stop conditions at designated intersections to slow speeds?

A – Installing STOP requires a traffic evaluation and they cannot be installed for traffic calming.



Q – Can you consider crosswalk pavers, rather than painted crosswalks?

A – This can be discussed. The maintenance of sidewalks that do not follow the NHDOT standard would need to be maintained by another entity.

### General Public Comments

- The Ocean Boulevard / Church Street traffic simulation does not seem to represent peak traffic volumes (e.g. Saturdays in summer) or the new hotel.
- There is some support to maintain four travel lanes along the corridor.
- A road diet from four to two lanes will result in traffic congestion and backups. It will also hamper the Seafood Festival dedicated bus access lane.
- There is some support for parallel parking instead of angle-in parking. Angle-in parking requires more time to exit.
- The tow trucks will have a hard time if they cannot cut through the parking lots. They will need to cross at Ross Avenue, and this is where the pedestrian access to the beach is located.
- The improvements will not alleviate speeding.
- Erratic and unsafe moped driver behavior is a problem.
- There are several issues near Boar's Head, including access and driver speeds. The signals at Church Street and Highland Avenue can help this, but reducing the number of travel lanes here is not a good solution.
- The area north of Boar's Head has been long neglected by NHDOT and should not be a lower priority segment.
- Pedestrian flashing signals are needed at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- There is a need for better wayfinding and signage to Route 101.
- There is support for the raised median.
- Drivers may decide to use the bike lane as a travel lane.
- Pedestrian access between Highland Avenue and Church Street is not positioned for high beach/pedestrian access coming from the public parking on the Church property located off Church Street.
- The loss of central parking along NH 1A from Dumas to Winnacunnet Road and shifting the parking to the seawall will affect the residents' ability to park in this location during flooding and storm events. With cars parked near the seawall, it will expose them to wave splash and debris over the seawall.
- The increase in runoff to the marsh due to the highway's new stormwater collection will result in greater backwater flooding.
- Loss of lanes could be a problem during emergency evacuations.
- The reduction in travel lanes could impact the annual road race that has over 1,700 people.

### 6. Written Comments Submitted at Meeting

- Lights at Church – Will that prevent residents of Fuller Acres exiting their street?
- Thought the meeting went great. My one concern is the traffic from 101 onto 1A.

- All southbound lanes need to be double to allow entrances to driveway and space for Amazon delivery vans, issues that are year-round.
- Need a crosswalk at the end of Ross Ave, not the only one in an abstract middle between Highland and Church. Ross is a major walk across between town lot and hotel. Need flashing cross lights at walk cross places. Only 2 car crossings will make traffic worse. Especially at only church and Highland. Cars and foot traffic. Tow trucks down Ross Ave are a problem as well.
- 1) Why isn't there consideration for building parking garages? There are empty lots. This could bring in revenue all year (winter rental spots possible and minimize on-street and 1A space). 2) Suggest more speed limit signs. Should center downtown at 20 mph? Start more 30 mph signs from Boar's to High St. 3) suggest speed bumps at North Beach Ocean Blvd to minimize speeding. Especially if there is no funding to do Segment 3 (North Beach resident). 4) What happens when the NORTH Beach seawall needs to be moved into Ocean Blvd as sea level is rising where ocean is now coming over at high tides. 5) Additional signage to go to 101 @ Winnecunnet Rd could be added for exit and also sign to exit out High St / 27 to get to 101 too. Please don't ignore North Beach issues.
- Crosswalks at stairs at beach entrances-Highland to Church St. Two lanes at Church St. 6 ft turn and straight. Move dump trucks to Ashworth Blvd to get more parking – not necessary next to building-ugly block beach. Non see through barrier /rail on business side – stop rubber necking half dressed people.
- Traffic Jam from Highland Ave. Intersection through Church St. Intersection

My main concern with the new traffic improvements is the addition of traffic lights on Highland Ave. and Church St. I believe this will cause major traffic backup in our area. Right now, traffic flows smoothly. Don't stop the traffic.

By removing the cut throughs in the medians and forcing all of the traffic to the Highland Ave. intersection, including Tow trucks from Dave's Garage, plus having all pedestrians from the neighborhoods, hotels, and parking lots cross at Highland Ave., it's going to get very congested and dangerous. Pedestrians cross every couple of minutes in the summer. The traffic will never move through, and we'll never be able to get out of our streets. Those median cut throughs allow a safe place for pedestrians to cross and allow cars and tow trucks easy access to make a left turn when needed without clogging the Highland Ave. intersection.

Traffic will also back up at the highland Ave. intersection because of the entrance to the new parking lot on the beach side. Traffic backs up into the street from parking lots when people are waiting for parking spaces.

People always try to beat the light and end up blocking intersections. This happened in my hometown when they added a traffic light too close to another traffic light like the Highland Ave and Church St lights. It caused a huge traffic jam even though they tried to coordinate the lights. When the intersections back up, traffic can't flow in either direction.

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

When traffic backs up, people try to get around it by going down Ross Ave. and Kentville Terrace, both of which are dead end streets with no space to turn around. We've had people turn around on our lawns or back up into the creek and have to call a tow truck to pull them out.

Another concern I have is taking away a lane of traffic heading north leaving the beach. We live near a Nuclear Power Plant and that is an evacuation route out of the beach. I hope we never need to evacuate but we did have a false alarm about two years ago and people were told to evacuate. Hampton Beach also encourages people to leave that way after Wednesday night fireworks to alleviate some of the traffic on Church St. We need two lanes out of the beach.

Now the new concern, for the last three years we've had flooding issues. Every year it gets worse. We actually had to raise our house last year. I don't think it's a good idea to move the parking to the beach side because a lot of water, rocks, wood, and seaweed came over the wall and railing there onto and across Ocean Blvd. Parts of the railing came down and there was a lot of sidewalk and road erosion.

In conclusion, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" and I wouldn't do any improvements until the flooding issue is resolved. Thank you for your consideration.