

**CITY OF CONCORD
TRANSPORTATION POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2019**

The Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) met at 6:00 p.m., on April 25, 2019, in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street.

Attendees: Dick Lemieux, Chair
Councilor Brent Todd
Craig Tufts
Ursula Maldonado
Sheila Zakre
Greg Bakos
Jim Sudak

Absent: Councilor Rob Werner - excused
Ryan Buchanan - unexcused
Rebecca McWilliams - excused

Staff: Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer
Dave Cedarholm, City Engineer
Sam Durfee, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 28, 2019 meeting were approved as submitted (Motion-Zakre; Second-Todd; Unanimous).

3. Public Comment

None

4. Presentations

a. Main Street Complete Streets Project: Post-Construction Performance Measures, 2018 Interim Report (Rob Mack)

Rob Mack presented the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project, Performance Measures Report, 2018 Post-Construction Report No. 2. This annual report to FHWA was required as part of the TIGER grant agreement for the project with intent to measure pre- and post-construction transportation and economic related performance measures for the Main Street project area. Measures include: motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian volumes and crash history at select Main Street locations; CAT bus patronage at Main Street bus stops; and the number of store-front vacancies. The subject interim report includes several years of pre-construction measurements as well as post-construction measurements for the first two years of a five year post-construction reporting period (2017 – 2021). The reported findings are preliminary at this point and will become more refined as additional study years are added to the measured averages.

Based on the first two years of post-construction data, preliminary trends in the downtown area are as follows. Main Street traffic volumes have reduced by about 10 percent. Pedestrian volumes have more than doubled at the Main/Pleasant intersection but have remained about the same at the Main/Center/Loudon intersection. Bicycle volumes along the corridor vary based on weather conditions but appear generally unchanged. CAT bus boardings and alightings are down by about a third which somewhat reflects CAT system-wide ridership reduction over the past several years. The number of reported vehicle crashes varies along the corridor and appears to be comparable to pre-construction conditions. However, the number of pedestrian and bicycle related crashes have been reduced all along the corridor. The number of ground-level store fronts has increased from 128 to 131, while the number of vacant store fronts has decreased from 14 to 13.

Attendees recommended by unanimous consent that the study findings be shared with City Council.

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: Public Transportation – January 15, 2019; and Traffic Operations – April 16, 2019.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Councilor Todd reported that at its April 8, 2019 meeting, City Council accepted TPAC's recommendations for CIP priorities. Council approved 3-year-term reappointments to TPAC for Dick Lemieux, Ursula Maldonado and Jim Sudak. Council also authorized staff to apply for NH Highway Safety Agency grants, such as for the annual Loudon Road Intensified Enforcement program.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from City Council regarding a communication shared by Councilor Werner from Kensington Road residents with concerns about cut-through traffic and speeds on Kensington Road

At issue is a concern by five residents of Kensington Road on cut-through traffic and traffic speeds. Some traffic that otherwise should be using Pleasant Street for east-west travel to from the regional medical campus area chooses to cut through the Upper School Street neighborhood to avoid delays at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. Of concern is the cut-through traffic that then uses Kensington Road as a link between School Street and Pleasant Street. Residents are requesting consideration of: restricting left turns from Pleasant Street onto Kensington Road; installing corner bump-outs at the Kensington Road approach to School Street to slow turning traffic; and improving the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection to reduce traffic delays and hence attract traffic from otherwise using Kensington Street.

Rob Mack reported that TOC continued its discussion of this referral at its April 16, 2019 meeting. Engineering staff conducted an updated traffic count on School Street between Westbourne Street and N. Fruit Street during the week of March 25, 2019. The average weekday traffic volume (AWDT) was about 2,500 vehicles. This reflects a continuation of the cut-through traffic reduction initiated by TOC with the 2009 eastbound lane-use changes made at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. The historic trend of average weekday volumes at this location on School Street includes: 3,900 AWDT in April 2008 prior to opening Langley Parkway South; 3,600 AWDT in May 2009 after the opening of Langley Parkway and lane-use changes at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection; 2,900 AWDT in April 2016; and now 2,500 AWDT in March 2019. This trend attests to the success of the 2008 and 2009 traffic improvements on the Pleasant Street corridor in attracting a significant volume of School Street cut-through traffic back to Pleasant Street.

An updated traffic count was also conducted on Kensington Road during the week of March 25, 2019. The average weekday volume was 470 AWDT. Morning and afternoon commuter peak hour traffic volumes were 66 and 33 vehicles per peak, respectively. That averages about one vehicle passing by per minute in the morning and one vehicle passing by every two minutes in the afternoon, characteristic of a fairly light traffic flow. The current 470 AWDT is substantially lower than the 850 weekday vehicles recorded in May 2009 after Langley Parkway South opened, and 930 weekday vehicles recorded in May 2008 prior to Langley Parkway South. Some of this traffic reduction may also be due to a shift of some traffic to Rum Hill Road which was recently repaved, coupled with substantial removal of trees and brush on the northeast corner of the Pleasant/Rum Hill intersection which vastly improved the sight lines there. Staff observations of Kensington Road traffic flow were consistent with the counts recorded.

It was noted that the subject cut-through traffic complaints from Kensington Road residents were first received by staff in August 2018, concurrent with the substantial disruption of neighborhood street traffic due to the water main and street reconstruction work in the area last year. There clearly would have been times when substantial additional traffic would have diverted to Kensington Road as adjacent streets and intersections were impacted by construction activity. These construction-related traffic diversions were ephemeral and have since subsided, although additional street construction in this neighborhood will resume this year with potential for similar short-term impacts.

Regarding speeds along Kensington Road, the aforementioned traffic count recorded average speeds of 27 mph northbound and 29 mph southbound and 85th percentile speeds of 31 mph northbound and 34 mph southbound, with southbound being the downhill direction. The speed limit is 30 mph. While TOC did not find these overall speeds to be inappropriate, CPD did offer to schedule deployment of the speed trailer on Kensington Road facing downhill traffic to remind drivers of their speed.

TOC expressed concern regarding potential traffic restrictions discussed with the neighborhood in the past such as left-turn restrictions onto Kensington Road from Pleasant Street. Only having these restrictions at Kensington Road would divert cut-through as well as some neighborhood traffic to the remaining three side streets (Rum Hill Road, Pleasant View Avenue and Minot Street), increasing the negative effects of traffic there. To be fair to the overall neighborhood, such measures would need to be applied equally to each of these streets. These restrictions can certainly force cut-through (as well as some neighborhood traffic) traffic back onto Pleasant Street and through the signalized Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. However, the signalized intersection is close to capacity as evidenced by the long traffic queues and delays during peak periods. Only major intersection reconstruction/enlargement and/or Langley Parkway Phase 3 can improve that. Until these improvements occur, the signalized intersection will bear the continued

increase in traffic as has occurred over the last ten years, including the pending opening of the new 150,000 sf medical office building on the hospital campus. The additional and significant traffic increase due to potential neighborhood street restrictions would divert cut-through traffic as well as some neighborhood traffic to this over-capacity intersection and act to accelerate the breakdown of intersection operations increasing queues and delays even more. Of particular concern is: the location of this key intersection along the sole access route to the medical center for local and regional traffic from the north and east (potential for impacts to emergency response vehicle access); and the location of Concord High School on Warren Street which would also bear the burden resulting from increased traffic loads and intersection delays mixing with heavy pedestrian flows.

TOC did not feel that the neighbors' request for corner bump-outs or other speed-lowering devices at the Kensington/School intersection would have any measurable effect. 4-way stop control was installed at the intersection years ago for apparently this same reason; this requires traffic to stop, which is much more restrictive on speeds than corner bump-outs might accomplish.

In summary, TOC did not support the placement of traffic restrictions to limit or deter travel along Kensington Road at this time, for reason of avoiding increasingly-negative impacts to traffic operations at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. The current traffic volume on Kensington Road is fairly light, and in fact, considerably reduced from what it was a decade ago. The supplemental connectivity provided by this street as well as the many other local streets in the urban core, give the travelling public choices. The preference for such transportation choice (i.e. opposition to street restrictions) was voiced by a number of Upper School Street residents during neighborhood meetings in 2008 and 2009. Furthermore, maintenance of street network connectivity is one of the stated objectives of the City's Transportation Master Plan. TOC concurred that the construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP 40), followed by the reconstruction of the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection to a roundabout configuration (CIP 570) was the appropriate course of action to improve traffic operation along the Pleasant Street corridor, including reduction of neighborhood cut-through traffic. The occasional deployment of the speed trailer on Kensington Road to remind drivers of their speeds was also endorsed.

TPAC attendees generally concurred with the TOC findings. It was suggested that staff discuss these findings with Councilor Werner (unable to attend TPAC tonight) regarding next steps in this referral.

- b. Referral from City Council regarding a communication from Councilor Bouchard on resident safety concerns about illegal vehicle left turns from East Side Drive northbound into the CVS/Burger King driveway - Further discussion on hold pending additional engineering evaluation.**
- c. Referral from TPAC-PT regarding the potential use of NHDOT 'toll credits' as municipal or transit-agency matching funds for Federal public transportation grants**

Dick Lemieux led a discussion of the NHDOT's use of 'toll credits' to fulfill their 20% state-match required for Federal highway and transit funds. The use of toll credits has been applied to both NHDOT and selected municipal transportation projects. The NHDOT has stated that all federal projects in the current Ten Year Plan are proposed to use toll credits. A bill currently in the Legislature proposes to use toll credits as match for FTA funding for commuter rail, suggesting that toll credits can be used to match FTA funding for other transit projects as well, including CAT. CAT's current proposed budget application for FY2020 included an approximate \$171,000 city contribution and a \$62,000 CAP-BM contribution to CAT's 20% match for FTA funds. The use of 'toll credits' in lieu of these local contributions could save substantial local funds.

Dick distributed a well-referenced summary of the state's toll-credit legislation and past applications, including use to partially fund a municipal project as well as a bus transit service in southern NH. There was considerable discussion amongst attendees regarding the potential feasibility, or not, of the above proposal. Councilor Todd offered to present this inquiry to the Manager to determine if staff might see benefit in further exploring the potential of using NHDOT's toll credits for municipal funding shares.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

a. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC met last week and discussed the Kensington Road referral (Item 9a). Also discussed was a resident concern about on-street parking along Sewalls Falls Road near the entrance driveway to Beaver Meadow School for student drop-off/pickup; stopping and standing vehicles interfere with the two-way movement of traffic along the street during these times. CPD will be monitoring the situation there over the coming weeks and TOC will consider the item further next month. He noted that this same issue was discussed by TOC in April, 2015. TPAC attendees felt that the school should help address this issue.

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

Craig Tufts noted that he and Sam Durfee visited Southern NH Planning Commission to look at their materials used for 'pop-up' demonstrations. The subcommittee is also following up with the new bike-share program in Manchester. It was felt that the increasing availability of on-demand services such as rental scooters are overtaking the use of bicycle rentals in some major cities.

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

Sheila Zakre reported that TPAC-PT met last week and discussed the potential use of NHDOT toll credits for CAT matching funds (Item 9c above). The Park Street bus shelter was recently power washed. The third and last of the new full-size CAT buses is expected to be delivered by the end of the year. Although not available at the meeting, Rob Mack noted that the draft final report for NHDOT's CAT Bus Service Study was just received by staff and would be distributed to subcommittee members for review and discussion next month.

11. Staff Updates

a. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP543)

Greg Bakos noted that the Terrill Park project is still being reformulated to avoid wetland impacts. The revised application to the Land and Water Conservation Trust is nearly ready for submission.

b. I-93 Bow-Concord/Storrs Street Extension North

The Chair noted that a city workshop on the project was held on Monday, April 1, 2019, with several TPAC members participating. He understood that the city hoped to set up another workshop meeting to continue the public-visioning process for this project. He suggested that TPAC might consider setting up a special meeting of its own to consider, perhaps, a matrix of conceptual alternatives for the Exit 14/downtown portion of the corridor.

c. Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP40)

No report.

12. Other Discussion Items

The Chair inquired about follow-up speed counts on Rockingham Street since down-posting the speed limit to 25 mph last year. Rob Mack noted that counts would be planned for later this spring.

The chair noted that Rob Mack was retiring from the City next month and that tonight would be his last meeting with TPAC. Rob has been fully involved with TPAC since its inception in 2008 and will be greatly missed. Attendees noted their appreciation with Rob's passion, creativity and knowledge in bringing innovative transportation engineering solutions to the city. Rob was grateful for having the opportunity to work with this energetic and thoughtful committee over the years that contributed to Concord's transformation into a complete streets community.

13. Adjourn

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