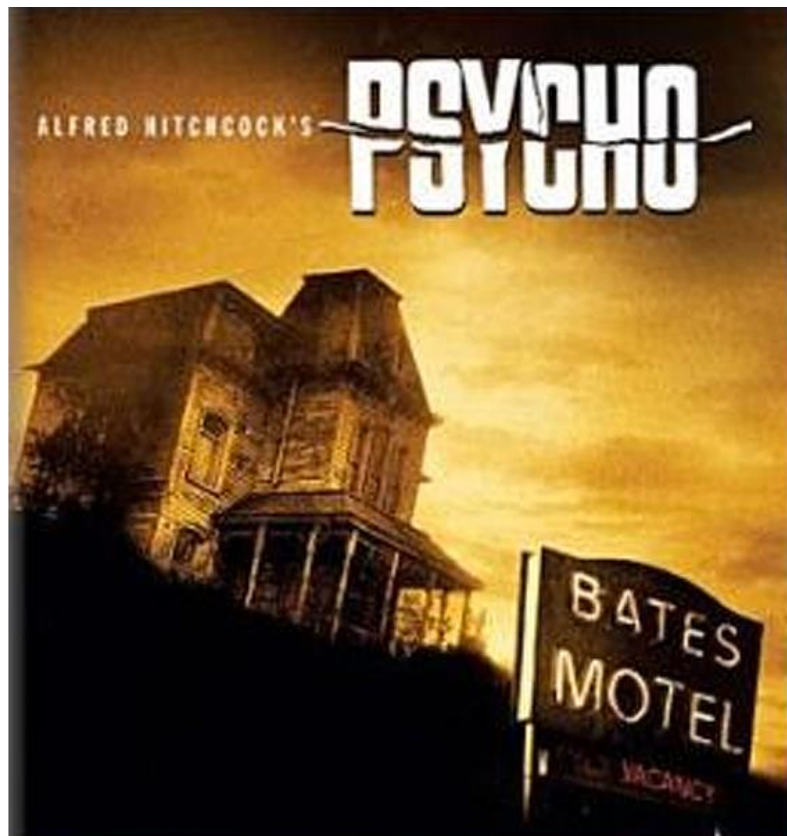


Those in the audience may wish to grab their smartphones and go to www.nottinghamroads.org and click on the link for this speech so that they can see the many pictures, references, and hyperlinks to highway engineering resources that I will be referring to in my presentation.

—

With this being Halloween night it is oddly fitting that gruesome issues thought to be dead and buried should rise from their graves, and for the Board of Selectmen to find itself haunted by such an apparition that appears before you now - although I assure you, I'm not as scary as my cousin Norman Bates is.



However, since the town has literally sent bulldozers to dig up things it was told to leave alone, zombies of issues past have been raised from the dead.

The bulldozers I'm talking about were the ones sent to make changes in roads that the voters told the town to keep as is.

And, at about the same time, at your most recent meeting, the Interim Town Administrator raised from the dead road standards that the voters had put a stake through. To feed this resurrected road standard vampire, the Interim Town Administrator twice called for bleeding the taxpayers of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In many ghost stories some naive people - usually teenagers - find themselves lost in the dark on country roads in some unfamiliar place where they unknowingly do something that unleashes evil spirits. That seems to be what has happened here to our new Interim Town Administrator.

As the Board of Selectmen knows, we had some issues a couple of years ago that got the town sued. To stop the madness, the town's voters intervened. They said that they thought a bunch of old roads in town should be considered town roads and left as is. To ensure that they would remain as is, the voters got rid of the town's freshly created road standards.

I'd like to see the Board of Selectmen play hero in our little ghost story tonight by rescuing the Interim Town Administrator from the house of horrors that he's wandered into. Would the Board please make it clear tonight that:

- That these alleged town road standards do not in fact exist.
- That the town's website still says we have the road standards that were overturned by the voters is an oversight, which will be corrected now that it has been pointed out.

Policies & Ordinances

- [Municipal Buildings Reservation Form](#)
- [Municipal Field User Policy](#)
- [Special Event License Application](#)
- [Winter and Inclement Weather Road Maintenance Policy rev. 10-18-2021](#)
- [Road Standards](#)

[View all](#)

- That the Board is committed to having the town follow the wishes of both the voters and residents about not pursuing such an unwanted project.
- And that the Board is also committed to driving away this ghoulish apparition of raising our taxes by such an enormous sum.

Back when this issue was being heavily debated last year lots of attention was focused on how the town's newly created road standards would be costly for the taxpayers and therefore should be gotten rid of. Very little attention was given to the non-financial reasons for rejecting these standards. I wrote about these last year at www.NottinghamRoads.org, and how these road standards would make our roads more dangerous. That issue got little attention back then, but now that the town has destroyed some of those features, making our roads more hazardous, it deserves attention now.

These roads are old-fashioned mixed-use residential rural roads. Some of these roads long predate the invention of automobiles. These roads were intended to be used not only by cars but by pedestrians, bicyclists, and, back in the day, horses. They continue to be heavily used by recreational walkers and bicyclists. Some are children going to and from the school bus stops. Some are at least as old as Steve Soreff here, as he's one of the recreational walkers I regularly see. I suspect we'd all agree that Steve would have difficulty dodging a speeding car coming at him.

There is a mistaken assumption that wider and straighter roads are safer. If you are only concerned about maximizing passenger safety while minimizing driving time that might be true, but the key concern for roads used by pedestrians is the safety of the pedestrians. Pedestrians are not protected by reinforced steel, crumple zones, seat belts, and airbags. Pedestrians are protected by vigilant drivers. Wide, straight roads do not make for vigilant drivers. Wide straight roads make for fast drivers and dead pedestrians.

According to [Smart Growth America](#):

“The number of people struck and killed while walking reached yet another new high in 2020. ... a 4.5 percent increase over 2019. This epidemic continues growing worse because our nation's streets are dangerous by design, designed primarily to move cars quickly at the expense of keeping everyone safe. The result in 2020 was a significant increase in all traffic fatalities, even with less driving overall due to the pandemic.”

It seems that in the horse and buggy days, people who laid out roads understood intuitively how to make a safe multi-use rural road. These road builders made roads that were safe for themselves, their families, and their livestock.

These are good roads. Roads that the voters directed the town to conserve.

We now have decades of experience with wide, straight roads going through residential areas. They're dangerous. We know about the human factors that make such roads dangerous. Highway engineers know how to design roads that are safe for pedestrians to share with automobiles.

And, guess what? These modern, safer designs have many of the features found on Nottingham's old roads - features that the town has not only recently been destroying, but it is now talking about spending hundreds of thousands of dollars so that they can make the destruction more thorough.

The safety features our forebears built into our roads now go by the term “traffic calming.” [The Institute of Transportation Engineers \(ITE\) defines traffic calming](#) as “the combination of measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.” Traffic calming consists of physical design and other measures put in place on existing roads to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. [The US Department of](#)

[Transportation endorses traffic calming and provides online resources for implementing it.](#)

I will introduce you to a few examples of modern [traffic-calming engineering features recommended by the ITE](#) and show you examples of the same features Nottingham is blessed with on its old roads.

Chicane

A [chicane](#) is a series of alternating curves or lane shifts that force a motorist to steer back and forth instead of traveling a straight path.

Example Suburban Chicane



Example Nottingham Chicane



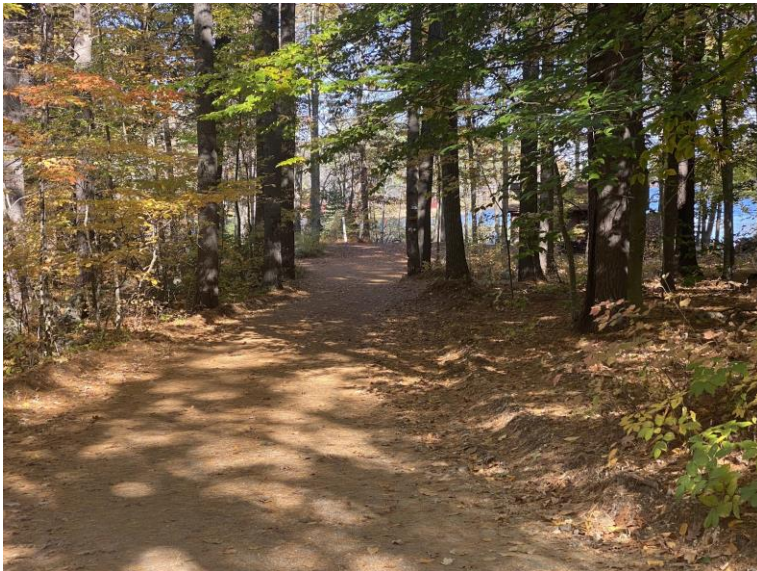
Choker

A [choker](#) is a narrowing of a roadway through the use of curb extensions or roadside islands.

Example Suburban Choker



Example Nottingham Choker



Half-Closure

A [half -closure](#) is a barrier that blocks travel in one direction for a short distance on otherwise two-way roads.

Example Suburban Half-Closure



Example Nottingham Half-Closure



Realigned Intersection

A [realigned intersection](#) is an intersection with skewed approaches or travel paths through the intersection.

Example Suburban Realigned Intersection



Example Nottingham Realigned Intersection



Road Diet

A [road diet](#) is a narrowing of the travel lanes.

Example Urban Road Diet

In this example, a four-lane road was reduced to three lanes.



Example Nottingham Road Diet



Speed Hump

A [speed hump](#) is a rounded raised area typically 12 to 14 feet in length.

Example Suburban Speed Hump



Example Nottingham Speed Hump



What an Unsafe Road Looks Like

Here's an example of a wide, straight section of this same road I've been showing you. Pay particular attention to the sign that the residents on this section of road put up, begging people to slow down.



While no one likes seeing the town having to spend money undoing what it should never have done, the residents of these roads that have been straightened and widened deserve some form of restitution. This can be accomplished by creating traffic calming features at the spots the town has made dangerously straight and wide.

This could be done inexpensively. Our forebears didn't spend much money doing it. For example, traffic calming features can be created by simply dumping piles of rocks to create a choker or half-closure or road diet. I know we have some supply chain problems, but New Hampshire has yet to suffer a scarcity of rocks.

I think we should start talking about sections of town roads where high speeds are endangering pedestrians and how those roads could be modified to make them safer by making them less wide and less straight, and how in our era the town can operate with the same attention to pedestrian safety and the same level of ingenuity and frugality that our ancestors used in building our old roads.

But for now, could the Board please do something to reassure the public that the Board is going to put these evil spirits back into their graves by:

- Assuring everyone that the voters did indeed void the town's road standards.
- Saying that someone simply forgot to remove those road standards from the website and that you'll make sure they're removed after this meeting.

- Assuring the public that the town has no intention of raising taxes to bring our roads up to those standards the voters got rid of.
- And assuring us that the recent changes in layout to some of our roads was done by mistake, and that there is no program of applying to our roads the road standards that the voters got rid of.