



## Engineering Services Division

# Traffic Operations Committee

## Meeting Minutes - October 18, 2011

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services Division  
Steve Henninger, Planning Division  
Jim Major, General Services  
Bill Dexter, Concord Police Department  
Sean Brown, Concord Fire Department  
Rick Wollert, Concord Fire Department  
Jennifer Kretovic, Concord 20/20

Visitors:  
Robert Stein, The Stein Law Firm (Item C.4 only)

### Regular Discussion Items

- 1) **Overview of city-wide accident data, including prior-month accident summary and discussion of select accident locations, circumstances and potential action.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Traffic accident data for September 2011 was reviewed. There were 78 reportable accidents in September 2011. This compares with 76 and 105 reportable accidents in September 2010 and 2009, respectively. 20 accidents resulted in total of 29 people injured, with 11 of those injuries occurring on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There was one accident involving a pedestrian: a pedestrian aged 79 years walking in the parking lot at Borders and being struck by a vehicle backing out of a parking space (minor injury, driver not identified).

There were three accidents involving bicyclists: a bicyclist aged 17 years traveling northbound on S. State Street, and while crossing the intersection at Pleasant Street on a green signal, being struck by a southbound vehicle turning left onto Pleasant Street (minor injuries, driver at fault, no helmet worn); a bicyclist aged 32 years traveling southbound on N. Main Street on the sidewalk and being struck by an eastbound vehicle turning from Washington Street (minor injury, bicyclist at fault, no helmet worn); and a bicyclist aged 54 years traveling southbound on Manchester Street against traffic and being struck by a vehicle turning out of ASA Automotive (minor injuries, bicyclist at fault, no helmet worn).

- 2) **City Council meeting update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At their October 11, 2011 meeting, Council accepted TPAC's interim report on CAT and set public hearings for November 14, 2011 for proposed Ordinance changes including: new handicap parking spaces at the West/Badger intersection; relocated handicap parking space at the N. Main/Park intersection; and the no parking/standing/stopping zone on South Street at Conant/Rundlett Schools.

3) **Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its September 22, 2011 meeting, TPAC discussed its interim report on CAT, heard a presentation on the State Transportation Coordinating Council, and discussed the status of the North-South Bike Route and twice-a-year pavement marking program.

B. **On-going Discussion and Action Items.**

1) **Referral from Councilor Shurtleff regarding a constituent concern on traffic speeds on Penacook Street in the vicinity of Merrimack Street in Penacook. (Council: 9/04/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern from Kevin LeBlanc of 2 Penacook Street about high vehicle speeds turning at the corner of Penacook Street and Merrimack Street, as well as behavior of traffic to and from the boat launch area north of the intersection. Councilor Shurtleff additionally requested that TOC consider lowering the 35 mph speed limit on Penacook Street to 30 mph. Other options requested for TOC consideration included posting a school zone near Penacook Elementary School and possibly installing a speed bump or raised intersection table at the corner of Penacook and Merrimack Streets.

Mr. LeBlanc's prior and similar request for STOP signs at the intersection was considered by TOC at its September 15, 2009 meeting. At that time, TOC concurred that STOP signs were not necessary, but recommended the addition of 10 MPH advisory speed plaques on existing curve signs in advance of the intersection. The advisory speed plaques were installed by General Services shortly thereafter.

Penacook Street and Merrimack Street intersect at a right angle. The turn in the road at this location is currently signed with TURN AHEAD warning signs with 10 MPH advisory speed plaques on both the Penacook and Merrimack Street approaches. A street light is located at the corner and sight lines are appropriate. Regarding safety, Concord Police Department records for this intersection indicate two reported accidents in the nearly eight years since January 2004. One accident occurred in August 2009 and involved a northbound vehicle failing to negotiate the turn and crashing into a tree at #127 Merrimack Street; the driver was charged with DWI and speeding. The second crash occurred in May 2011 when a northbound vehicle struck a fire hydrant at the intersection and fled the scene heading westbound on Merrimack Street. 2011 traffic counts at various locations along Penacook Street indicate average weekday traffic volumes ranging between 460 and 480 vehicles per day. Speed limits are 35 mph along Penacook Street and 30 mph along Merrimack Street.

Following up on TOC's discussion last month, Engineering compiled speed data at several locations along Penacook Street and one location on Merrimack Street. These locations were selected to document actual speeds both in the vicinity of the Penacook/Merrimack intersection as well as along Penacook Street for purpose of assessing the posted speed limit. Speed data is summarized below.

Penacook north of Rolfe: (September 12-14, 2011) southbound	Average Speed 85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	26 mph northbound 32 mph northbound	27 mph southbound 34 mph southbound
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Penacook near Rolfe Park: (September 14-16, 2011) southbound	Average Speed 85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	35 mph northbound 42 mph northbound	35 mph southbound 40 mph southbound
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Penacook north of Elem School: (September 14-16, 2011)	Average Speed	34 mph northbound	34 mph southbound
	85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	40 mph northbound	42 mph southbound

Merrimack west of Penacook: (October 6-13, 2011)	Average Speed	24 mph eastbound	23 mph westbound
	85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	31 mph northbound	30 mph southbound

Bill Dexter reported that the Traffic Enforcement Unit monitored speeds on Penacook Street north of Rolfe Street for 1.75 hours on the morning of September 7, 2011. Of all traffic observed, only two vehicles were exceeding the posted 35mph speed limit and neither was determined to be driving unreasonably for conditions. These observations are also consistent with the speed count reported above.

Based on observations by police and engineering staff as well as the vehicle speed data, TOC members felt that overall vehicle operation in and around the Penacook/Merrimack intersection appeared reasonable and did not justify significant additional roadway or traffic control changes. The sharp right turn at the intersection acts to substantially lower travel speed at the intersection. Existing advisory turn and 10 mph signs and overhead lighting are appropriate for the location and the low volume of local traffic.

There is evidence of occasional speeding and/or careless driving. Mr. LeBlanc provided TOC with an account of a late-night speeder that came to a screeching stop near the intersection then accelerated rapidly away. The speed counts also indicated a few individuals travelling in excess of 40 mph just beyond the intersection. Such inappropriate driver behavior is best addressed through enforcement action. As enforcement of occasional transgressions along lightly travelled streets can be time-consuming, it is helpful if residents can assist enforcement by providing vehicle descriptions or times of day when careless driving occurs. It was noted that a state police cruiser (off-duty) is often parked outside on a residential property near the intersection and might act to entice some of the careless driving incidents.

Penacook Street has a double yellow centerline that ends prior to the intersection. TOC concurred with a suggestion to extend the yellow centerline on a radius through the turn in the intersection much as the centerline on Community Drive swings onto Allen Street near the high school. General Services will plan to paint the centerline extension the next time the long lines on Penacook Street are repainted.

TOC did not feel that the potential use of vertical deflection (speed humps or raised tables) at or near the intersection was necessary; the 90-degree turn at the intersection already acts to slow traffic. Merrimack Street is an emergency response route providing access to the boat launch area at the river. CFD staff also provided TOC with a negative opinion regarding potential placement of vertical deflection at this intersection. Another consideration is that vertical deflection might increase noise impacts for nearby residents, particularly because of the location of the boat ramp access at the intersection.

A 35 mph speed limit is currently posted along the length of Penacook Street, from Merrimack Street to Abbott Road. As the length of Penacook Street is within the Urban Compact, the speed limit by statute should be 30 mph, rather than the 35 mph which appears to have been posted for many years. TOC also felt that the statutory 30 mph speed limit would be more appropriate given the travel speeds recorded north of Rolfe Street. The lower speed limit would also be appropriate at the

southerly end of the street near Abbott Road and Penacook Elementary School. As such, TOC recommended that the posted speed limit be revised to 30 mph along the length of the street, with a report to City Council to be prepared by Engineering. Staff would plan to monitor traffic speeds along the street following a change in posted speed limit.

The implementation of a school zone in the area of Penacook Elementary School had been discussed by TOC in the past. TOC understands that the school specifically did not want a school zone established as it requires all students to come by bus or car. Several walkers from the Abbott Road area are exceptions, but since sidewalk is along the school side of Penacook Street there is no need to cross Penacook Street in the school vicinity. School speed zones are limited by State RSA's to 45 minutes before and after school hours, and thus have little effect on traffic speeds throughout most of the day. In any event, a request for a school speed zone should come from the school district.

### C. **New Discussion and Action Items**

- 1) **Request by Ann Lightfoot of 18 Conant Drive with concerns on school drop-off parking on Conant Drive near the cut-through path to Conant School. (Engineering: 9/29/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern about parked vehicles related to dropping off students on Conant Drive in the vicinity of the cut-through path to Conant School. Parked vehicles line both sides of the street limiting the width of the street to one lane for two-way traffic. Vehicles park on or next to the painted crosswalk reducing safety for pedestrian crossings. Vehicles parking on the south side of Conant Drive also pull onto the grass lawn of #19. Ms. Lightfoot noted that this parking issue seemed new with the start of classes in September.

Rob Mack visited the site on a morning prior to the start of school and observed all of the above. CPD was contacted regarding parking on the crosswalk and restricting the travel way and patrols were directed to monitor the situation. The school district was also notified of the situation. Principal Deb McNeish noted she would get word out to parents. The issue was further discussed by the Parking Committee on October 17, 2011, following which staff installed several temporary No Parking signs in the vicinity of the crosswalk. Staff will continue to monitor. It is likely that the desire to drop children off here is compounded by current school construction, and is expected to abate next year when the new parking and drop-off area is completed on the new school campus.

- 2) **Request by Betsey McNamara of 40 Roger Avenue to consider installing guardrail or boulders along the north side of Roger Avenue near her property along the drop-off at the bluff. (Engineering: 10/06/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is the drop-off along the northeast end of Roger Avenue in the vicinity of the bluff. The resident request is to install guardrail or some form of barrier along Roger Avenue in this area.

The subject drop-off is located at the end of Roger Avenue at the hammerhead turnaround. Traffic exposure is limited to an occasional U-turn vehicle at the turnaround or vehicles destined for the residence at #40. The top of slope was measured to be about 13 ft beyond the edge of pavement. There is a single delineator post located near a manhole at the top of slope. TOC members concurred that the addition of physical barriers was not justified at this location due to low traffic exposure and 13 ft level area beyond the edge of pavement. General Services suggested that it

would add a few more reflective delineator posts along the subject area.

- 3) **Request by John Cusano of 40-42 Canterbury Road to install a driveway from the commercial facility at 40 Pembroke Road to Regional Drive to alleviate truck traffic on Canterbury Road. (Engineering: 10/06/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Mr. Cusano's residence on Canterbury Road is opposite the rear parking lot entrance to the Sprague Electric site. At issue is a concern on increased truck traffic entering/exiting the rear parking lot at this location due to a truck-driver training program, including some trucks standing and idling on Canterbury Road while the gate to the rear lot entrance is opened/closed. Requested is consideration of constructing a direct driveway connection from this site onto Regional Drive so that the southerly site driveway on Canterbury Road can be closed.

The Sprague site has primary access points along Canterbury Road as well as access to a small visitor lot from Pembroke Road. Site access was apparently designed with truck activity to occur at the rear (south) side of the facility. Trucks accessing the rear lot use the more southerly (gated) driveway on Canterbury Road because the northerly driveway accesses the automobile (employee) parking area where maneuverability of large vehicles becomes restricted. TOC members felt that an option to redevelop site access directly to Regional Drive had some merit for consideration, but that any such proposal would need to come from the Sprague site owner.

- 4) **Referral from the Parking Committee regarding a request from The Stein Law Firm to remove parking near the Barberry Lane driveway. (Parking: 10/17/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Barberry Lane is a private way acting as a driveway for The Stein Law Firm (#1 Barberry Lane or 81 Pleasant Street) to the south side of Pleasant Street roughly opposite the intersection with Merrimack Street. Along the south side of Pleasant Street there is No Parking to the west of Barberry Lane. To the east, the No Parking zone extends to about one car length beyond Barberry Lane, roughly coinciding with the No Parking Here to Corner sign located on the north side of Pleasant Street east of Merrimack Street. At issue is the space for approximately one on-street parked vehicle east of the No Parking zone between Barberry Lane and the next driveway at #79. Mr. Stein presented his concern at the October 17, 2011 meeting of the Parking Committee that he and most of his employees turn right from Barberry Lane and head toward downtown on Pleasant Street. When a vehicle is parked in the subject space, he feels there is not sufficient sight line to the east to see approaching vehicles from Pleasant Street westbound which may cross the centerline into the eastbound lane and potentially conflict with a vehicle turning right from Barberry Lane. Mr. Stein provided TOC with photographs of the condition. Mr. Stein's request is to extend the No Parking zone on the south side of Pleasant Street to the driveway of #79, essentially removing space for one parked vehicle.

Rob Mack reported that the Parking Committee discussed this request at its October 17, 2011 meeting, with Mr Stein in attendance to present his concerns. The Parking Committee indicated its disapproval of potentially removing the subject on-street parking space, unless the TOC otherwise recommends its removal for safety reasons. As such the issue was referred to TOC.

A parked car about 30 feet east of Barberry Lane does affect sight lines to the east, requiring a reasonable level of care for drivers exiting the driveway; this is typical for most driveways in the City's urban core where on-street parking exists. City Ordinance prohibits on-street parking within 5 feet of private driveways. Barberry Lane has parking setbacks (along the south side of Pleasant Street) that

exceed this minimum; there is no on-street parking to the west of Barberry Lane, and no parking for about a 30-foot distance to the east. TOC members questioned the need for an increase in sight lines to the right for a driveway right turn around a parked car. Measurements made from the City's GIS aerial maps indicated that Pleasant Street was about 38 feet wide just east of Barberry Lane near the subject parking space. That allows for an 8 ft parking lane on both sides and two roughly 11-foot travel lanes. TOC members felt that 11-foot wide lanes were adequate for traffic including trucks, and would not result in through traffic needing to encroach in the opposite travel direction under normal circumstances.

TOC members concurred that right-turn egress from Barberry Lane was reasonable, and in fact better than many of the adjacent driveways along the street to the east due to the increased parking setbacks. Members further felt that travel lanes of about 11 feet wide were ample for through travel, and that a right-turning vehicle from Barberry Lane would have adequate opportunity to execute a safe right turn. This consensus opinion was conditioned on a confirmation of the actual travel lane width on Pleasant Street at the location of the parked car. *(Rob Mack field measured Pleasant Street just east of Barberry Lane the following day to be about 38 feet wide curb-to-curb with an eastbound lane width of about 19 feet providing 8 feet for a parked vehicle and an 11-foot travel lane.)*

D. 

- 1) **Staff response to miscellaneous inquiries (refer to correspondence in agenda packet).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

- 2) **Discussion of monthly meeting time.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TOC historically meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM. Meetings typically run to between 3:00 and 4:00 PM. To better accommodate the schedule of members who have regular hours ending at 3:00 PM, attendees concurred that beginning the meeting at 12:00 PM with end of business by around 3:00 PM would be an acceptable change. Rob Mack will solicit opinion on the potential time change from those not in attendance today and will report back prior to the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer  
Chair, Traffic Operations Committee

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on  
Tuesday, November 15, 2011 @ 1:00 PM in the 2<sup>ND</sup> Floor Conference Room.***