



# Rockingham Planning Commission

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## US ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR STUDY

**--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--**

EXETER –FEBRUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2006: The Rockingham Planning Commission will be holding two public information meetings regarding the US 1 (Lafayette Road) Corridor Study on February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006. These meetings will be the culmination of several months of work developing conceptual alternatives for transportation improvements along the corridor. The details of the meeting times and locations are:

### **US 1 Corridor Study Public Information Meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
February 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	7:00 PM (Meeting room will be open early to allow map viewing)	Hampton Falls Town Hall 1 Drinkwater Road
February 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	7:00 PM (Meeting room will be open early to allow map viewing)	Portsmouth City Hall 1 Junkins Avenue

The intent of the meetings is to present the recommended improvements along the corridor as well as solicit public input regarding these improvements. In addition to a presentation by staff working on the project, there will be maps and other information available at the meeting to help familiarize attendees with the proposals and the concepts behind them.

The study is not a construction project and it will not result in any immediate changes in the roadway, but will identify and prioritize projects for funding in the State 10-Year Transportation Improvement Program or through other available means.

This project has been approached from the perspective that there is a need for significant safety and capacity improvements along the corridor, but that these improvements must be developed in cooperation with the communities, and in a manner that is sensitive to the role that Lafayette Road plays in each town. This design process, known as context sensitive design, serves to enhance both the function of the roadway as a State highway, as well as the surrounding communities where US 1 serves as Main Street and has a much different function than moving regional through traffic. In that regard, a number of improvements are being proposed. For that reason, there is no uniform improvement for the entire length of the corridor. Improvements are being proposed that are tailored to both the nature of roadway in a particular area as well as to the community specific desires for the corridor. The types of improvements that are being recommended are:

- Intersection widening to accommodate left turn lanes
- Planned locations for future traffic signals
- Access management techniques such as left turn lanes and consolidated driveways
- Realignment of oblique (odd angle) intersections
- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- Improvements to the traffic circle at the NH/MA state line

- Possible future bypass around downtown Hampton.
- Sections of 5 lane highway (2 through lanes in each direction and center turn lane)
- Transit facilities and a roadway that accommodates future transit service
- Streetscape improvements.

## **Background Information**

The US Route 1 Corridor Study was initially proposed in 2000 by the Route 1 Coastal Communities Corridor Advisory Committee (a subcommittee of the Seacoast MPO), and is intended to update and improve upon a corridor study completed for US 1 in 1989 by the Kimball Chase Company and the NH Department of Transportation. The original study had predicted traffic volumes and improvements necessary for the year 2000, and essentially called for the widening of Route 1 to a “five lane typical” along the length of the corridor (2 lanes each direction with a center turn lane). This proposal was not well received by the corridor communities at the time due to the lack of local involvement in the development of the plan, and the tremendous impacts to property that widening the roadway would produce. Despite the lack of community support, portions of the plan have been implemented, primarily in Seabrook and in Portsmouth where much of US 1 is built out to the five lane typical. In addition, many intersections along the corridor were improved based on this study and requirements for commercial and residential development. The study is guided by a Corridor Study Advisory Committee made up of local officials, representatives from the MPO and RPC staff, and the NHDOT. This committee is critical to the study in that it will both oversee the work effort, but also guide its outcome, including helping to develop recommendations and prioritize projects

The current study is updating the 1989 study by evaluating and prioritizing all road improvements likely to be needed over the next 20 years, including conceptual designs and estimated costs. It would expand and improve upon the original study by also including an access management component, considering design alternatives appropriate to the communities and surrounding development (“context sensitive design”), consider bicycle and pedestrian and public transportation needs, and consider aesthetic and landscaping elements. The project is divided into three phases:

**Phase 1: Existing Conditions** – This phase involved data collection, development of base maps and performing capacity and level of service analysis on the existing roadway.

**Phase 2: Development of Project Alternatives** – This phase involves utilizing the information from existing conditions to forecast future traffic volumes and patterns and develop necessary improvements. This phase of the project requires extensive public involvement, ensuring that any improvements designed are appropriate to the community in which they are located. This early coordination with the community will facilitate the construction of the projects in the future.

**Phase 3: Management Plan** – This phase is essentially the development and approval of the corridor management plan. This will include discussion of all the recommended improvements the infrastructure, as well as an access management plan that will lay out policies and practices that will maintain and improve traffic flow and safety of the roadway as land use changes occur.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 are substantially completed with Phase 3 expected to be completed Spring, 2006.

For additional information, please contact David Walker at the Rockingham Planning Commission (778-0885 or [dwalker@rpc-nh.org](mailto:dwalker@rpc-nh.org)).