

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

MEETING SUMMARY

PROJECT: NASHUA-MERRIMACK-BEDFORD 13761
F.E. Everett Turnpike Widening of Two Lane Sections
from Exit 8 (Nashua) to I-293 (Bedford)

DATE OF MEETING: April 3, 2018

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Nashua City Hall, 229 Main Street, Nashua, NH

ATTENDED BY PROJECT TEAM:

NHDOT

Wendy Johnson
Jon Hebert
Dan Prehemo
Jon Evans

CHA-MJ Team

Bill Ashford
John Parelli
Jed Merrow
Jordan Tate
Jennifer Zorn
Michael Long

GENERAL PUBLIC:

Twenty-four people signed in. A few other people attended but did not sign in (see attached sign-in sheets).

SUBJECT: Public Informational Meeting

NOTES ON MEETING:

The F. E. Everett Turnpike (FEET) project involves widening three segments of the Turnpike from two lanes to three lanes in each direction. The project starts at a point just north of the Tinker Road Bridge (over the Turnpike) in Nashua and proceeds northerly for 12 miles to the I-293/NH-101 Interchange in Bedford and only addresses roadway and bridge work within the segments to be widened. The sections proposed for widening encompass a total of 8.1 miles. No changes are proposed to the toll plazas or the interchanges along this corridor. However, there will be noise study evaluations for the entire 12 mile corridor.

The meeting consisted of an Open House from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM with a Formal Presentation at 7:00 PM. The presentation is attached.

Prior to the formal presentation, a number of attendees were given a description of the work and a walk-through of the draft project plans and asked general questions. Specific questions and responses are described below.

Within the presentation, focus was given to the bridges over the Pennichuck Brook and Baboosic Brook, as well as the bridges carrying Wire Road and Baboosic Lake Road over the Turnpike. The presentation also focused on impacts to the environmental resources, including concerns related to stormwater and noise.

Below are the public comments received at the meeting.

Patricia Klee, Nashua Ward 3 Alderman – Expressed concerns regarding traffic control on the Turnpike and whether traffic may be diverted on to other roadways. Answer – Two travel lanes will be maintained in each direction on the Turnpike except during rare instances during off-peak hours for certain construction activities such as drainage installation or blasting. No diversions are expected.

Jim Donchess, Mayor of Nashua – The Mayor was given a tour of the project and did not express any specific concerns, but was very interested in the noise issues expressed by the people living west of the Turnpike near Damper Circle and Hearthsides Drive. He was provided with an explanation of the noise study and NHDOT's Noise Policy.

Erme Jette, Nashua Alderman – Expressed interest in a bicycle path parallel to the Turnpike. Answer – This project is funded by the Turnpike, so a bicycle path is not normally a part of these projects, the Department will evaluate the request. *Subsequent to the meeting the request was evaluated and it was determined that these types of bicycle facilities are not allowed in the Limited Access Right-of-Way by statute. There are some instances of a perpendicular crossing, but parallel facilities are not allowed. Purchasing additional land to build a bicycle path outside the Turnpike for this project is outside the scope of this project.*

Gina Balkus, a Bowers Pond resident (this is the area of Damper Circle, Hearthsides Drive, and Sandstone Drive) – Asked about the noise analysis. J. Evans explained the NHDOT noise process and the analysis results. This area did not receive a noise wall as it did not meet the minimum feasible and reasonable criteria. She asked about the specific noise levels in the neighborhood and whether the DOT would meet with the homeowners association. J. Evans indicated that noise levels at several locations within this neighborhood were anticipated to meet or exceed the Department's noise abatement criteria of 66 decibels under both the existing and post construction conditions which is why the Department initiated an investigation of the feasibility and reasonableness of implementing noise abatement at this location. He indicated that the intent of the three public informational meetings is to provide information about various aspects of the project, including noise impacts. However, if a separate meeting with the homeowners association was desirable the Department would attempt to accommodate this request.

Richard Dowd, Nashua Ward 2 Alderman – Requested that Open Road Tolling (ORT) be added to the Bedford Toll Plaza as part of this project. Answer – The project to implement ORT is scheduled to advertise in November 2018. However, this project is now on hold. This is due to the ongoing efforts by the Legislature to allow the NHDOT to assess All Electronic Tolling (AET) and to work to implement it where it is financially feasible within the tolling system. Bedford is one of the plazas that may realize implementation of AET. Consequently, it

does not make sense to construct ORT when the potential for AET exists. Mr. Dowd also asked about providing a full interchange at Exit 12. Answer - The scope of this project is to expand/widen the three two-lane gap sections along the mainline only. There are no improvements to the interchanges beyond what is needed at the ramp noses to allow for the additional lane. The scope of this project has been developed through the Legislative Ten Year Plan process and does not include any improvements beyond the mainline expansion. Expansion of the Exit 12 interchange would be significant from an impact perspective as it would require relocation of a portion of Back River Road and the displacement of several residences.

Name unknown – Asked about installing ORT at Bedford Toll Plaza. Answer – See above answer to Richard Dowd. Also asked about the fact that there is no Exit 9. Answer – Exit 9 was intended to serve the Circumferential Highway, a proposed bypass route around Nashua which was never constructed. The Circumferential Highway is not in any future plans for construction at this time due to substantial wildlife and wetland impacts that were realized during the preliminary design.

Name unknown – Asked about Park and Ride facilities. Answer – There are no new facilities planned as these are outside the scope and funding of this project. They would also have minimal impact on reducing the congestion along the roadway.

Ed Linchman, Nashua – Expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion. Asked about current Level of Service (LOS). Answer – Current LOS varies from D to F in many locations along the corridor. If the project is constructed, the LOS improves most areas to LOS C or greater throughout the corridor, with only a few locations at a LOS D.

Steve Dookran, Nashua City Engineer – Questioned whether NHDOT goes back after a project is completed to verify the actual noise levels encountered. He said that noise is an issue in several neighborhoods in Nashua, including areas south of the current project where walls were previously installed. He also said that Nashua would be interested in any work zone agreements during construction as they do not want traffic shifted to local roads. Answer – Noise levels are not measured after the project is complete. The models used in determining noise barrier locations have been vetted by FHWA to provide a good approximation of noise within the tolerances. Any work zones will maintain the current lane configurations on the Turnpike and Smart Work Zones will be used that provide the motorist with real time travel delays to encourage them not to divert into neighborhoods.

Name Unknown – Question regarding previous noise studies completed in Nashua and what the numbers might show and if the criteria had changed. Answer – Previous studies used the NHDOT policy established in 1996. The policy was updated in 2011 and again 2016. In general, the values have not changed over time.

Marty Jack, Nashua Public Works Committee – Do the proposed soundwall criteria meet national standards? – Answer – Yes, they are in accordance with the current federal standards.

Name unknown – Was there a cost-benefit analysis done? Answer – Yes. It showed the project provides a benefit. This person also stated that residents were not satisfied with the results of the noise study. Also, had concerns about environmental impacts and that opening up the roadway to three lanes may impact traffic south and north of the project in other areas of Nashua and Manchester, implying the project would only shift a bottleneck and therefore should not be

constructed. He then responded that there may be issues in Manchester as there would still only be two lanes in that area, but that there should be sufficient capacity in Nashua as there are three or more lanes there. Finally, the person asked how many round trips occur within the corridor and whether a bus system for commuters would resolve the traffic issues. The round trip information is not known, but approximately 60-70,000 vehicles travel the corridor each day. As for the bus system, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission had determined previously that only 2-3% of the traffic volume could be removed with a more robust bus system.

Name unknown – A local resident expressed concerns about Exit 11, suggesting that it functions poorly and that it causes delays on the adjacent local roads, particularly Executive Park Drive.

Name unknown – A local resident expressed concerns about bicycle and pedestrian routes north of Exit 8 and that there is no connectivity because of the Turnpike. This person also asked about a parallel bike path. See the answers above.

Name unknown – A local resident expressed concerns about wildlife passage across the corridor and that, due to the median barrier blocking access across the roadway, there should be consideration of new passage for small mammals. Answer – The new bridge carrying Baboosic Brook under the Turnpike includes a shelf to accommodate wildlife.

Name unknown – A local resident expressed the thought that improved connectivity of the local roads would help with congestion at Exit 11.

Submitted By:

Michael D. Long, P.E.

ATTACHMENTS:

Presentation

List of Attendees

F.E. Everett Turnpike Widening Project

Public Informational Meeting – Nashua
April 3, 2018

SIGN IN SHEET

Name	Affiliation	Phone Number	E-Mail
Robert G. Sampson	Hist. District Com		
Richard Dowd	Alderman Ward 2 Nashua		
Sen. Beth Laskey	Senator Dist. 13		
Julie Chizmas	City of Nashua		
James Kayo	City of Nashua		
Patricia Klee	Alderman Ward 3 Nashua		
FRANK KOZAKA	RESIDENT		
Michael Putnam	Resident		
Julie Scliano	Resident		
Marty Jack	Hills 36		
Mike Porslow	Bowers Pond		
Greg Lantos	Nashua RPC		
JAN SCHMIDT	ALDERMAN & Rep Ward 1		
Allant Schmidt	Resident, Commuter		
Gina Balkus	Bowers Pond Resident		

F.E. Everett Turnpike Widening Project

Public Informational Meeting – Nashua
April 3, 2018

SIGN IN SHEET

Name	Affiliation	Phone Number	E-Mail
Pete Kohalmi	City of Nashua		
KEVIN MORIARTY	BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS		
Brad Schott	resident		
Jim Donchess	City of Nashua		
JANSEN DELROYAS	Resident		
Jay Minkarah	Nashua Regional Planning Comm.		
ERNE JETTE	ALDERMAN NASHUA		
Michael O'Brien	State Rep / Alderman		
Mary Ann Melzig-Gelja	Alderman Ward 8		