



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes- October 16, 2012

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services
Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services
Steve Henninger, Planning
Greg Taylor, Concord Police Department
Rick Wollert, Concord Fire Department
Fred Reagan, MV School District

Guest: Alan Moses, Riverbend CMH, Inc.

Regular Discussion Items

- 1) **Overview of city-wide accident data, including prior-month accident summary and discussion of select accident locations, circumstances and potential action.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Traffic accident data for September 2012 was reviewed. There were 107 reportable accidents in September 2012. This compares with 78 and 76 reportable accidents in August 2011 and 2010, respectively. 32 accidents resulted in total of 40 people injured, 4 of which occurred on Loudon Road. There was one fatality resulting from a motorcycle accident that occurred in a parking lot off of Manchester Street.

There were two accidents involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 27 walking along the Carter Hill Apple Orchard driveway among parked cars and sitting down on the grass to take a rest and being struck by a vehicle backing up from a parking spot (minor injury, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 63 years walking on the westbound sidewalk along Pleasant Street and crossing N. State Street during the flashing Don't Walk signal and being struck by a vehicle turning left from Pleasant Street eastbound to N. State Street northbound (injuries, accident still under investigation).

There were two accidents involving bicyclists: a bicyclist aged 16 years travelling westbound against traffic along the sidewalk near Gully Hill and colliding with a stopped vehicle that was attempting to exit the Shell Gas Station (injury, bicyclist at fault. no helmet worn); and a bicyclist aged 61 years travelling southbound on S. Main Street and while passing Maitland Street, being struck by a southbound vehicle that passed the bicyclist and then turned right onto Maitland Street cutting the bicyclist off (minor injury, driver at fault, helmet worn).

There was further discussion about observations of some vehicles not properly yielding to traffic within the N. State/Franklin roundabout. Based on recent observations, it was noted that the white yield lines on the entrances to the circular roadway (original thermoplastic markings) were becoming quite worn. Repainting these lines this fall will be discussed with GSD.

2) **City Council meeting update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its October 9, 2012 meeting, City Council referred Items 2 through 5 in Section C below to TOC.

3) **Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TPAC has been focusing its efforts on developing recommendations for the Main Street Complete Street Project Advisory Committee regarding potential street cross sections that comply with the 'complete streets' objective of the City's Comprehensive Transportation Policy.

B. **On-going Discussion and Action Items.**

1) **CIP Priorities: FY 2013-2022.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Discussion deferred to the next meeting.

C. **New Discussion and Action Items**

1) **Request by Councilor Shurtleff regarding a constituent concern on parking near the High Street/Summer street intersection causing difficulty for turning vehicles. (Council: 9/26/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Rob Mack visited the intersection area and discussed bus-turning issues and concerns with Fred Reagan of MVSD. Parking is currently prohibited along the east side of High Street from Summer Street to Barnett Drive (Ordinance dates back to 1957); there is a faded no parking sign about 180 ft from Summer Street but nothing near the intersection. On the west side of High Street there is a No Parking Here to Corner sign about 30 feet from Summer Street. Fred Regan noted that turning buses and other traffic have experienced issues caused by cars illegally parked (within the no parking zones) on either side of High Street near the intersection at Summer Street. Any cars illegally parked on High Street near Summer Street clearly create a significant obstruction to traffic flow.

Based on the above, TOC felt that this may be more of an enforcement issue and suggested following up on that first before considering removing more parking along the west side of High Street. CPD sector patrols and parking enforcement will be informed of the issue and will report progress back to TOC. Fred Regan will also get feedback from MVSD bus drivers on any issues here as we go forward. Parking Enforcement advised that it will check out the faded signs on the east side and consider replacement or possibly relocating the sign closer to Summer Street.

- 2) **Referral from City Council to consider establishing a No Parking/Standing/Stopping zone along Conant Drive between South Street and Rundlett Street to mitigate adverse effects of parking for traffic related to school drop-offs/pick-ups at the Abbott-Downing Elementary School. (Council: 10/9/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is concern with potential on-street parking between South Street and Rundlett Street during school traffic peaks. Rob Mack noted that such parking could effectively block this section of Conant Drive. Peak traffic queues often back along Conant Drive from South Street to near Rundlett Street. This queue takes up half of the travel way, effectively leaving the remaining westbound-side lane for one-lane, two-way traffic flow; a potential parker here could act to block the street. A similar concern with drop-off/pick-up parkers was considered by TOC last year further west on Conant Drive by the crosswalk to the pathway to the school. That issue has been addressed in the interim by the placement of temporary No Parking signs (paper signs); the Parking Committee has begun a discussion about possible installation of permanent signage at this crosswalk area but a final recommendation has not yet been made. Illegal parking along South Street along the new school frontage had been a substantial issue, but enforcement efforts this fall have been successful in minimizing this occurrence. On-street parking for drop-offs/pick-ups does continue (legally) along both sides of South Street particularly south of the No Parking zone. A problem is that parking on the west side of South Street occurs on the north and south corners of the South/Conant intersection, compromising sight distance for the heavy volume of Conant Drive traffic trying to turn out onto South Street (most of which are exiting from the school campus). In the past, Engineering has also received complaints about school-related traffic parking along the sides of Bow Street and on residents' grass fronting the street.

Engineering and Parking Enforcement staff have also recently responded to concerns on school pick-up/drop-off traffic parking/standing/stopping on and along S. Curtisville Road adjacent to Mill Brook School and impeding street traffic flow. Temporary No Parking signs (paper signs) have been placed along the north side of S. Curtisville Road to help mitigate the blockage issue.

TOC concurred that a systemic overview of access issues at both school campus areas is appropriate. If on-campus changes can be implemented that minimize the occurrence of on-street parking, they should be considered first prior to considering the extent and location (if necessary) of permanent No Parking zones. Engineering Services will look into on-campus and off-campus parking operation during school drop-off/pick up times at both campuses to better define issues and potential solutions. Input from both Parking Enforcement and Concord School District will also be sought. Findings will be brought back to TOC for further consideration. In the meantime, CPD sector patrols will be advised about the parking concern on Conant Drive near Rundlett Street.

- 3) **Referral from City Council to consider installing a Multi-Way STOP at the intersection of Broadway and Pillsbury Street. (Council: 10/9/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: A concern of area constituents is high traffic volume on Broadway and whether the volumes of pedestrians crossing there meet warrants for instituting multi-way STOP control. It was noted that the 2008 Safe Routes to School Study for Conant/Rundlett Schools recommended that corner bump-outs and shorter crosswalks be installed to enhance pedestrian crossings of Broadway at both Pillsbury and Allison Streets; multi-way STOP was not part of that recommendation. Rob Mack advised that per the city's STOP Sign Policy, an engineering study of this intersection is required to evaluate the appropriateness of multi-way STOP. Engineering Services has begun traffic volume data collection and will provide TOC with a more detailed

evaluation for further consideration.

- 4) **Referral from City Council to consider installing a Multi-Way STOP at the intersection of Broadway and Allison Street. (Council: 10/9/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Same as Item C-3 above.

- 5) **Referral from City Council to consider removal and installation of STOP signs at Heather Lane intersections, including: installation of a STOP sign on the New Meadow Road eastbound approach to Heather Lane; installation of a STOP sign on the Gabby Lane eastbound approach to Heather Lane; and removal of the STOP sign on the Heather Lane northbound approach to Gabby Lane. (Council: 10/9/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TOC discussed each of the above STOP sign changes with respect to the city's STOP sign policy and the unique characteristics of each of the intersection locations. Heather Lane, New Meadow Road and Gabby Lane provide access to a small cul-de-sac neighborhood of about 29 homes. Traffic volumes are limited to neighborhood traffic (no through traffic) and are very light. Short street segments promote low travel speed. The Heather/New Meadow and Heather/Gabby intersections act as T intersections and assignment of right-of way per the rules of the road would be evident, STOP signs or not.

The Heather/New Meadow intersection currently has no STOP sign. The eastbound New Meadow Road approach acts as the stopping side street. There have been no recorded crashes at this intersection back to the 2004 limit of the current crash database. TOC concurred that a STOP sign on the New Meadow approach is not necessary but would be considered optional.

The Gabby/Heather intersection currently has two STOP signs, one on each Heather Lane approach to the intersection; Gabby Lane has no STOP sign. This is unusual in that Gabby Lane is actually the 'side street' of this T intersection and should otherwise be functioning as the stopping side street. The reason for the odd configuration of STOP signs goes back to the early development of the subdivision on Gabby Lane where it was envisioned that Gabby Lane would become a 'through street' continuing east past Heather Lane to a future connection with Donovan Street. Plans for this extension were abandoned, but the two STOP signs on the Heather Lane approaches have since remained. TOC concurred that the current two Heather Lane STOP signs are inappropriate and could be removed; Gabby Lane should function as the stopping side street. A STOP sign on the Gabby Lane eastbound approach is not necessary and would be considered optional.

Regarding placement of new STOP signs at locations where their use is considered optional, city policy provides guidance that side-street approaches to collector/arterial streets be given preference to new STOP sign location as opposed to local side-street approaches to other local streets. As such, TOC members noted preference to remove the two STOP signs at the Heather/Gabby intersection and place them on two nearby side street approaches to South Street (a major collector street) that currently have no STOP signs. It was suggested that further consideration of any change in STOP signs in this area include input from neighborhood residents. Engineering will further discuss this item with the Ward Councilor.

- 6) **Request from Riverbend Community Mental Health, Inc. to establish an exclusive pedestrian crossing phase at the State/Pleasant signalized intersection. (Engineering: 10/9/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Alan Moses, representing Riverbend, attended the meeting and presented his request to revise the pedestrian crossing at the intersection to exclusive WALK/DON'T WALK phasing. This request was also submitted to TOC in an October 9, 2012 letter from Mr. Moses. This request was pursuant to a recent pedestrian accident at the intersection involving a pedestrian in the crosswalk being struck by a turning vehicle. Mr. Moses noted a concern that Riverbend has facilities adjacent to this intersection and that it is concerned for the safety of its consumers that use crosswalks at this intersection.

Rob Mack explained that the current intersection operates with concurrent pedestrian crossings where pedestrians cross at the street together with traffic moving on a green light in the same direction; turning traffic must yield to pedestrians crossing in the crosswalks. This type of pedestrian operation is generally considered safe and is commonly used across the country. Concurrent pedestrian crossings currently operate at the five traffic signals along N. State Street from Pleasant Street to Centre Street, as was designed for this signalized corridor in 2005. Traffic signals with an exclusive pedestrian crossing stop all traffic at the intersection while the pedestrian signal phase cycles through the WALK/DON'T WALK movement; an example is the Main/Pleasant intersection. Where there are many pedestrian crossings, the use of exclusive phasing can increase overall delays for vehicles and pedestrians; longer traffic queues build up and some pedestrians choose to cross against the signals rather than wait for the light to cycle around. At the subject intersection, use of an exclusive pedestrian crossing would need to consider potential longer backups on Pleasant Street where they already extend back through intersections with Pleasant Street and Green Street at peak times. Impacts of additional traffic queues across the new crosswalk on Pleasant Street just north of N. State Street near the South Congregational Church would also be a consideration. Selection of the type of pedestrian crossing is generally pursuant to an engineering study of the particular intersection during the signal design process. Regarding safety, a review of the numbers of pedestrian crashes at signalized intersections in Concord since 2004 indicates a similar number of occurrences at intersections offering exclusive versus concurrent pedestrian phasing.

The CPD's crash report from the subject accident is not yet complete. Engineering will review the circumstances of the crash when available, and as appropriate, will assess potential options to pedestrian signal phasing at this intersection. Additional traffic count data will also need to be compiled at the intersection for this assessment. Engineering will report findings back to TOC when available to facilitate further consideration of this request.

- 7) **Request by Cynthia Marple of 178 N. State Street with a concern on difficult turns from Curtice Avenue onto N. State Street, and a request to consider making Curtice Avenue one-way eastbound from N. State Street to Prospect Street. (Engineering: 10/10/12).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Rob Mack summarized that the ongoing construction along this section of N. State Street is not yet complete. When completed, the reconstructed road will include a number of changes that will act to improve the sight lines for traffic turning out of Curtice Avenue:

- The N. State Street travel lanes are being relocated closer to the Rumford Street and Cemetery side. This will remove the former 'jog' in the road just north of Curtice Avenue that acted to restrict sight lines. The new pavement is in place and the new alignment will become more evident when new pavement markings are installed.

- Parking used to be allowed along the east side of N. State Street just north of Curtice Road. Parked vehicles here would certainly restrict sight lines. The new roadway layout will restrict on-street parking to nearly 400 feet north of Curtice Avenue, and a 5-foot painted shoulder (No Parking) will be marked along the east side of N. State Street both north and south of Curtice Avenue.
- Although not related to sight lines for turning traffic, the N. State Street crosswalk at Curtice Avenue will also be painted with high-visibility crosswalk lines and new crosswalk signs will be installed.

TOC members felt that when these improvements are completed, sight lines to/from Curtice Avenue will be substantially improved. TOC also felt it would be appropriate to see how the new roadway works for traffic turning to/from Curtice Avenue before further considering the need for a more restrictive change such as a one-way street conversion.

D. 

- 1) **Staff response to miscellaneous inquiries (refer to correspondence in agenda packet).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer
Chair, Traffic Operations Committee

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, November 20, 2012 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***