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# Memo

To: Meeting Attendees  
From: Christina Haskins, PE  
Date: January 21, 2016  
Re: Sunderland Safe Roads Scoping Study – Public Informational Meeting

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On January 19, 2016, a Public Informational meeting was held at the Sunderland Town Office to discuss the proposed work. The following individuals attended:

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Marie Litowinski	Sunderland Safe Roads Committee
Colleen York	Sunderland Safe Roads Committee
Scott York	Sunderland Safe Roads Committee
Mark Hyde	Sunderland Selectboard
Marc Johnston	Sunderland Highway Department
Jim Sullivan	Bennington County Regional Commission
Bruce Lierman	Bennington County Regional Commission
Chrissy Haskins, PE	Dufresne Group
Sally Ayrey	Town Resident
Mike diMonda	Town Resident
Lewis Ennis	Town Resident
Avis Hayden	Town Resident
Michael McShane	Town Resident
John Skinner	Town Resident
Karen Stuart	Town Resident
John Stuermer	Town Resident
Lily Van Haverbeke	Town Resident
Peter Van Haverbeke	Town Resident
Cassidy Warren	Town Resident
John Williams	Town Resident
Robert Zeif	Town Resident

1. Marie provided introductions and a brief summary of the purpose of the meeting.
2. Chrissy summarized the draft report, including the following:
  - a. Review of the project area, project purpose and need statement, local concerns, alternatives presented and evaluation matrix. Chrissy discussed how Alternative

- 3 (wide shoulders) had changed since the previous meeting from 6-inches of gravel to 15-inches of gravel with road stabilization fabric.
- b. Details of the preferred alternative, including the following:
    - i. Adding 2 feet of pavement to each side of Sunderland Hill Road from the bridge to the Town Office and painting an edge line to create 10-foot wide travel lanes, which would create a 3-foot wide paved shoulder. This could be phased by installing gravel shoulders first and then paving during a future road resurfacing project.
    - ii. Adding 3 feet of paved shoulder to the southbound side of Sunderland Hill Road from the Town Office to Dunham Road and painting an edge line on both sides to create 10-foot wide travel lanes. This would create a 4-foot wide shoulder on the southbound side of the road.
    - iii. Adding edge lines, “sharrows” and signage to Hill Farm Road.
  - c. Typical cross sections and photo simulations of the wide shoulders.
  - d. Design considerations such as culvert/drainage swale modifications and ledge rock removal.
  - e. Total project cost estimates for the preferred alternative with a discussion on how costs may differ for local funding versus federal funding.
  - f. Funding options including VTrans grants and local funding.
  - g. Phasing recommendations
3. Chrissy reviewed the next steps, which include revising the report based on local comments and VTrans review comments, submitting a final report, Selectboard approval of the report and a Town Meeting vote.
4. The meeting was opened for public comment. Comments and questions are in normal font and responses from the committee, Mark, Jim or Chrissy are in italic font.
- a. How much wider would the pavement be on Sunderland Hill Road? *2 feet on each side.*
  - b. Can a paver still make 2 passes on the road, or would 3 passes be required? *The local paving companies have pavers that can pave the extra width with 2 passes.*
  - c. Will maintenance costs for the road increase in the future? *There will be additional paving costs due to the wider road, however maintenance such as sweeping, crack repairs, etc., would not significantly change.*
  - d. Can the Town apply for a grant for Phase 1? *Yes, the Town can apply for as much or as little of the project as is desired. The grant process is competitive though. Some variations of the project may do better than others.*
  - e. Will the report include costs for local construction? *If local construction is desired, Dufresne Group can try to work with the Town to determine the typical costs to the Town for various components.*
  - f. Can a rumble strip be added on the edge line? This would provide drivers with a stronger cue that they are exiting the travel lane (i.e. when texting while driving). *A rumble strip is difficult for bicycles to maneuver across. A rumble strip would also cost more.*

- g. Would the Town apply for a grant for the entire project? *It is possible to apply for a grant for the entire project. The Town would need to make this decision.*
- h. Does the proposed project include measures for stormwater abatement in light of the new regulations? *The project is an opportunity for stormwater improvements; however the current proposed project does not include stormwater improvements. At this point, the regulations are new and it is not yet known if improvements will be required in this project area. All Towns will need to inventory their roads over the next 4-5 years to determine where improvements are needed.*
- i. What does local funding mean? *Local funding would come out of tax revenue, either directly or by a loan to be paid by tax revenue.*
- j. Local funding would require a budget increase.
- k. If the highway department is already busy, how will they construct these improvements? *The Town will need to decide the best way to implement the desired improvements and how to pay for the improvements. If the town staff is already too busy and the Town chooses to construct locally, additional staff may be required.*
- l. Can the Town construct portions of the project as part of their grant match? *The short answer is yes; however this can be a very complicated process. It is recommended that the Town be upfront about this if they plan to use labor for their match.*
- m. In regard to the new stormwater regulations, does the amount of impervious area effect costs for the future? *We are not sure yet, but all impervious area will need to be considered. If the shoulders are widened, that will increase the impervious area.*
- n. VTrans guidance indicates that less than 14-foot wide travel lanes are too narrow for use as shared lanes. If the wide shoulders are added, the travel lane plus shoulder will only be 13 feet wide. Will the wide shoulders provide cyclists with a false sense of security? *This is a good question. Wide shoulders are acceptable as a bicycle facility in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Manual and will provide additional space that is currently not available. This will improve the situation; however it will not be as safe as a dedicated bicycle lane or shared use path. The improvements recommended are based on the character of the area and are cost-conscious. The shoulders will also give beginner cyclists a visual indication of where they should be riding in relation to the travel lane.*
- o. Could the wide shoulder be constructed on only one side of the road? For example, if there were significant costs or impacts on one side, could the shoulder only be constructed on the opposite side? *It is possible; however facilities used by bicycles should be located on both sides as bicycles ride with traffic. It is best to be consistent. If the wide shoulder abruptly ends on one side of the road, the cyclist or pedestrian may suddenly enter the travel lane or try to cross the road.*

- p. What type of gravel would be used on the shoulders? *The gravel would be a crushed gravel or possibly a recycled asphalt (RAP). The gravel would be compacted.*
  - q. Can signs be installed telling cyclists to ride in single file? *This type of sign is not part of the MUTCD, which regulates road signage. The law in Vermont allows cyclists to ride two bicycles wide on a road; however this is typically known by avid cyclists to be bad etiquette.*
  - r. How do parents feel about the preferred alternative? *Colleen discussed the survey that was performed prior to the scoping study. Parents indicated that they would allow children to walk to school if safety was increased. Parents would also likely walk with their children to school so the children would not be walking along the road alone. The preferred alternative will be discussed with the school and feedback solicited from parents.*
  - s. Is Hill Farm Road going to be widened? *No. Hill Farm Road improvements include pavement markings and signage only.*
  - t. Can the line striping be done first? *Yes. This is a low cost item that could easily improve conditions by delineating an area closer to the center of the road for vehicles and an area closer to the edge of the road for cyclists and pedestrians.*
  - u. Are engineering plans required for a grant application? *No. The grant application can be prepared using the final report from the scoping study. If the Town applies for a grant, the amount requested would include design engineering, construction engineering, local project management and construction costs. The design would be done after grant award and is typically a 2-5 year process, depending on the complexity of the project.*
5. Mark indicated that the report will be posted once it is finalized. There will be a vote at Town Meeting regarding how to proceed. This vote will not be a warned article. It will be included in the discussion section of the meeting. Mark is hoping to have some alternatives regarding phasing and funding prepared for discussion. Mark would like to see a consensus on one of the alternatives. If the Town decides to pursue a grant, the grant would likely not be awarded until fall 2016.