



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Traffic Operations Committee

June 19, 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
Sam Durfee, Planning Division
John Thomas, Police Department
Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division

Guests:

Paul Deshaies (Rockingham Street resident)
Anthony Tenczar (Rockingham Street resident)
Ken March (Broadway resident)
Brian Sartorelli (Rockingham Street resident)
Bob Brown (Wilson Avenue resident)
Ruth Ann Herbert (Rockingham Street resident)

1. Regular Discussion Items

a. Overview of City-Wide Crash Data

Crash data for April 2018 was reviewed. There were 98 reportable crashes in April 2018. This compares with 109 and 101 reportable crashes in April 2017 and 2016, respectively. 14 crashes resulted in a total of 15 people injured. There were no fatalities. Crash data for May 2018 was also reviewed. There were 116 reportable crashes in May 2018. This compares with 93 reportable crashes in both April 2017 and 2016, respectively. In May, 23 crashes resulted in a total of 27 people injured. There were no fatalities.

In this two-month period there were four reported crashes involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 37 years lying in the middle of the Clinton/Iron Works intersection, intoxicated and unaware of where he was, and claiming to have been struck by an unidentified vehicle (no apparent injuries); a pedestrian aged 65 years walking southbound on N. State Street in the crosswalk at Church Street and being struck by a vehicle turning left from N. State Street into Church Street (injuries, driver at fault); a pedestrian aged 67 walking along Horseshoe Pond Road in the crosswalk at Commercial and being struck by a vehicle turning left from Horseshoe Pond Lane into Commercial Street (minor injury, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 26 years walking in the parking lot at Cranmore Ridge Apartments and being struck by a vehicle in the parking lot (minor injury, driver not identified).

In this two-month period there was one reported crash involving a bicyclist: a bicyclist aged 12 years riding her bicycle southbound along South Street in the crosswalk at the entrance to Rundlett Middle School and being struck by a vehicle turning right into the driveway from South Street (no injuries, driver at fault, helmet use not reported).

b. City Council Meeting Update

Not discussed.

c. Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update

Not discussed.

2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items

a. Referral from TPAC regarding a request by Rockingham Street residents for additional traffic calming measures on Rockingham Street

The meeting was attended by Anthony Tenczar and several neighbors who presented a petition signed by 260 individuals to lower the speed on Rockingham to 25 mph (47 from Rockingham Street, 191 from other Concord streets and 22 from surrounding towns). Residents also requested distinctive signage such as the oversized speed limit signs with distinctive borders as have been used in Durham, NH and Springfield, Missouri. Stated neighborhood concerns include a high volume of traffic going too fast, inadequate sight lines at the dip in Rockingham Street at Bow Street, high crash history and the narrowness of the residential street. Mr. Tenczar would like the city to keep working with residents to get traffic speeds lower along Rockingham Street.

Staff summarized the history of neighborhood requests for lower speeds and traffic calming which began in 2008. Positive outcomes included construction of new sidewalk in 2010, several new painted crosswalks and signs, additional speed limit signs, targeted enforcement and use of the CPD's speed-feedback trailer. Very positive feedback has been received from the neighborhood regarding the sidewalk. Earlier this year, TOC endorsed the deployment of a weeble on the crosswalk at Bow Street which also received positive feedback from residents. Speeds along the street have been relatively unchanged over the past decade (30 mph average speed, 34 mph 85th percentile speed, 30 mph posted speed). Residents want to again ask if TOC could further consider additional traffic calming measures or speed limit reduction to help suppress speed.

The city has historically kept the statutory 30 mph speed limit on all collector and arterial streets in the city. Only about a hundred local, residential streets had been selected for down-posting to 25 mph by City Council, mostly in 2005. At issue is posting seemingly-low speed limits on busier through streets where lack of compliance becomes not only an enforcement problem, but contributes to general disregard by drivers for speed limit signing.

Staff noted TOC and TPAC plans to reconsider speed limits city-wide to make a more consistent application of 25 mph as is currently is posted on some local residential streets. The Planning Division is in the process of planning for the next update to the City's Master Plan which will occur around 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 consideration of speed limits city-wide would be most appropriately done as part of this effort. Furthermore, the master plan update process will include substantial public outreach with opportunity for public input including public meetings. TPAC had concurred with this approach at its January 25, 2018 meeting and is looking forward to participating in the master plan update process.

Rob Mack noted that Mr. Tenczar had brought the Rockingham Street residents' request for lower speeds and additional traffic calming to TPAC-Bike/Ped's meeting of June 4, 2018. The subcommittee supported the idea of working to lower speeds in this residential area. Mr. Tenczar noted that residents in the neighborhood were willing to work with the city on measures to reduce

speed and might even consider contributing funds for improvements if appropriate. Rob Mack noted that the option of adding street trees through available city programs was available to residents along the street as was previously endorsed by staff and TOC.

TOC continued its discussion after guest attendees left the meeting. TOC continued to feel (from its 2008 investigations onward) that overall speeds along the street were not inappropriately high with CPD noting substantial enforcement efforts resulting in few reported violations. Sight lines along the street were appropriate for speeds and crash history was low along street segments (three reported sideswipes of parked cars in 10 years). TOC members felt that reducing the speed limit on a through street like Rockingham Street would likely not affect speeds much, a result measured at other locations in the city where speeds had been reduced in the past. It was felt that speed reduction on Rockingham Street would require substantial and long-term enforcement efforts. CPD noted that given the increasing level of resident request for a speed limit reduction here, that they could support working with a lower speed limit if approved by City Council. TOC members had endorsed planned discussions of speed-limits city-wide in conjunction with the upcoming 2020-2030 Master Plan Update. As such, it was suggested that a lower speed limit on Rockingham Street now could act as a 'test' of such a restriction on a collector street which might be useful if the same is considered on other moderate-traffic through streets in the urban core. TOC concurred to endorse a speed limit reduction to 25 mph, coupled with follow-up measurements of speeds and enforcement efforts over the next year or two. It was suggested that a new speed limit designation here could be highlighted for the first few weeks by the addition of two red flags to any new speed limit signs to attract driver's attention to the change (an application allowable per the FHWA's Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices). This latter approach was preferred as a first step rather than establishing a precedent of oversized and color-banded speed limit signs as requested by the residents.

TOC's support of a 25mph speed limit trial would be shared with TPAC at its meeting next week.

b. Referral from City Council regarding a request from Councilor Herschlag to fund additional sidewalk construction along Borough Road

Rob Mack reported that Engineering staff and TPAC considered similar requests for Borough Road sidewalk in 1998 and 2014, culminating most recently with TPAC's September 26, 2014 report which was accepted by City Council. The subject referral again requests the continued extension of sidewalk along Borough Road westward from roughly the Sandwood Crossing area where sidewalk currently exists. An issue in past studies is the potential need to take right-of-way, pay damages and remove trees or otherwise negatively impact abutting properties for sidewalk construction, regardless of the side of the road that the sidewalk might ultimately be installed along. Staff recalls significant concern from potentially-impacted property owners in earlier studies.

TPAC Bike/Ped considered this request at its June 4, 2018 meeting. The City's 2017 Pedestrian Master Plan includes a potential sidewalk segment from the Sandwood Crossing area westerly to Primrose Lane to be one of about fifteen 'priority' new-sidewalk segments. As such TPAC-BP recommended its implementation as one of the priority locations, although it did not rank this segment in relation to the other priority segments as identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Staff noted that GSD plans to do a shim overlay along Borough Road this year. This is not the type of work that GSD includes sidewalk and curb construction with; projects with pavement reclamation and full-depth road reconstruction are typically those that GSD can effectively include substantial sidewalk construction. Given the complexity of issues noted in prior sidewalk studies here, staff suggested that development of sidewalk here should be considered as a new, stand-alone CIP project with funding to accommodate necessary land survey, engineering design, easements and construction.

Staff noted that TPAC would also be considering this item at its meeting next week and that the above information would be shared with them at that time.

c. Referral from Councilor Matson regarding resident concerns on speeding along Plum Street

At issue is a concern by a Plum Street resident that one particular resident on Plum Street speeds constantly and poses a safety problem for other residents. The resident requests temporary speed bumps to slow traffic but that might also be removed in the winter to facilitate plowing.

Plum Street is a cul-de-sac street that is approximately 450 feet long and serves eight homes. TOC members felt that the street was too short to have an overall speeding problem and that the speeding issue appeared to be related to a specific driver's behavior. CPD will send an officer out to speak with the resident.

d. Referral from Councilor Nyhan regarding a resident concern on traffic speed along Broadway at Allison and Pillsbury Streets

At issue is a concern by a Pillsbury Street resident on traffic speeds and accidents on Broadway at the intersections with Allison and Pillsbury Streets. Stated concerns include excessive travel speed cars not stopping for pedestrians in the crosswalks. Rob Mack noted that Engineering and TOC conducted a comprehensive speed and safety study of both of these intersections in 2012 in response to a similar concern, with findings reported to City Council in a report dated November 29, 2012. Measured speeds were reported to be reasonable and reported crashes were low.

In its 2012 report, TOC felt that safe pedestrian crossings of Broadway at either intersection could be made with proper pedestrian-crossing action (looking both ways, making 'eye contact' and not stepping in front of an approaching vehicle unless one is certain it is stopping). Sight lines approaching crosswalk areas were very good, vehicle speeds appeared generally appropriate, street lighting and pedestrian signs were located at both locations, and pedestrian crossing delay was relatively low even during peak times. TOC concurred that crossing safety could be enhanced by the construction of corner bump-outs at each intersections. Similar recommendations were also made in the 2008 Safe Routes to School Travel Plan for the former Conant-Rundlett Schools.

CPD will send an officer out to speak with the resident. Engineering will also field-check both intersections.

e. Referral from Councilor Nyhan regarding a resident concern on traffic speed on Wilson Street and a request for sidewalk

Bob Brown, resident of Wilson Street, said his family has lived there for six years and feels that traffic speeds are high, especially on the section between South Street and Norwich Street which through traffic also uses as a shortcut to Clinton Street. He would like to see the speed trailer deployed here. He noted that there are no speed limit signs there to indicate the 25 mph speed. Rob Mack added that he had discussed similar concerns with Wilson Street resident Lisa Bowman, who also asked if sidewalk could be constructed along this section of Wilson Street.

Engineering would plan to conduct a volume and speed count along Wilson Street, and would check on the location of speed limit signs. CPD would plan to deploy the speed trailer and look into planning some directed patrols. Regarding sidewalk, it was noted that the city's Pedestrian Master Plan indicates that sidewalk along Wilson Street from South Street to Norwich Street is planned for future implementation, but not as a priority. This sidewalk would typically be constructed when the street is reconstructed (not yet programmed in upcoming years). This item will be further considered by TOC following review of traffic and speed data and CPD enforcement efforts.

f. **Referral from City Council regarding resident concerns on stop sign violations, traffic volumes and noise in the area of the Broadway/Rockingham intersection**

At issue are resident concerns on traffic operation and safety at the Broadway/Rockingham intersection. A communication signed by eight residents near the intersection notes the following concerns: drivers don't stop at the stop signs; excessive intersection noise due to some overly-noisy mufflers; large trucks driving through the intersection when they shouldn't be there; and too much traffic volume for the residential area. Mr. March spoke to these concerns on behalf of his neighbors.

Staff follow-up on the concern began in late May with predominantly CPD enforcement efforts. 15 targeted-enforcement sessions were recorded between May 27 and June 15, 2018. Nine of the sessions observed no violations and six of the sessions included 8 vehicle stops with warning or citation given. Through-trucking violations were not observed. CPD also reached out to Mr. March on June 9 to discuss his concerns as well as enforcement efforts. Mr. March expressed appreciation for CPD efforts and also understood that CPD cannot always be present at the intersection. Attendees discussed the issue of excessive muffler noise; CPD indicated that it does not have appropriate equipment to stop and measure a vehicles muffler noise. Regarding traffic volume, staff noted that Broadway and Rockingham Street are classified as a major collector street and an urban collector street, respectively. As such, these streets are expected to provide access between neighborhoods as well as access from neighborhoods to the arterial and interstate highway network. A moderate volume of traffic is expected on these streets and has historically increased proportional to land-use growth in the Capital Region. The potential closure of Rockingham Street at S. Main Street, as requested by one resident, was felt by TOC to be inappropriate and not in the spirit and intent of the master plan which encourages street connectivity within and between neighborhoods. Staff will share the above findings with TPAC when they also consider this request on June 28.

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.

- b. Dick Lemieux noted a concern about poor pavement conditions on select streets where potholes and edge drop-offs can become potential hazards for bicyclists. He suggested the city be mindful of this when programming its street maintenance and repaving efforts.

Next meeting date: July 17, 2018