



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Traffic Operations Committee

February 20, 2018, 12:00 PM
2nd floor Conference Room
City Hall, 41 Green Street, Concord, NH

Staff Present:

Rob Mack, Engineering Services (Chair)
Dave Cedarholm, Engineering Services
Jim Major, General Services
Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division
Jason Wimpey, Concord School District

Guests:

1. Regular Discussion Items

a. Overview of City-Wide Crash Data

Crash data for January 2018 was reviewed. There were 119 reportable crashes in January 2018. This compares with 101 and 105 reportable crashes in January 2017 and 2016, respectively. 28 crashes resulted in a total of 33 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There were three crashes involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 20 years crossing Centre Street in the crosswalk at Washington Street and being struck by a vehicle traveling westbound on Centre Street (injuries, driver at fault); a pedestrian aged 35 years walking on the westbound-side sidewalk on Loudon Road and while crossing the driveway at Granite State Glass was struck by a vehicle turning left from Loudon Road into the driveway (injuries, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 86 years walking in the parking lot of Cumberland Farms on N. Main Street and being struck near the store entrance by a vehicle moving from a parking space (no injury, driver at fault).

There were no crashes involving bicyclists.

b. City Council Meeting Update

At its February 12, 2018 meeting, City Council accepted TOC reports that: recommend a supplemental street light at the N. State/Franklin roundabout; respond to a Council referral on Christian Avenue cut-through traffic and speeds; and respond to a Council referral on left-turning traffic at the Loudon/Woodcrest Heights/Dairy Queen driveway intersection.

c. Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update

At its January 25, 2018 meeting, TPAC discussed: NHDOT's I-93 Bow-Concord Study; and the Council referral on the Old Loudon/Portsmouth intersection.

2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items

- a. **Referral from TPAC regarding a referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding constituents' concerns on the revised alignment of the Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection (TPAC: December 11, 2017)**

Rob Mack noted that Engineering would be preparing, for TPAC, a comparative analysis of four potential intersection concepts: no changes; minor right-turn corner widening; reconstruct right-turn bypass lane; and fully reconstruct and relocate the intersection further west. The analysis will be shared with TOC and TPAC when complete.

- b. **Referral from Councilor Champlin regarding a resident request for 'Children at Play' signs on Chapel Street to slow traffic (Council: December 11, 2017)**

Rob Mack reported that CPD had followed up with targeted speed enforcement; however they did not observe speeds higher than 25 mph. As it seemed that the resident had singled out pizza delivery drivers as among the most-offensive speeders, CPD did follow up with the pizza shop management. CPD again reached out to the concerned resident regarding enforcement efforts. The resident acknowledged that pizza delivery drivers seemed to be driving more slowly on Chapel Street lately and was pleased with CPD efforts. CPD advised the resident that engineering staff was available to answer any other questions regarding installing signs. Engineering staff left a phone message for the resident, but did not get a return call. As such, staff will summarize CPD and TOC follow-ups for Councilor Champlin.

- c. **Referral from TPAC regarding a request by Rockingham Street residents for additional traffic calming measures on Rockingham Street (TPAC: December 14, 2017)**

TOC had a follow-up discussion of the six general questions posed by Skip Tenczar on behalf of residents in this inquiry. A summary of TOC findings and suggestions is outlined below and will be shared with Mr. Tenczar.

1. *Increased strict enforcement of speed by the police?* Sargent Casey from CPD attended a meeting with several residents to discuss speed enforcement. He answered questions on CPD's speed enforcement efforts and how they are applied to a street like Rockingham Street. In follow-up, the speed trailer was deployed there for a period of time and staff has received positive feedback from the residents. Engineering also conducted speed and volume counts on Rockingham Street in January 2018. Near Donovan Street, average speeds are 29-30 mph and 85th percentile speeds are 33-34 mph. These speeds are similar to speeds recorded in 2008 and 2009. A few excessive vehicle speeds were recorded and the time-of-day data was provided to CPD to aid in enforcement efforts. A two-way weekday traffic volume of about 3,200 vehicles was also recorded and indicates a small increase from the 2,800 vehicles recorded ten years ago in 2008 that would be consistent with background traffic growth.

2. *Lowering the speed limit to 25 mph?* The residents' 2008 request for a 25 mph speed limit on Rockingham Street was considered extensively by TOC and TPAC and ultimately City Council; a reduction to 25 mph was not supported. The state's statutory 30 mph minimum speed limit is consistent city-wide on the collector-arterial street system, of which Rockingham Street is part.

Rob Mack discussed (with Planning staff and TPAC) the option of reconsidering city-wide speed limits to make a more consistent application of 25 mph as is currently is posted on some minor local streets. The Planning Division is in the process of planning for the next update to the City's Master Plan which will occur in 2020. Part of this effort will include an update to the Transportation Component of the Master Plan including: a review of the existing and planned street network and street classifications; consideration of village/neighborhood areas and livability; and incorporation of elements of the city's bicycle and pedestrian master plans. It was suggested that the consideration of

city-wide speed limits would be most appropriately considered as part of this effort. Furthermore, the master plan update process will include ample opportunity for public input including public hearings on the Planning Board and potentially the City Council level. TPAC concurred with this approach at its January 25, 2018 meeting and is looking forward to participating in the master plan update process.

3. Painting compressed nine-foot lanes to calm speed? TOC and TPAC have in the past endorsed the use of painted lane narrowing at select locations. Rockingham Street was so marked at the request of the neighborhood around 2009 to allow for some shoulder space to delineate space for walkers prior to the construction of sidewalk around 2012. However, as TOC discussed at its December 2017 meeting, with several residents in attendance, if lane lines are designated for vehicles and lined shoulder areas are available for bicyclists, then potential on-street vehicle parking that encroaches in the marked lanes becomes not only unsafe, but would be in violation of the Ordinance. Some residents had indicated a preference to be able to have occasional visitors park along the edge of the street. As such, further consideration by abutting residents is suggested.

4. Strategic use of signs related to children and/or densely settled area? The city does not post advisory signs such as ‘children at play’ or ‘densely settled area’ as these are not Federally-endorsed signs. They are not effective in modifying driver behavior, however they could act to instill a false sense of security in folks living or walking nearby. Children playing or people walking can be expected anywhere along any street in the urban portion of the city. Safe travel by vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians is possible by appropriate application of the ‘rules of the road’ as identified in the state statutes.

An option for some residents has been to purchase one of those small plastic yellow men and place it on their property (not in the public right of way) when their kids are out. This practice might be more effective if the devices were only used when kids are present. Static 24/7 displays of such devices when no one is around makes the message disappear into the background like ‘white noise’.

5. City help with calming devices such as tree planting and/or bump outs?

The city has two street tree programs that residents are encouraged to consider. There is a Neighborhood Street Tree Program that has a limited budget each year to purchase and install street trees at select locations across the city. There is an application process coordinated through the Planning Division to do this and the next budget availability will begin on July 1. Another option is available through General Services, where residents can purchase select street trees at wholesale price through General Services and then General Services will provide for the tree planting.

TOC discussed neighbors’ concerns about the crest in Rockingham Street at Bow Street that seemingly affects sight lines along Rockingham Street. Staff did verify in 2008 that sight lines were adequate at this location. Although TOC would typically not endorse the use of crosswalk weebles on low-use crosswalks such as those on Rockingham Street, TOC concurred to try a weeble deployment on the Bow Street crosswalk this year. This may act to draw drivers’ attention to the crosswalk and may also reduce the effective travel width at the location with potential traffic calming effect at this location as traffic comes up out of the dip in the road. TOC will review the effectiveness of this deployment over the coming year. General Services will deploy the weeble after snow-plowing season ends.

Engineering staff recalled that during the 2010 sidewalk construction project, an option to construct curb and sidewalk (and possibly a bump-out) was considered on the southern corner of the Bow Street intersection with Rockingham Street. Because of the topography of the corner, including drainage issues, such an improvement was not deemed realistic within the sidewalk project scope and budget.

Also discussed with residents attending the December TOC meeting, was an inquiry to consider installing additional curbing along the street to help calm traffic. Although such an improvement would require substantial cost of street drainage construction, it was noted that any ‘traffic calming’ effect might not be realized in this case. Rockingham Street is currently narrower than what the city would design for a collector street. The City’s ‘complete street’ design criteria, with curbing, would allow for five-foot bicycle shoulders in addition to minimum lane widths for vehicular traffic. The result would actually be a wider pavement than currently exists (e.g. South Street in front of the schools). The construction of curb would also preclude on-street parking which TOC understands might concern some neighbors as noted previously.

Traffic calming devices involving vertical deflection such as speed bumps and raised intersections are generally considered inappropriate on collector and arterial streets. In residential areas, the issue of 24/7 vehicle noise at the bumps is another consideration.

6. *Can cyber cameras monitor and ticket speeding offenders through mail?* No, the use of video enforcement is specifically prohibited in NH by state statute with the only exception allowing for video enforcement at the toll booths along the NH Turnpike System.

3. New Discussion and Action Items

- a. None.

4. Open Discussion Items

- a. **Staff response to miscellaneous inquiries (refer to correspondence in agenda packet).**
None.

Next meeting date: March 20, 2018