



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

September 22, 2016, 6:00 PM
2nd floor Conference Room
City Hall, 41 Green Street, Concord, NH

Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (Vehicle Traffic Safety Operations; Chair)
Brent Todd (Council Representative)
Ursula Maldonado (Pedestrian and Trails Community)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Members Absent:

Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Jennifer Kretovic (Council Representative)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)

Staff and Guests:

Heather Shank, Acting City Planner

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 28, 2016 meeting were approved with minor amendment (Motion-Maldonado; Second-Todd; Unanimous).

3. Presentations - None

4. Public Comment - None

5. New Business - None

6. Old Business - None

7. Consent Reports

a. Acceptance of Subcommittee Minutes

The following subcommittee reports were accepted by unanimous consent: Bicycle/Pedestrian – July 5 and August 1, 2016; Public Transportation – July 19 and August 16, 2016; and Traffic Operations – June 21 and July 19, 2016.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Councilor Todd reported that at its September 12, 2016 meeting, City Council voted to reject the proposed three-lane conversion plan for the Loudon Road Corridor Improvements Project (CIP19). Rather, Council directed staff to consider a revised plan that keeps the 4-lane configuration but includes select sidewalk and access management improvements (driveway closures/modifications) to enhance safety to the extent possible.

TPAC members had considerable discussion of the Loudon Road Corridor and the potential role of TPAC as the city moves forward. Members felt that future visioning sessions and neighborhood charrettes should focus on corridor livability, much as had been successfully done several years ago in Penacook Village with the Penacook Village Association. Planning staff noted that the relatively new concept of form-based zoning was being explored and might be a helpful tool for planning the long-term redevelopment of the corridor.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from Engineering to consider speed limits city-wide (*Engineering: 11/19/15*)

Not discussed.

b. Referral from Council regarding a request from third grade students at Christa McAuliffe Elementary School for the installation of a 4-way stop at the intersection of Warren and Rumford Streets (*Council: 5/13/16*)

Rob Mack reported that Matt Cashman (Concord School District) and Chris Gallo (C-M Elementary School Principal) attended TOC's September 20, 2016 meeting and presented the request on behalf of the school. The Warren Street intersections at N. Spring Street and at Rumford Street are on adjacent corners of the school block and are on the walk-to-school routes. Crossing guards are located at both intersections. While the Warren/N. Spring intersection is a 4-way stop, the Warren/Rumford intersection is a 2-way stop with Warren Street being the non-stopping street. They noted that it was felt by some that traffic on Warren Street did not stop for the crossing guard at Rumford Street and that stop signs should be considered on the Warren Street approaches making it a 4-way stop intersection.

TOC considered the merits of the request. Regarding safety, the Warren/Rumford intersection had no reported crashes in the last three years. That compares with the Warren/N. Spring intersection that had four reported crashes in the same period. The city's stop sign policy allows for consideration of stop signs at intersections near school areas where there is a significant volume of pedestrian activity. As traffic volumes and speeds along Warren Street are fairly low, and there are already multiple stop locations on the blocks just east and west of the school location, TOC felt that the addition of another full-stop location would not have a significant impact on through-traffic flow along the street. The disparity in traffic control and pavement markings between adjacent intersections along Warren Street was also discussed: the Warren/N. Spring intersection has a 4-way stop and four painted crosswalks; while the Warren/Rumford intersection has a 2-way stop and four painted crosswalks. TOC felt that, given the unique characteristics of this and adjacent intersections and within the context of the school zone, addition of a 4-way (or multi-way) stop at the Warren/Rumford intersection would give both intersections the same look and operation, a consistency that could enhance expectations by both drivers and pedestrians in the immediate vicinity of the school.

TOC reviewed the current application of multi-way stop control at the intersections in the nearby neighborhood west to Liberty Street. It was felt that current multi-way stop locations were located somewhat arbitrarily throughout the neighborhood and that members still felt some uncertainty when driving through the area on whether the 'next intersection' would be a stop or not. Regarding an option to remove one other multi-way stop in the neighborhood in conjunction with adding the subject multi-way stop at the Warren/Rumford intersection, it was felt that less change in area traffic control at any one time would be potentially less confusing to drivers; only the change at the Rumford/Warren intersection was suggested at this time. TOC also discussed the current school-zone sign which is located on Warren Street facing eastbound traffic approaching the N. Spring Street intersection. TOC concurred that this sign should be relocated to west of the Rumford Street intersection due to the significant school-related activity that occurs on the Rumford Street corner.

After some discussion, TPAC indicated its unanimous consent in endorsing TOC's findings and recommendation to install a multi-way stop at the Warren/Rumford intersection.

c. Referral from Council in response to a communication from Councilor Herschlag regarding a constituent request to change the flashing yellow arrow signal at the Fisherville/Borough/Manor intersection back to a red/green arrow signal (Council: 7/11/16)

Rob Mack reported that this referral was discussed by TOC at its September 20, 2016 meeting. Since the intersection was first signalized in 2007, the northbound and southbound left-turn lanes were controlled by exclusive red, yellow and green arrows; left turns had to wait for an exclusive left-turn interval in order to turn. Other intersection traffic in turn had to wait at a red light until the exclusive left-turn signal phases ended. The flashing yellow arrow (FYA) operation was one of the improvements included in CIP35 Phase 6 and installed in November 2015. The purpose of the change was to reduce unnecessary intersection delays due to the need for the signal to cycle through multiple phases before being able to service a left-turn vehicle call. Furthermore, the conversion to FYA at this intersection establishes a consistent use of this type of traffic control at all signals from this location southward to McGuire Street, controls that have worked well and have been accepted by the traveling public since first initiated in 2010.

Last month, TPAC discussed its 2014 consideration of a Council referral regarding complaints by Snow Street residents of vehicle speeds and cut-through traffic choosing to avoid the signals at the subject intersection. Council accepted TOC/TPAC's September 30, 2014 report recommending the change in design to the FYA operation here in part to alleviate signal delays which may have been inducing Fisherville Road southbound traffic to use Snow Street as a cut-through bypass of the red arrow left turn signal at Manor Road. As requested last month, staff followed up with the residents of that referral. The resident was very appreciative of the city's efforts to install the FYA, but indicated that they had moved from their Snow Street residence early in the year and did not get much of a chance to notice changes in neighborhood traffic.

Regarding the current referral, staff contacted the Borough Road resident on August 5, 2016 to discuss her concerns. She felt that the lack of the former green left turn arrow did not leave enough time for cars to turn left into Borough Road and that risks were being taken by left turn vehicles to beat the light. Another concern was that left-turning traffic had to pull beyond the stop lines in order to safely turn left. Staff explained the reason for the change to FYA (a recent safety concept coming into practice nationwide over the last decade), how it works, and how drivers negotiate the turn. The resident asked that staff check out traffic peaks in September after schools resume classes.

Staff observed traffic operations during both the morning and afternoon traffic peaks in August and September. At these times minimal queues and delays were observed on the Fisherville Road and Village Street approaches, a significant reduction from that observed in prior years with the

red/green arrow operation. During commuter peaks, left-turn delays and ‘risky’ movements were not observed. Northbound and southbound left-turn delays were measured for two 30-minute periods (commuter peaks) on September 14, 2016 and indicated: 18 morning left turns per 30 minutes with average delay of 5.6 seconds; and 52 afternoon left turns per 30 minutes with average delay of 7.6 seconds. The substantial reduction in left-turn delay would effectively eliminate the desire for drivers to circumvent this intersection in order to ‘speed up’ a left turn movement. In the 9 months since the conversion to FYA there were two reported crashes at the intersection. This compares with four reported crashes in about 10 months of 2015 prior to the change. This is not indicative of a safety issue. Drivers making left turns were observed to do so properly and safely. Occasionally, a very conservative driver was seen waiting in the left turn lane on the green light for an unusually long time until even the most distant opposing vehicle passed by; the signal sensed the waiting turner and held the green light (with FYA) until the driver turned.

At its September 20, 2016 meeting the TOC concurred that the current FYA operation at the intersection is appropriate, safe and effective and recommended that the operation be continued full time, including during commuter peaks. Intersection performance has been significantly improved, there is no indication of safety issues and queueing and delays have been minimized reducing the potential to cause traffic to avoid the signal and cut through neighborhoods such as Snow Street. The change to FYA at this intersection establishes a consistent use of this type of traffic control with other signals along this corridor. Staff would continue to monitor traffic operations and safety.

After some discussion, TPAC indicated its unanimous consent in endorsing TOC’s findings and recommendation to retain the intersection’s current FYA operation as designed.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

a. Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (TPAC-BP), Craig Tufts

Craig Tufts reported that pursuant to recently-reported bicycle-motor vehicle crashes on NH Route 106 and Fisherville Road, TPAC-BP discussed bicycle-related traffic laws, with particular attention to distracted-driving and the ‘3-foot rule’. After considerable discussion, TPAC members felt it would be beneficial if a representative of Concord Police Department (CPD) could attend a TPAC meeting to discuss bicycle-related laws and CPD enforcement practice of same. Rob Mack will contact CPD and explore potential opportunities for CPD attendance at a future TPAC meeting. Craig Tufts offered to coordinate with TPAC-BP members and compile a list of prospective questions for CPD.

b. Public Transportation Committee (TPAC-PT), Sheila Zakre

Sheila Zakre reported that TPAC-PT continued its discussion of snow-maintenance at bus stops. Practices in other municipalities were researched and potential Federal funding programs were explored. CAT is going to observe bus stops this winter to better document bus stop and sidewalk conditions at Concord bus-stop locations. CNHRPC is conducting another CAT boarding and alighting study for the week before Thanksgiving and is looking for volunteers to assist with the data collection effort. There will also be a New Hampshire Statewide Coordinated Transportation Services Plan Public Meeting in Concord at 26 Horseshoe Pond Place on Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at 3:00 PM.

c. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC met earlier this week and discussed: a Council referral to consider adding multi-way stop control at the Warren/Rumford intersection (Item 9b); a resident request to consider changing the flashing yellow arrow at the Fisherville/Borough intersection (Item 9c); a request to consider changing the one-way direction on Federal Street; a request to pave Tallant

Road; and a request to consider a No Right Turn blank-out sign at the Clinton/Langley intersection.

11. Staff Updates

- a. Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project – TIGER 2012 (CIP460)**
Construction of the southbound (and final) side of S. Main Street is underway with project completion anticipated by November.
- b. Sewalls Falls Bridge Replacement Project (CIP 22)**
Construction ongoing with bridge opening anticipated around November 1.
- c. Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)**
See discussion under Item 8.
- d. Mountain/Shawmut/East Side/Exit 16 Roundabout (CIP 24)**
The project will be bid for construction next week. A two-phase construction is anticipated. Phase 1 will occur this fall and winter and will focus on utility pole relocation. Roundabout construction will occur next spring under Phase 2.
- e. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP543)**
The project design is still under review by the NHDOT.
- f. I-93 Bow-Concord (NHDOT)**
The project's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met for the first time this past summer. The TAC has not yet announced the next meeting step.
- g. Storrs Street Extension North (CIP18)**
The engineering study is underway, with traffic data collection to occur next week.

12. Other Discussion Items

- a. NHDOT's Community Technical Assistance Program Funds Available**
Craig Tufts noted that funding is available from NHDOT through the Community Technical Assistance Program for studies to mitigate area traffic impacts associated with major I-93 corridor improvements. Funding was established as part of the I-93 widening project from Manchester to Salem and intended to aid studies for communities along the I-93 corridor (includes Concord). He and Heather Shank will explore the potential for applying for grant funding for a Concord-area study.
- b. Staff Follow-up on Resident Concerns on Speeding**
Councilor Todd acknowledged recent staff responsiveness to resident concerns on speeding traffic along Merrimack Street and Community Drive in Penacook. Engineering staff promptly deployed radar speed counters to document traffic volume and speed conditions and coordinated findings with the Concord Police Department who provided directed speed-enforcement patrols. Residents expressed their appreciation for the prompt city response to their concerns.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 8:45 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: October 27, 2016
 November 17, 2016
 December 15, 2016