



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

December 14, 2017, 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)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Members Absent:

Jennifer Kretovic (Council Representative)
Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)

Staff and Guests:

Ed Roberge (City Engineer)
Rockingham Street Residents: Anthony Tenczar; Brian and Sarah Sartorelli; Justin Connell;
Mary Bombaci; Ruth Ann Herbert; Paul Deshattes.

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order with introductions by all attendees. As a number of guests were in attendance to speak on select items, the agenda order would be modified to begin with Item 3 followed by Items 9b, c and d.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 26, 2017 meeting were approved as submitted (Motion-Todd; Second-Sudak; Unanimous).

3. Public Comment

a. Rockingham Street Residents

Rob Mack introduced the discussion and noted that Mr. Tenczar had contacted him several weeks earlier regarding a meeting of several residents wherein concerns about traffic speed were discussed. A follow-up resident meeting was attended by CPD's Sgt. Casey and enforcement was discussed including a recent deployment of CPD's speed trailer. Engineering staff was also planning to conduct an updated volume/speed count on the street in the near future following completion of recent street

construction activity. It was noted that TPAC and TOC addressed a similar request from the neighborhood in 2008 resulting in a recommendation to: prioritize sidewalk construction, and in the interim, paint narrow traffic lanes with shoulders for walking and bicycling; retain the 30 mph speed limit and add two more speed limit signs; and conduct speed enforcement.

Skip Tenczar acknowledged TPAC and TOC's work with the residents ten years ago and noted positive outcomes including new sidewalk, several new pedestrian crosswalks and signs, additional speed limit signs and use of the speed trailer. Since then there has been a noticeable increase in the use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and six new families with children have moved in. The neighbors wanted to ask if TPAC could further consider additional traffic calming measures to help suppress speed. Other attendees from Rockingham Street noted difficult pedestrian crossings at Bow Street and Donovan Street due to traffic not stopping and limited sight lines from resident driveways to traffic approaching eastbound and coming out the of dip in the road near Donovan Street. Recently, several neighbors had posted 'Drive Like Your Kids Live Here' posters along their street frontages.

The Chair referred the residents' inquiries to TOC and invited guest attendees to speak to the committee at its next meeting on December 19, 2017. Mr. Tenczar offered to attend.

4. Presentations

a. Bike-Share Programs (John Stoll, Senior Planner)

John Stoll presented the state-of-the-art of bike-share programs. These are essentially publicly or privately owned fleets of bicycles available for individual, per-trip use for a small fee. Rather than make an urban trip by car or bus, a user has the opportunity to go to a bike-share station, acquire (and pay for via a cellphone app) a bicycle for a one-way or two-way trip, ride the bicycle to the intended destination and either leave the bicycle there or return it to another nearby station. A 'hub' system is used in Manchester and Portsmouth wherein the municipality located a number of bicycle docking stations throughout the city including bicycles which can be rented for a trip and returned to any of the docking stations. An emerging technology is a 'dockless' arrangement wherein the bicycle is equipped with GPS technology and its own locking system so that a user (via a phone app) can locate one of a number of units in the city, unlock it via the phone app, use it for a trip to the desired destination, and relock it there for availability to the next potential user. Noted were a number of US cities that provide a bike-share program, some publicly funded and some sponsored by private entities. Some programs have been highly popular while others have experienced very low user demand; geography, climate and location of service hubs with respect to popular destinations are factors. Manchester NH has a program with about half a dozen bicycle docking stations funded by private groups and businesses; the program started with low user demand but popularity has been increasing. The new dockless programs are becoming increasingly popular as they offer users with a more flexible, point-to-point service.

TPAC members discussed potential metrics that might be suitable in considering such a program for Concord, including: ridership; funding sustainability; public opinion; increased access to transportation; and increased bicycling awareness. David Sky noted that there are three private bike-share programs in Concord that are limited to select users and only available for round trips: NHTI; NHDES; St Pauls School and the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. Robert Baker suggested that perhaps a city like Concord should first plan more novice-friendly bicycle infrastructure before offering a bike-sharing program which is usually promoted to novice bicycle users. John Stoll noted that TPAC-BP will continue looking into bike-sharing programs, possibly soliciting feedback from the four private programs currently operating in the city.

5. New Business

- a.** Councilor Todd noted a communication from Councilor Grady-Sexton regarding a Community Drive resident's inquiry about potential snow shoveling assistance for an elderly neighbor. He noted that

the TPAC-Pedestrian subcommittee had promoted a ‘snow angel’ program some years back that encouraged neighbor volunteers to help clear sidewalks, especially near homes where residents were elderly or not physically able to do so themselves. Ursula Maldonado offered to take up the request at TPAC-BP’s next meeting. Councilor Todd would inform the resident that TPAC-BP will consider the request.

6. Old Business - None

7. Consent Reports

a. Acceptance of Subcommittee Minutes

The following subcommittee reports were accepted by unanimous consent: Bicycle/Pedestrian – October 2, 2017.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Councilor Todd reported that at its December 10, 2017 meeting, City Council referred the Main Street truck parking concern to TPAC. Another referral regarding a request for a ‘Children at Play’ sign on Chapel Street was referred to TOC.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from Councilor Kretovic regarding a resident request for review of the curb line constructed at the driveway to #244 N. State Street

Ed Roberge reported that the subject curb was reconstructed on December 7, 2017 to the satisfaction of the resident. TPAC members reviewed and approved Ed’s draft consent report on the referral as submitted (Motion-Sudak; Second-Maldonado; Unanimous). The report will be submitted for Council consideration on January 8, 2018.

b. Referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding constituent concerns on the revised alignment of the Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection.

Councilor Bouchard related concerns voiced by a number of constituents on difficulties turning right at the recently reconfigured Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection. At issue is the eastbound right turn from Old Loudon Road onto Portsmouth Street which is quickly followed by a curve to the left. Concerns are that it is dangerous as the yellow centerline on Portsmouth Street must be crossed and that the following curve back to the left is difficult for the elderly to negotiate. Councilor St. Hillaire noted similar concerns and that he has difficulty making the turn in his truck without crossing the yellow centerline at speeds greater than about 10 mph. He noted that the centerline is worn off in that area which indicates many drivers do the same.

Ed Roberge noted that the purpose of the intersection reconfiguration was threefold: eliminate confusion caused by the former ‘two-intersection’ configuration; improve drivers’ view to the right from a stop at Portsmouth Street which was difficult due the adverse skew in the former intersection approach; and reduce the speed of the right turn from Old Loudon Road onto Portsmouth Street, a movement that used to act as a non-stopping through movement. Similar intersection reconfigurations had been done in the past including: Mountain Road at Shaker Road; Borough Road at Washington Street; and N. State Street at Bouton Street. The subject right turn had been designed to accommodate school-bus turns, but at low speeds akin to many city intersections.

TPAC members discussed the current configuration of the intersection and noted that the existing skew between Portsmouth Street and Old Loudon Road was much sharper than those at other intersections so reconfigured. The Chair referred the request to TOC for further consideration, including a consideration of a conceptual-level intersection modification that might alleviate the subject right-turn concerns.

c. Referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding a constituent concern with increased traffic volume and speed along Christian Avenue pursuant to the repaving of Loudon Road.

Councilor Bouchard related the concern from a constituent on Christian Avenue. Rob Mack reported that staff had followed up with a volume and speed count on Christian Avenue at the end of November. Compared with counts conducted in 2010, speeds were nearly identical (average 25-27 mph; and 85th percentile 32-33 mph). Traffic volume has increased only slightly in the last seven years from about 1,650 to 1,850 vehicles per day. Use of Christian Avenue as a significant bypass of Loudon Road may have been likely during construction activity along Loudon Road. But it appears that residual use of Christian Avenue as a bypass is not currently significant. There were a few inappropriate speeds recorded, and the time-of-day data was shared with CPD to assist in enforcement efforts. Attendees felt that deployment of the CPD's speed trailer would be an appropriate action to remind drivers of their speed.

d. Referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding a constituent concern with Loudon Road left turns into the new Dairy Queen site.

Councilor Bouchard related a constituent concern that it has become more difficult to turn left into Woodcrest Heights Drive if a concurrent left turn is being made into the new Dairy Queen site across the street. Another concern was three recent crashes at the intersection since the Dairy Queen opened this past summer. Rob Mack noted that the old theater site had been vacant for over a decade, but now with the redevelopment of the site, the additional turning traffic on the south side competes with existing turns on the north side (Woodcrest Heights) increasing turning conflicts and delays from what folks had become used to. Difficult left turns are common all along the corridor. Regarding the three crashes since June, one was a rear-end collision behind a left-turn into the DQ site; one was an angle crash due to a left turn out of the DQ driveway; and one was caused by an improper left turn into Woodcrest Heights. Attendees concurred that staff should continue to monitor traffic operations at this new intersection.

e. Referral from Councilor Matson regarding public concerns about delivery trucks parking in the median on Main Street too close to crosswalks.

Rob Mack noted that this was a December 10, 2017 referral from Council to TPAC. At issue is observation of some trucks that park too close to crosswalks thus restricting visibility of pedestrians that might have to cross the travel lane from behind the parked vehicle. He noted that Federal guidelines recommend a 20-foot offset between a crosswalk and adjacent street parking; this dimension was utilized in the design of crosswalks and curb-side parking spaces in the Main Street Complete Streets Project. The informal use of the cobble median area for truck loading evolved after the project was opened to traffic, but clear limits on where trucks shouldn't park are not evident. Staff contacted Parking Enforcement earlier this week and made them aware of the 20-foot setback requirement. Parking Enforcement concurred and would inform its enforcement officers of same. They would also consider developing some informational handouts for delivery drivers. Staff will monitor the situation in conjunction with Parking Enforcement.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

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

Ursula Maldonado reported that TPAC-PT continues to work with staff to plan and locate small bicycle markings on select approach lanes to traffic signals to identify the 'hot spot' that bicycles should wait over in order to get the green light. TPAC-PT would like to participate in the review of the new Rundlett Middle School Plan. The subcommittee is also continuing planning of alternative locations for a possible bike-lane demonstration project.

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

Jim Sudak reported that CAT is in the process of building a new web site pursuant to a hacking issue that occurred earlier in the year. The new site is currently being refined to comply with Federal regulations and is expected to go live by the end of the year.

c. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC did not meet last month and will be meeting next week. A new referral from Council was received regarding a request for a 'Children at Play' sign on Chapel Street. Staff is following up on the two new bus stops on Pleasant Street just north of State Street where a few cars continue to park in the new bus stop zones. Parking Enforcement is monitoring the new stops.

11. Staff Updates

a. Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)

Ed Roberge reported that the project is complete.

b. Mountain/Shawmut/East Side/Exit 16 Roundabout (CIP 24)

Ed Roberge reported that the project is complete.

c. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP 543)

Ed Roberge reported that finalized permit documents are coming in. Staff is still waiting for shoreline permits. The consultant is finalizing construction plans, with advertising for bids anticipated in late winter.

d. I-93 Bow-Concord (NHDOT)

Ed Roberge noted that the City's advisory task force for the project had recently met with NHDOT to review a new alternative for the Exit 14/15 area that better accommodates some of the City's suggestions as expressed at last summer's review of project alternatives. Staff is not yet aware of the details of the new alternative. The Chair noted that it would be nice if TPAC could have an opportunity to review this new alternative before the NHDOT's next public meeting.

e. Storrs Street Extension North (CIP 18)

Ed Roberge noted the project is still on hold pending development of a preferred alternative in Item 11d above. He noted that Administration is considering the possibility of advancing this project to around 2020 as it appears that the footprint of the proposed roadway extension might not be affected by any of the several I-93 Exit 14/15 options currently under consideration.

12. Other Discussion Items

Councilor Todd shared an inquiry from a resident of Blackwater Road requesting a Deer Crossing sign. This same resident had requested such a sign last summer as a deer was hit near his home last February. That initial request was considered by TOC and signage was not recommended. The resident's new request was based on his report of a second deer impact in that same area just recently. Rob Mack had inquired of General Services and the Police Department for details on the recently-reported deer strike, but neither had records of any deer strikes in that vicinity other than the February 2017 event.

Staff explained that Deer Crossing signs are not used in the City as deer crossing roadways is a ubiquitous occurrence and can be expected at any location city-wide as opposed to what might be expected at a concentrated high-use game crossing trail (Planning staff was not aware of any such trails in the city). Staff noted that road signs advising of sporadic conflicts are not effective, do not affect driver behavior, and give a false sense of security. Advisory signs are most effective when used at fixed, high-visibility locations such as sharp road curves or cross streets. Councilor Todd appreciated the explanation and would relate that information back to the resident.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 9:00 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: January 25, 2018
 February 22, 2017
 March 22, 2017