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McFARLAND JOHNSON

Established 1946

CONFERENCE REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: June 27, 2019

PROJECT: Dover-Somersworth-Rochester 29604
(MJ Project No: 18288.00)

LOCATIONS/TIME:

Blackwater Road Intersection, Somersworth (4:00 PM)
Long Hill Road Intersection, Dover/Somersworth (5:00 PM)
Whitehouse Road/NH Route 236 Intersection (West High Street), Somersworth (6:00 PM)

SUBJECT: Public Walking Tour

ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT: W. Johnson A. King
T. Reynolds

MJ: G. McCarthy J. Zorn
S. Ozana

Approximately 20 members of the public attended the tour, including city staff.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project involves the study of improvements to NH Route 108 from the vicinity of the intersection with Indian Brook Drive in Dover northerly to the vicinity of the intersection with Innovation Drive in Rochester, a distance of approximately 5 miles. The objective of the project is to develop an alternative that will improve the safety and mobility of all users by applying 'Complete Street' principles with the central goal of achieving an appropriate balance between the needs of motorized, non-motorized, and transit users of the corridor.

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

The Walking Tour began with a brief summary by W. Johnson on the purpose of the Walking Tour which was to experience the corridor's opportunities and challenges first hand. Attendees were encouraged to provide comments or any thoughts to the project design team. Three intersections along NH Route 108 were selected for the tour based on the comments and suggestions received at the public Listening Sessions held on March 18, 2019 and May 2, 2019: Blackwater Road Intersection in Somersworth; Long Hill Road Intersection in Dover/Somersworth; and Whitehouse Road/NH Route 236 (West High Street) in Somersworth. The comments heard from those in attendance include the following:

What we heard at the Blackwater Road Intersection:

- Vehicle speed is an issue.
- Northbound vehicles on NH Route 108 go right up the middle of the two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) to get into the left turn lane onto Blackwater Road.
- Queue lengths makes the drivers impatient.
- Traffic is lighter than normal today (on June 27, 2019) due to the water line construction project located further south on NH Route 108 in Dover.
- There are no pedestrian facilities at this location.
- There are a lot of businesses (Velcro, etc.) that have shifts ending around this time (4:00 PM).
- The bus stop in this area is placed outside of the intersection; considered good placement.
- A bus pull-off would be beneficial.
- Cumberland Farms (both directions), there is an issue with gridlock when trucks enter or exit onto Blackwater Road, however it does function better since the painted “Do Not Block box” was added.
- Driveway on Blackwater Road is too close to the intersection;
- Difficult to cross NH Route 108 at Blackwater eastbound due to left turning westbound vehicles on Blackwater Road.
- Usually vehicles wait two to three light cycles to cross intersection.
- Adding a right turn lane for southbound NH Route 108 onto westbound Blackwater Road may be beneficial.
- The pavement “bump” on westbound Blackwater Road onto NH Route 108 needs to be addressed (NHDOT District 6 maintenance issue).
 - If there are any modifications made, they need to be careful of the loop detectors.
- It was suggested by a City staff member that this intersection could be a good place for a roundabout.
- Southbound NH Route 108 queue is also problem.
- The empty lot on the northwest corner of this intersection is currently for sale; it could be developed and add more traffic to the intersection.
- City would prefer video detection at signals.
- Vehicles traveling southbound on NH Route 108 cut onto the shoulder to bypass turning vehicles; this is an issue with the bicycle traffic as the vehicles cut off the bicycles. (Note: This issue was witnessed during the tour.)
- Need pedestrian crossings:
- Beyond this intersection bus pull offs are the best design.
 - The buses are 40 feet in length with a tight turning radius
 - COAST will provide counts and rider statistics to NHDOT
 - The bus stop to the north of this intersection is used by a person in a wheel chair

- Bicycles on NH Route 108 are seasonal and there is limited space on the bus for the bicycles.
- Sidewalks were desired in regional locations to capture use by individual developments.
- Timing of the traffic light was a concern, especially for the through traffic being cut off by left turns. Changes in timing will make an improvement.
- A noise analysis is needed in this section of NH Route 108. Buffers between the road and buildings/residences need to be created.
- Residents near Calef Auto experience a lot of noise.
- My mother can't open her windows due to the noise.
- We need to grow in harmony

What we heard at the Long Hill Road Intersection:

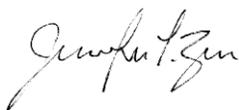
- Cars cut through the Shell Gas Station headed southbound on NH Route 108.
- Southbound queue is big.
- There is a lot of pedestrian traffic from Blackwater Road to Long Hill Road.
- There is a lot of pedestrian traffic from the apartment complex (Winchester Arms) just to the south of the intersection, to the Mini-Mart at the Shell Gas Station.
- The northbound left protected phase of the traffic light seems short:
 - Few light cycles
 - People are making U-turns at the intersection of Indian Brook Road and NH Route 108 to avoid this light, but that takes them to a new four-way stop condition, which is also a long wait.
- There is a through road to the south of this intersection connecting NH Route 108 with Old Rochester Road with speed bumps.
- The sidewalk should extend north of the intersection and not stop here as it currently does.
- There is an easement for access to back of the dirt track (which could act as a fourth leg to the intersection) through the Portland Glass parking lot.
 - There is water transmission line in this area owned by the City of Somersworth.
- Future sewer is proposed in this area with some gaps.
- A wider combined-use path with a wider grass panel, or at least a bike lane with crosswalks is desired by a City staff member.
- A previous project funded by the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) failed to put sidewalks on the west side, although they were proposed.
- At least 5-foot side shoulders for bicycles was desired.
- Bicycles lane are preferred on both sides and a sidewalk is preferred on the east side.

- A newer sidewalk near the Long Hill Road lights is present (completed circa 2003-2004). City staff would prefer not to impact this newer area of sidewalk.
- This sidewalk may need to be updated to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- Winchester Arms (apartment complex to the south of the intersection) has a large grass area in front of the building; drainage is a consideration.
- Widening the road in front of houses will make it harder for vehicles to exit the driveways
- There are drainage issues at some residences (nothing specific was noted).
- The four-way stop on Old Rochester creates traffic issues.
- Vehicles are too fast in this location.
- Sidewalks are preferred; no bicycle lanes.

What we heard at the Whitehouse Road/NH Route 236 (West High Street) Intersection:

- Entrance to Dunkin Donuts is too close to intersection
- A lot of people on bicycles are seen at this intersection, but not a lot of walking.
- In the morning, NH Route 108 can get backed up southbound to Kelley's or further north to the Airport.
- Haven Hill Road is used as a shortcut to Salmon Falls Road.
- 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM is tough time for traffic in this location.
- Wayfinding or signage was suggested to better direct traffic to the downtown Somersworth.
- When traveling west, it is tough to see over the crest on NH Route 108.
- A designated left turn lane on NH Route 236 was suggested.
- The bus stop (south of this intersection) in front of Goodwin Community Health Center may have been funded by the health center.

Submitted by:



Jennifer L. Zorn, AICP
McFarland-Johnson, Inc.