

Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study
Public Forum 10.25.17 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Starts at 6:02pm.

Kendra Amaral, Town Manager welcomed public to the Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study. Went over timeline, mentioned working group and consultants Mitchel Rasor, MRLD Landscape Architecture and Tom Ericco TYLyn International. The content to be presented was still in draft form.

Consultant Mitchell Rasor highlighted project explains goals. Working group has already had a site walk and five meetings.

Study area includes Route 1 (gourmet alley, water district site), government and water streets, Walker Street and Wentworth Street to the gas station (best automotive). Mr. Rasor compared 1997 study findings to current 2017 findings.

Initial project findings: Route 1 distinct corridor, very open and out of character and Wallingford Sq area which is very dense and established. Also found opportunity for other intersections that could be “squares.”

Key Themes:

- Create vibrant edges or gateways (in 1997 design)
- Squares (intersections) create streets and intersections as a framework for wayfinding, which ultimately helps with economic development
- Placemaking (and key metrics for the study) concept of place which is defined by:
 - Streets, intersections (opportunities)
 - Architecture
 - Neighborhoods
 - Open spaces
 - Respect for history, respect for the future people
- Key metrics for the Foreside which have been kept in mind throughout the study:
 - Walkability and safety for pedestrians and bicycles
 - Protecting and stabilizing residential neighborhoods
 - Allow more development flexibility in mixed use areas (Extend density and infill)
 - Make Route 1 more consistent in character and scale (Extend sense of economic development and neighborhood character)
 - Create more unified zone from Whipple to Wallingford to Route 1 (Gourmet Alley)
 - Increase access to a range of open spaces
 - Increase awareness of parking options
 - Kittery not Portsmouth
 - Coordinate with the Shipyard

The presentation had technical difficulties. Mr. Rasor mentioned the presentation will be posted on the Town website. Mr. Rasor asked those who have questions, concerns or recommendations to contact Chris DiMatteo, Town Planner.

- Pedestrian sheds, Kittery has a lot of walkable areas, ¼ mile radius or 5 minute walk to Wallingford Square from numerous locations in the study areas.

Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study
Public Forum 10.25.17 Meeting Minutes

- Consultants reviewed various buildings and their respective footprints. Conclusion, there is a range of building footprints in the study area although most are much smaller than examples.
- Love Ln is included in the study area and is concern because of cut through traffic, character and opening on to Route 1. It is being reviewed for traffic calming and other techniques (not sidewalks) will be recommended.

Mr. Rasor reviewed the schedule:

- 10/25/2017 (tonight) getting public feedback
- 11/9/2017, taking recommendations to Planning Board
- Through November, refine the draft report and have one last working group meeting
- End of December submit final report

Mr. Rasor mentioned public can continue to make comments or suggestions to staff or working group.

Key Land Use Considerations:

- General idea to continue scale, walkability and character from Wallingford Sq to Route 1
- East of Route 1 revisit current zoning (MU-KF) to rebuild as is or rebuild only up to 1500 sq ft. Consultants are trying find alternatives to zoning requirements that would not impede on neighborhood character. Reconcile uses between MU-KF and BL-1 Zones.
- Parking lots are concern. Zoning does not prevent demolishing structures and building parking lots. Consultants curious about how parking lots could be zoned, e.g. primary or accessory use.
- Consultants think larger buildings could be along Route 1 corridor.
- Foreside, smaller buildings dependent on lot size. Suggest redevelop Walker Street commercial corridor.

3 growth models over 20 year period: Existing conditions, Mid-Level Growth, High Growth. (Most of the graphics presented had Mid-Level of growth. Parking and traffic demands were modeled).

Mid-level growth, 4 opportunities sites:

1. Water district site- recommendation that came from Sustain Southern Maine. Also tightening up and "right sizing" the intersection. Consultants built off recommendation but lessen growth expectations in their recommendation.
2. Govern street infill to code (has green space, although there was a foundation being constructed at time of meeting).
3. Fire station site- redevelop street site, to bring the building closer to the street, all setbacks met. Pitch roof would not meet MU-KF zoning.
4. Intersection at Whipple Rd and Wentworth St- There is a park near the corner, and could move park and building to create a plaza concept with commercial 1st floor, residential 2nd at corner define area "Whipple Sq concept."

Zoning: 1997 one large zone- good for economic development. The current Comprehensive Plan calls for Growth and Neighborhood stabilization.

Recommended:

Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study
Public Forum 10.25.17 Meeting Minutes

- The Core of the Foreside Zone (Walker St to Government St) be Foreside Mixed-Use. This would include the BL and BL-1 Zones included in the study area.
- The remaining zones of the Foreside be foreside residential.
- “4-Square” concept. Whipple Sq (Wentworth/Whipple), Walker Sq Walker/Route 1), Government Sq (Newmarch/Gov’t), Wallingford Sq. The series of streets would be the bones in the area, helping to connect the square which would help with wayfinding. The gateway would create clear destination and arrival. Square concept could create edges to the neighborhoods, and help make clear transitions to the commercial and residential areas.

Tom Errico with TYLyn International, transportation engineer discussed the idea of creating a shared-use path within the railroad right of way, which could allow for connectivity and would connect to the waterfront. The waterfront connection could create a greenway from the estuary to the high school parking lot. The parking lot at the high school could also increase parking inventory. The bridge over the estuary would be intended to be a pedestrian structure.

Providing more accessibility to waterfront and to enhance the public dock at Wallingford Sq. was another recommendation.

Parking: Mr. Errico presented most of the data in the June 15th forum.

- Based on data analysis, consultants believe 125 parking spots could be created.
- On diagram green illustrated where more on-street parking could be added.
- Blue on diagram represented formalized on-street parking (now not clear where and where can’t park).
- Off- street parking could also come from formalized shared parking of gourmet alley off hour use of lots- York Hospital.

Traffic congestion and uses:

- More cars on Walker Street than on Route 1
- The afternoon where road system is taxed the most/ existing level of service
- 2 peaks in Kittery (shipyard/non-shipyard)
- Speed data: Walker St has higher speeds, Love Ln has high speeds
- No high crash locations in study area

Route 103/Walker St Project:

- Maintain parking, improve crosswalks and pedestrian safety
- Project currently over budget, DOT work team reviewing the project to meet the budget
- Walker Street will be fully ADA compliant

Route 1/Water St/Hunter Ave/Newmarch St:

- Recommendation to make west side of park to be a two-way road way
- Bike lane will be provided on the southbound side and a north on Hunter Ave. Hunter Ave would be a dead-end local street, with bike lane and parking.
- Improve access to the park, create safe crossing
- Newmarch St would need to be widened to accommodate roadway

116 Walker Street/Route 1

- 117 • Reduce number of lanes
- 118 • 1 turning lane, 1 north lane, 1 south lane, 2 bike lanes, on parking on west side, sidewalks
- 119 • Down size Walker St intersection to help crossings
- 120 • Traffic models agree with design a predict population increase

121 Gourmet alley:

- 122 • Invert parking at Golden Harvest along Route 1, make parking on street
- 123 • Formalize sidewalks

124 Government St:

- 125 • Formalize parking, stripe travel lanes and parking

126 Jones Ave:

- 127 • Formalize parking
- 128 • Provide 1 Travel Lane toward Government, shift lane eastward to enhance sight distance at
- 129 corners
- 130 • On street parking
- 131 • Sidewalk with bumpout toward Government

132 Q & A:

133 **#1. Q: Do the changes need to go through MEDOT? What are the next steps? A: Yes, in coordination**
134 **with MEDOT and Maine Historic Preservation Commission. HPC has concerns about changing motorist**
135 **experience of John Paul Jones Park. Consultants want to enhance pedestrian experience. It is difficult**
136 **to get in touch with HPC.**

137 **#2. Q: If traffic was routed on Newmarch instead of Hunter, where are people from Portsmouth**
138 **directed?**

139 **A: Traveling on northbound on Newmarch St would turn right on Government. Models demonstrated**
140 **the intersection being efficient.**

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142 **#3. Q: Greenway? Have contacted Department of Defense? A: negotiation between communities, the**
143 **intent is not to get rid of the ROW but use the ROW space abutting. (Resident says that was not clear).**
144 **70ft ROW, there could be a fence separating the railroad from a multiuse path.**

145 **#4. Q: Hunter turnaround? Fire lanes? A: Not the case, but are brainstorming about directing traffic up**
146 **Water Street. Turnaround for fire and snow removal would need to be addressed.**

147 **#5. Resident gave input on demolishing structures for parking. Suggested limit to 0, in specific locations,**
148 **to replace structure with structure. Public or private parking as a special exception use.**

149 **#6. Resident discussed involvement with past DOT work on Route 1. Q: Has DOT changed perspectives**
150 **on roadway design? A: MEDOT has had a paradigm shift, federal highway is more flexible with**
151 **roadways and design standards especially in urban areas.**

#7 Q: Traffic Light at Shipyard gate? Could it be updated? **A:** Once through DOT project design & construction funding issues, the project could move quickly. Ms. Amaral explained that the equipment needs to be replaced at the intersection, but DOT cannot replace equipment until the project is designed, while considering 2 project options. Mr. Errico echoed the project is not a 2018 but 2019 project.

#8 Q: Love Lane? **A:** Thoughts are to implement traffic calming to discourage people from using it as a throughway. Spot traffic calming, turning limitations in and out, access management will be in the recommendations.

#9 Q: Speed on Route 1? Data could affect 2-way 2 lane traffic on Newmarch Street, which could make problem worse. **Tom Renaud from KACTS explained the method of collecting traffic data, but agrees to provide speed data to the Town.** A: Newmarch St as it exists (17ft wide one-way lanes) may encourage people to speed. Two narrow lanes, could slow traffic.

#10 The resident was concerned with taking land from the park, and had concerns about traffic volumes not decreasing. Also had concerns about park access. **Q:** Have you looked into bridge traffic? What happens to recommendations in December, when is the last time to give feedback? **A: Still time to give positive and negative feedback. Submit comments to Town Planner, Chris DiMatteo. Planning Board 11/9/2017, then could go to Town Council for potential adoption as a study.**

#11 One resident shared excitement of idea to make Route 1/Newmarch St a more contiguous street. Mentioned street activity could help with traffic calming. Recommendation could provide opportunity for State Road to become enhanced. Resident thought rerouting bicycle traffic up Hunter and making Newmarch Street 2-way is a good idea. The resident said that State Rd Walker St is not a good intersection. Liked parking ideas and Square concept. **A: Mr. Errico wanted to be clear parking is suggestion on the York Hospital side only.**

#12 Resident Mike Kelso made comments about Love Lane. Mentioned trouble with TD Bank intersection (at Route 1) not enough time to turn, can't see traffic. Also mentioned when turning left there, the wide intersection allows for cars to pull in intersection and block view from the right. Mentioned challenges from traffic from Walker Street (turning right on red) and Water District. Suggested reducing speed of Gourmet Alley. Finally, suggested making Love Ln local traffic only, especially in the morning.

#13 One resident supported rail path and water edge access Wallingford Sq. and idea of mixed-use on dock and how to connect pedestrians from Warren's to Wallingford Sq property owners allow access.

#14 Another resident liked idea about safe walking to water access and shared that she has written the Governor about John Paul Jones Park. Also supported reversing parking by the Golden Harvest and reducing intersection width at Walker/Route 1. Resident asks Town if the sidewalk at library can be fixed temporarily until study is complete, because it is dangerous.

#15 Q: Will changed zoning to allow for Hotels in MU-KF be in recommendations? Thoughts? Is it possible? Planning Board waiting on recommendations from the Kittery Foreside Study.

#16 Resident Mr. Kelso, mentioned parking concerns, there are a number of business with no available parking for their customers. Asked Town to stop approving business unless there is parking.

Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study
Public Forum 10.25.17 Meeting Minutes

191 Consultants mentioned the Rockland Boutique Hotel, which uses valet parking only by sharing parking
192 on an underutilized lot. In the Foreside, Mr. Rasor explained he could recommend using an existing
193 building with a use change, adaptive reuse. There would have to be traffic demand modeling, analyzing
194 congestion and peak hours. In general, in urban areas parking can work if demonstrated scientifically.
195 Believe the negative impacts may not be as big as expected. Increasing the shell of the building map be
196 more of the issue.

197 #17 Mr. Kelso mentioned Rice library could be a good source of parking and suggests meters.

198 #18 One Resident explained that Rockland is a different scale community from Kittery Foreside. Believes
199 people and commerce, not hotels, would be better for the area.

200 **#19 Q:** How did you pick the perimeter of the study area? Mentioned additional water access, which is
201 not on the slide, but the space is underutilized. **A: The study was established by the Town. Adjacent**
202 **centers are relevant and not outside the scope of the project. The Town wharf is important to**
203 **maintain for access, which may be overlooked.**

204 #20 One resident explained the ordinance already allows for hotel as an Inn that could have 11 rooms.
205 She believes that is more reasonable because of congestion.

206 Ms. Amaral clarified the residents concern with Hotels in MU-KF. She explained residents are concerned
207 the Foreside cannot handle the impact for 30-35 room Hotel. If it can handle it, what are the negative
208 impacts? What are the positive impacts of that type of development in the Foreside?

209 Mr. Errico responded to the ability of the roadway to handle traffic due to use (future impact, traffic
210 circulation, intersection operation). He believed the intersection infrastructure could handle a 30-35
211 boutique hotel.

212 #21 Resident Elisa Winter Holben, also a business owner in Wallingford Sq. mentioned wanting to
213 preserve area and allow for continued vibe of small Wallingford Sq. Also would like to continue the vibe
214 throughout the area. Asked if a hotel could be somewhere outside the Square. Asked if overlay or
215 feather-zoning could be considered.

216 **#22 Q:** How many hotels with 30-35 rooms could be allowed or go in the area if the ordinance changed?

217 Resident agreed designated areas for parking. Liked suggestion about waterfront access. Believes
218 diversified economy downtown is an incubator, hopes Foreside could do that. Hotels would take that
219 away.

220 #23 One resident explained recommendations on Newmarch Street would remove greenspace for
221 parking. Q: Could bike lanes be on Hunter side? Also had concerns about traffic coming from
222 Portsmouth. Could hunter be turned heading south? Removing green space would kill trees. **A:**
223 **challenge from bike perspective, bikes would have to cross Route 1 twice. It would create conflict**
224 **points for the bicyclists.**

225 #24 One resident echoed converting one-way streets to two-streets slows down. Suggests a light at the
226 other end of the bridge. Mr. Errico agreed to look at the speeding issue.

Kittery Foreside Land Use, Traffic, and Parking Study
Public Forum 10.25.17 Meeting Minutes

227 #25 One resident mentioned increase in Shipyard work to increase in volume to 9000 people which
228 could impact hotel.

229 Conclusion:

- 230 • Materials will be posted
- 231 • Planner, Chris DiMatteo is the contact for comments
- 232 • 11/9/2017 Planning Board meeting
- 233 • Providing Feedback and involvement is important

234 Meeting ends 7:50pm.

235 Meeting Minutes: Michelle McDonald

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