

## **Chatham Route 28 /Crowell Road – August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

### **Public Involvement Goals and Overall Approach**

The goal of this outreach effort is to provide the Town of Chatham with a public involvement process that actively seeks community input to help develop and refine a design for the reconstruction of the intersection of Route 28 and Crowell Road.

As the Town's consultant, Howard Stein Hudson (HSH) will continue to work closely with the Town to achieve reasonable agreement as to how to best redesign the intersection of Route 28 and Crowell Road in Chatham. This work will take place within the context of the Town's broader Route 28 Corridor Visioning Project and the West Chatham Roadway Design Project as needed and appropriate such that members of the community will understand both the distinct and overlapping aspects of these efforts. In spite of the general understanding of Route 28/Crowell Road as an intersection in need of improvement, it is recognized that all parties involved are unlikely to arrive at unanimous agreement on a preferred design. The objective is to solidify widely shared support for and understanding of the design concept and details, thereby allowing the project to move forward in the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) process.

Public involvement efforts for this project will continue to be organized into two interconnected and mutually-supporting tracks:

1. Face-to-face outreach efforts including:
  - One briefing for state and local officials;
  - Face-to-face meetings with business operators and abutters regarding their experiences with the intersection, how it is used, and issues they see with regard to it. At the time of this update, this task has already been performed and a summary memo prepared.
  - A series of public information meetings including:
    - i. A kick-off meeting to introduce the project to the community – already completed at the time of this writing;
    - ii. A follow-up session once all needed data has been gathered and a set of concepts for design underway;
    - iii. An official MassDOT 25% design public hearing; and,
2. Virtual outreach centering on a project website. This website will have its own unique appearance, but will also be clearly branded as belonging to the Town of Chatham. HSH will provide the Town with a button and web link to place on [www.chatham-ma.gov](http://www.chatham-ma.gov). At the time of this update, the website has been in test mode, that is invisible to general web users, since summer 2015. It was shared with the town which provided comments back to HSH. The amendments were performed, but final go-ahead to post was never received. This posting should now be made as soon as possible.

The other major component of the digital outreach effort will be responding to emails from community members. Our experience shows this to be a preferred method of communication

for Chatham residents. All email replies will be subject to approval by HSH project manager Joe SanClemente and the Town of Chatham in the person of Terry Whalen before they are sent.

Based on suggestions we have received from the Town of Chatham, a brief web survey regarding the intersection, how it is used, and commonly experienced problems associated with it will be put together and analyzed by HSH. Questions will be single response to speed up survey taking and ease data reduction. While HSH will place information regarding the survey on the project website and is happy to email burst the link to the survey, the Town of Chatham will assist in getting the word out about the survey through other local methods. At the time of this update, this survey has not as yet been undertaken. As an element of data collection, signal to the community of the transparency of the project, and opportunity to confirm or revise key themes seen in the abutter interviews, this item should likewise be undertaken as soon as possible.

## **The Public Involvement Process**

### **Meetings**

HSH will conduct a face-to-face public involvement effort supplemented by digital outreach. This element of the outreach process will address members of the local public as well as both elected and appointed officials. The timing of meetings will be coordinated with the Town of Chatham to ensure that community members are not required to choose between attending a session regarding Crowell Road/Route 28 and one addressing another topic of public interest. Notification regarding upcoming meetings will be provided in the *Cape Cod Chronicle*, on the project website, and via email blast to the project's stakeholder database.

### **The General Public**

We anticipate meeting with the general public three times during the course of the project. An initial public information meeting was held in June of 2015 to introduce the project and project team to the community and to allow residents, business-owners, and other stakeholders to provide questions and comments regarding the intersection of Crowell Road and Route 28. A second public information meeting will be held after the project team has collected all of the appropriate data and has evolved several options for consideration by the public. Based on reaction to these designs, one will be taken into the MassDOT 25% design process. The second meeting would be followed by the official MassDOT 25% design public hearing. The third general audience public meeting will be the official MassDOT 25% design public hearing. This meeting will be run by MassDOT supported by the consultant team. HSH is deeply familiar with the requirements of holding a DOT public hearing and will work with the agency and Town to ensure both a successful meeting and one which adheres to current DOT regulations. HSH will take the lead in preparing the materials for these meetings such as handouts and PowerPoint presentations and document the meeting through the production of minutes. These materials will also be added to the project documents section of the project website.

### **State and Local Officials**

HSH expects to brief state and particularly local elected and appointed officials once during the course of the project. Our experience suggests that this briefing should be held shortly before the second public information meeting to allow local officials such as police, fire, and EMS to provide input on the evolving design in a more relaxed setting than can be achieved in a large scale public information meeting. State and local officials, both elected and appointed, have been added to the project's mailing list and will be encouraged to attend public meetings. HSH will take the lead in preparing the materials for these briefings such as handouts and PowerPoint presentations and document the meeting through the production of minutes. These materials will also be added to the project documents section of the

### **Abutter Survey**

Prior to the initial public information meeting outlined in the previous section, HSH will spoke with the owners and/or operators of abutting businesses and properties at the intersection of Crowell Road. Working with the Town, HSH ensured that these interviews all took place all on one day in June of 2015. These short conversations focused on the key informants' experience with the intersection, issues they have seen in terms of safety, things that work about the space, things that do not, and their general experiences as abutters. Based on input received from the Town, HSH worked to create a short, standardized key informant protocol which will operate much like a survey. Data reduction was performed by HSH and the findings summarized in a memo which can be used by the Town and project team to guide and inform other elements of the public involvement process.

### **Digital Outreach**

Over the past several years, HSH has created a number of successful websites for an array of projects in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey. Development of such a website is included as one of the key outreach methods for this project. As noted above, the site is currently complete, but final permission to post it has never been issued by the town. The site should be launched as soon as possible. This unique appearance helps to define the project and give it an identity in the eyes of the community at large. A prominent link to the Town's website is displayed on the site to ensure a clear connection between the project and the Town of Chatham. The project website will serve as:

- A 24-hour point of contact for the project, allowing members of the public to learn about the project on their own time outside of scheduled public meetings;
- A method to ensure that the project maintains a community presence before and between public meetings;
- One of several methods through which members of the community can learn about upcoming public meetings;
- A repository for project documents such as presentations and minutes of meetings; and
- A mechanism through which members of the public can add themselves to the stakeholder database and mailing list.

This website provides users with an overview of the project and information to help distinguish the Crowell Road/Route 28 project from other projects addressing Route 28 in Chatham. Contact

information for the project's public involvement specialist HSH's Nathaniel Curtis, will also be available and easy to locate.

As the project grows and develops, the website will keep pace with it, with changes made and materials added as appropriate. During the website's initial operation, HSH will coordinate closely with the Town of Chatham regarding what materials are made available. As the project moves forward, we anticipate that basic maintenance functions such as the posting of meeting minutes will become automatic, requiring minimal Town input. The website will include an FAQ page which will be updated regularly and used as a primary avenue through which questions routinely raised by the community can be answered. It should be noted that this element of the site is not yet operative, but will be developed over time. One of the first documents to be posted to the project website will be a fact sheet, developed by HSH under the direction of the Town. This fact sheet will be made available throughout the community both digitally and in print. At this time, the fact sheet remains unwritten and should be undertaken soon.

Drawing from the list of interviewees, interested parties visiting the project website and attendees at the public meetings, HSH has built and will continue to maintain a data base of interested parties. This database will be developed in such a way as to be sortable so that it can support required notifications as the intersection design project advances. The database will include, but not be limited to, local and state officials, abutters, property, and business owners.

Based on input received from the Town of Chatham, HSH will conduct a very brief web survey for soliciting information regarding the Crowell Road intersection from a broad cross-section of Chatham residents. HSH will perform the data reduction and summarize the findings in the form of a memo which will guide and inform further public involvement as well the ongoing design effort. Under our current scope, we are prepared to issue an email burst regarding the survey and place information on the project website, however, any further outreach, such as a card placed in summer theater programs as suggested by Deanna Ruffer, will need to be performed by the Town. As noted above, this work has not yet been undertaken, but should be relatively soon.

### **Working with the Town of Chatham**

It is our goal to conduct a public involvement process that solicits and makes real use of community input. We believe that throughout the process, but especially at the outset, it will be important to show that the project team and Town are open to community input having an impact on the project's outcome. While this project is generally considered to be non-controversial, for reasonable agreement to develop, it is important to ensure that community members feel that they have had an opportunity to be heard and their thoughts incorporated rather than just being used as a "rubber stamp" for an approach developed in a vacuum by the consulting team. At all steps of the process, we will work closely with the Town to ensure that materials given to the public are accurate and aligned with the Town's goals. During the project, we will keep in touch with the Town regularly by telephone and email.

If at any point during the public involvement process you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We look forward to working with you on this exciting project.