



NH 111 Corridor & Wall Street Extension Feasibility Study Project Kick-off Meeting

Searles School, Windham Minutes

November 5, 2009

Members Present: Matt Caron, Bruce Breton, David Sullivan, Ross McLeod, Annette Stoller, Sy Wrenn, Gerald Lewis, Tom McPherson and Jack McCartney.

Public Attendees: See attached attendance list.

Project Staff Present: Laura Scott, Windham; Gene McCarthy and Mike MacDonald, (McFarland-Johnson); Meg Walkers, Public Spaces; Cliff Sinnott and Roxanne Rines (RPC).

Welcome/Introductions

Cliff Sinnott welcomed everyone and introduced the Project Advisory Committee members present at the meeting. He then introduced Gene McCarthy from McFarland Johnson and Meg Walker from Public Spaces.

Project Background/History

Sinnott stated that McFarland Johnson has been hired as the consultant. The feasibility study will not result in a construction project. We expect to have lots of public input through conversations that happen within the community and getting consensus on the issues. Communication between committee members and the public is very important to the process.

Sinnott gave a brief history of the project: it started out being an examination of Wall Street. As the scoping continued, it expanded because there were important linkages that had to be resolved between the changes of the traffic pattern in the town center and what would ultimately happen to Route 111.

The study originated with the end of the project design of I-93. Because of the expanded traffic flows with the I-93 changes, the town requested some mitigation efforts be applied to improve traffic circulation in Windham. **Sinnott** stated DOT offered to support a study to expand Wall Street to deal with traffic circulation issues.



Project Overview, Purpose and Scope

Gene McCarthy stated McFarland Johnson is an engineering and planning firm and he is the program manager for this project. He reviewed the consultants that will be working on the study with McFarland Johnson.

The idea of the public meetings is to have the public's input on what the town's citizens would like to see. The town's 2005 Master Plan discusses creating a Village Center District.

He presented a slideshow and reviewed the 3 components of the study: Wall Street extension; NH 111 corridor study; and NH 111 relocation (Windham village center).

McCarthy stated the goal of the advisory committee is to create a problem statement, vision statement, develop alternative and evaluate those alternatives, make short and long term goals and then to make recommendations to the RPC and DOT with a final report in the fall of 2010.

Context Sensitive Solutions Approach

McCarthy stated the town and community needs to work on how traffic approaches and flows, reshape the current streets and pedestrian facilities. The ideas should be very broad, beyond transportation and land use visioning.

Laura Scott, Windham Community Development Director, thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

Meg Walker, Public Spaces, a non-profit design firm from New York, explained what her company does and their goals.

Concerns from audience members: How much is DOT involved and how much is Windham paying for the study? **McCarthy** stated DOT has one seat/vote on the advisory committee. The majority of funding is from DOT and FHWA, the portion of the local match is in-kind service provided by Windham town staff.

How much of the I-93 project is set in stone? **McCarthy** stated none of the I-93 project being constructed will change. This study is being conducted at the request of Windham to plan for a future village center.

What will the impacts on water quality be? **McCarthy** stated an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) has been completed, it addresses concerns and solutions for water quality.

Group Discussion

What are the problems along the NH 111 Corridor near the Windham Village Center?

Audience: there is a cueing problem during the morning commute along 111, North Lowell Road, of about 1/2 mile long. **McCarthy** asked how many light cycles it takes to get through the intersection. **Audience:** 2 or 3 cycles and about 10 cars per cycle make it through the light. **Police Chief** stated a lot of drivers go past the loop bar in the road that changes the light cycle.

Audience: Traffic needs to move from East to West in New Hampshire, there needs to be a better solution. There also needs a better way to move traffic through the town center.

Audience: The town center is not walkable, young children have to be driven to places, there is a lack of sidewalks. During community events there isn't enough parking for everyone attending. The town needs commercial destination points; light signals need to be linked to allow for better traffic flows. Community would like to see a mixed use village district, a walkable community. Being able to park and walk to different locations (i.e., town hall, post office, school, library). There is no municipal water or sewer system in town, which makes developing parcels tougher. Removing traffic from going through town on way to other communities.

Audience: Have there been any traffic studies conducted? **McCarthy** stated traffic studies and a model are currently being developed; the model will take a look at possible future changes in land use and zoning. **Walker** stated there needs to be links between destinations.

What is your Vision for the NH 111 Corridor in the Windham Village Center?

Audience: Would like a walkable village center with sidewalks. The town center has a lot of historical buildings, maintain the historical character of the area when new development is built. Create trails or paths instead of sidewalks. New buildings should have historic charm and not ruin neighborhoods near the center. Have restaurants or small shops in town, but no chains. No huge or commercial signage. Make the town center quaint, combine destinations, provide parking in other places besides on the roads. Create a community garden, ice skating rink, a venue for live music. Traffic should not be diverted around Windham because the businesses will suffer losses.

What is the link between the Extension of Wall Street and a Windham Village Center?

Audience: There is a huge truck diversion because of the weigh station on I-93, trucks pull off the highway and travel through town. The town has leased land for an elderly housing development, there should be a pedestrian connection between this development and the businesses in town. Do not add any traffic lights to the town area, there are enough. Possible pedestrian/bike tunnel to cross over/under 111. There are a lot of wetlands in the village area that would need to be crossed. Citizens would like the walkable village center to be pedestrian friendly, with boutique type shops.

Scott stated she heard from attendees that had to leave, that they do not support the bypass or extension.

McCarthy asked how many would support the relocation of 111: bad idea if is it located to the south. **McCarthy** asked who supports the Wall Street Extension: show of hands indicated this alternative was a better idea.

Issues: impacts on private properties; environmental impacts; wetland concerns; cost factor; and to not build too close to the pond.

McCarthy stated there will be a focus on access management in the study. The town has a technical role, they are assisting McFarland Johnson is gathering information. The towns GIS department has helped with information concerning the environmental side. We are using the GIS system to look at the corridor and see what information is available. We will be using information that is already collected.

He continued that the consensus of the public was that Wall Street is the number one priority; the study should center on the area south of 111; and recommendations for changes in zoning to support and define a Village Center be included in the final study.

The town will add this project to their website, including the power point presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne M. Rines
Recording Secretary