



CITY OF CONCORD

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MINUTES

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee met virtually at 5:30 p.m., on July 12, 2021.

Attendees: Craig Tufts, Dick Lemieux, Boyd Smith

Staff: Sam Durfee, Senior Planner, Staff Representative
Dave Cedarholm, City Engineer

Absent: Greg Bakos

1. Minutes of the June 7, 2020 Meeting

Boyd motioned to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2021 meeting, Craig seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Loudon Road Bridge Replacement

Dick provided a Google Sketchup drawing that depicted three different bridge layouts. All three provided 11-foot-wide travel lanes and a 4-foot median. They differ in the alignments of sidewalks and shoulders. Options include; 1) 13-foot-wide shared use paths (SUPs) and 2-foot shoulders on either side, 2) 10-foot-wide SUPs and 5-foot shoulders on either side, or 3) a 14-foot-wide SUP with a 5-foot shoulder on one side and a 6-foot sidewalk with 5-foot shoulder on the other.

The group discussed the three options at length. Option 1 was not seen as viable given the shoulders do not provide adequate area for snow storage, a partial breakdown lane, or as a bike path for cyclists who choose not to ride on the sidewalk. Dave pointed out that the SUPs in option 2 would effectively be less than 10-foot-wide, and therefore substandard given the squeezing effect of the bridge rail on one side and the 6-inch curb drop off on the other. He added that a 2-foot-wide textured curb buffer will be applied to the curb side of the SUPs.

Dick stated that making SUPs on both sides in equal width leaves both sides viable and will be an improvement to current conditions, but would likely see reduced use if a pedestrian bridge over the Merrimack River is ever constructed. Craig added that the speed of bike traffic on the bridge would likely be slower than it would on an open rail trail, which is not a bad thing from a safety perspective. Craig also discussed the every-day transportation utility that having a path on both sides would bring, and being forced to cross Loudon Rd twice is not desirable and few bicyclists would probably do it.

Dave shared the impacts of a pedestrian crossing (push button crosswalk) at Loudon Rd east of Fort Eddy that HDR, the City's consultant, studied. The series of intersections on Loudon Rd starting at Main Street are timed and any random stops triggered by a pedestrian push button have the ability to cause significant back ups on Loudon Rd and Fort Eddy. Members of the subcommittee agreed that a pedestrian crossing at this location was not reasonable given the impacts on traffic flow and that there are adequate crossings at the Loudon Rd shopping Plaza (serving non-motorized users from the Heights) and at Main St and Stickney Ave (serving users from downtown).

Discussion continued regarding which side of the bridge the 14-foot shared use path would go on if that option was selected. Dave shared a decision matrix that contemplated the number of road and railroad crossings, number of easements or property acquisitions, ease of access to and from Fort Eddy Rd and Stickney Ave, avoidance of Loudon Rd and the I-93 underpass, and a reduction in the skew of the Loudon Rd bridge at Fort Eddy Rd. The option on the south side of the bridge scored the lowest due to the number of crossings and easements/property acquisitions required. Another challenge of the southern route is crossing the railroad by Storrs Street. There is a steep grade and the group was unsure an additional at grade crossing would be permitted.

Dave shared an idea to eliminate a Loudon Rd crossing to get to the northern side of the bridge, east of the river, that consists of a path under the bridge that loops around and ties in with the sidewalk just before the bridge. It was noted that this underpass could be inundated during times of high water. The group agreed this underpass would be a welcomed addition to the project even with closures due to high water.

Dave left the meeting at 6:50.

Discussion continued to note that bicycles would likely still ride on the 6' sidewalk on the one-side option, and questioned whether this was more or less hazardous than narrower paths on both sides. There was questioning as to whether it mattered if snow storage took place on a shoulder or on the side of a shared use path. The group also wondered what level of detail a two-sided option had previously been given and if there were any design elements that might improve safety on a narrow path.

The members of the subcommittee came to a consensus that a solution with a shared use path on both sides is strongly preferred if it can be made reasonably safe for all users of the roadway. If this is not deemed feasible, a 14-foot SUP may be better on the north side, but more discussion would be needed for a consensus.

Lane Striping Policy

Sam had distributed a rough draft of a lane striping policy before the meeting, and Boyd had made some markups. Due to the time, it was agreed that the lane striping policy discussion would hold off until the next meeting.

Outreach

Boyd shared a flyer with the group for comment. The purpose of this flyer is to advertise biking in Concord by sharing links to and information on related Master Plans, advocacy groups, and bike related events and seeks to raise awareness of biking issues by encouraging residents to reach out to their City Councilors. This flyer would be shared at Market Days and the S&W Bike Swap on July 31st.

Boyd will send this to subcommittee members for input on the flyer's content and appearance.

No other agenda items were discussed and will be on the agenda for the August 2nd meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18PM