



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

June 28, 2018, 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)
Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)
Rebecca McWilliams (At-Large)
Greg Bakos (At-Large)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Members Absent:

Ursula Maldonado (Pedestrian and Trails Community) - excused
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative) - not excused

Staff and Guests:

Dave Cedarholm (City Engineer)
Sam Durfee (Senior Planner)
Ryan Buchanan (TPAC nominee)
Dan St. Hilaire (City Council)
Anthony Tenczar (Rockingham Street resident)
Ruth Ann Herbert (Rockingham Street resident)
Joan Hertz (Chapel Street resident)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order with introductions for all attendees.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 24, 2018 meeting were approved with minor amendment (Motion-Bakos; Second-McWilliams; Unanimous).

3. Public Comment - None

4. Presentations - None

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: Bicycle/Pedestrian – May 7, 2018; and Public Transportation – April 17, 2018.

8. **City Council Meeting Update**

Councilor Todd reported that at its June 11, 2018 meeting, City Council: adopted the FY2019 budget; conditionally included Langley Parkway Phase 3 design in FY19 pending funding approval, and acknowledged TPAC for providing its endorsement of the project; discussed the MRGT project and noted its support (non-monetary) to help promote and facilitate the project; and authorized the Manager to enter into a trail and license agreement with the Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail to build and maintain a multi-use trail on City property.

9. **TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair**

a. **Referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding a constituent concern on the revised alignment of the Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection**

Staff presented a comparative analysis of five alternatives: Alternative A retained the current intersection configuration; Alternative B widened the northeast corner radius; Alternative C widened the radius on both corners; Alternative D reconstructed a slip lane for the westbound right turn into Portsmouth Street; and Alternative E fully reconstructed the intersection about 25 feet west of its current location. It was noted that all of the alternatives, including the existing configuration, could allow for all large-vehicle turns to be made; the modification-alternatives B through E would allow additional levels of lane width at the intersection to allow turns to happen at slightly higher speeds and with more room to maneuver. The minor-modification Alternatives B through D were estimated to cost \$14,000 or less. The full intersection relocation (Alternative E) would cost about \$45,000. It was noted that City Council approved a \$15,000 line item in FY2019 for CIP78 Street Paving to accommodate potential modifications to this intersection.

Councilor St Hilaire had reviewed the alternatives and noted his preference for Alternative C or E, with the edge going to Alternative C as it cost considerably less than Alternative E but appeared to have similar benefits. He felt that Alternative D posed safety concerns.

TPAC members considered the benefits of making a more capacious intersection area versus the desirability to promote lower traffic speeds. Some TPAC attendees felt that the current intersection configuration was fine and that the encouragement of lower intersection travel speeds was a benefit for the neighborhood. Others felt that Alternatives B and C allowed for a little extra maneuvering space which could be beneficial to older drivers. Members did not indicate support for Alternatives D or E. TPAC approved a motion that Alternatives B and C were reasonable (Motion-Todd; Second-McWilliams; Unanimous). TPAC further suggested that Council determine which of these two alternatives to implement. Staff will prepare a report for Council with TPAC's recommendation.

b. **Request by Rockingham Street residents for a 25 mph speed limit and additional traffic calming measures on 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 TPAC and 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 summarized 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 concurred with this approach at its January 25, 2018 meeting and is looking forward to participating in the master plan update process.

Staff noted that TOC considered this latest neighborhood request at its June 19, 2018 meeting. 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 had been used in Durham, NH and Springfield, Missouri. Noted 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.

TOC continued to note (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 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 would support working with a lower speed limit if approved by City Council. TOC members have 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.

Crag Tufts noted that Mr. Tenczar brought the Rockingham Street residents' request for lower speeds and additional traffic calming to TPAC-BP'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.

Two technical studies were distributed to members related to prior studies of the effects of lowering speed limits. A 1992 FHWA study of the effects of raising or lowering the speed limit by up to 15 or 20 mph was conducted at about 100 test locations across 22 states. Findings included no significant change in motorists' speeds and no accident reduction for speed reductions below the average running speed. On the other hand, 'technical violations' of the reduced speed limit increased significantly. A commonly-cited reason for posting overly-low speed limits was public and political pressure. A second 2005 University of Missouri study was related to speed reduction case studies at several cities, and in particular Springfield, Missouri. In Springfield, a well-publicized speed-reduction demonstration project was developed for a grid network of local neighborhood streets (excluding the collector streets) where speed limits were reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph. A 'pace car' program as well as substantial enforcement was part of the program. A speed reduction of a few mph was noted along the local neighborhood street network in the period following the speed reduction, with some 'spillover' reduction noted on nearby collector streets. A result of this particular study is that some of the cities reduced speeds to 25mph on local residential streets city-wide.

TPAC attendees had a lengthy discussion of the issue. Residents attending asked for a 25 mph on Rockingham and would like to add distinctive speed limit signs. Also liked was the idea of a pace-car program as noted in the Springfield, MO trial. Staff noted that the subject pace-car program was short-lived as volunteers became wary of being identified as slower drivers for fear of potential retribution. Staff voiced past TOC concerns that 25 mph may be an unrealistically-low speed limit for a collector street like Rockingham Street, and while it is well-meaning in the residential context of the street, it might become an enforcement concern with good drivers now being considered scofflaws. A TPAC member suggested that the city be cognizant of what might eventually be instituted along Rockingham Street in the name of reducing speed, be it special large signs, flashers, or enforcement efforts atypical of other similar city locations; what ultimately results on Rockingham street may become the precedent for the rest of the city. A TPAC member inquired of a resident attendee how the neighborhood would measure the success of a speed reduction trial; the response would be the neighborhoods observations and perceptions related to safety. A member inquired if the neighborhood expressed any interest in the street tree program as was suggested earlier; a response was not provided.

TPAC approved a motion to recommend that City Council consider reducing the speed limit on Rockingham Street from 30 mph to 25 mph, including appropriate signage as determined by staff (Motion-Todd; Second-Zakre; Unanimous). TPAC suggests that staff monitor speeds along Rockingham Street over the coming year, and with comparison to prior speed data here, ascertain the effectiveness of a lower speed limit posting along this collector street. The results may be helpful in the upcoming broader discussion of speed limits city-wide during the Master Plan update. Attendees cautioned that if lower speeds only result from the addition of substantial enforcement effort or other traffic control measure (more signs, flashers, street modifications), that same should be an expected requirement in the future at similar through-streets city-wide where future speed limit reductions might be contemplated.

c. Referral from Councilor Herschlag requesting funding for sidewalk 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. At 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.

Attendees acknowledged the priority status of this sidewalk segment as well as others noted in the Pedestrian Master Plan. However, factors such as potential user demand, constructability and cost may make other segments across the city more desirable to implement first. Another option suggested would be to bundle a number of the priority sidewalk segments and include them in a grant application under an appropriate NHDOT sidewalk funding program. It is staff's understanding that Ward 2 abutters along the south side of Borough Road are requesting sidewalk be located along the northern side of the road. It is not known if Ward 1 abutters along the north side have an opinion on the matter. Councilor Todd suggested that additional input is needed to gage public support.

TPAC approved a motion that it supports construction of this segment of Borough Road sidewalk as one of a number of priority-sidewalk locations identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan. It also acknowledged that significant additional investigation is needed due to a number of outstanding issues such as design-location, right-of-way need, abutter acceptance and cost. A recommended first step would be to reach out to residents along both sides of the corridor to identify issues and gage support for further engineering investigation (Motion-Tufts; Second-McWilliams; Unanimous).

d. 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. Staff reported that Mr. March, author of the communication, spoke about the neighbors' concerns at the June 19, 2016 Traffic Operations Committee meeting.

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. The issue of excessive muffler noise was discussed at TOC's June 19 meeting. 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.

TPAC members concurred with staff and CPD follow-ups and felt that the responses to residents' concerns noted above were appropriate. Attendees did not support the closure of streets in the area, particularly collector streets such as Broadway and Rockingham Street. Staff was requested to report these findings and recommendations on the referral back to City Council.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

a. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC met this month and considered: the Rockingham Street 25mph speed reduction request (Item 9b); speed concerns reported on Wilson Avenue, Broadway (Item 9d) and Plum Street; and a request for sidewalk along Borough Road (Item 9c).

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

Craig Tufts reported that TPAC-BP met this month and discussed: the Rockingham Street speed reduction request; location of loop detector hot spots for future paint markings to show cyclists where to best stop in a lane to best activate the traffic signal for a green light; continued investigation of bike-sharing and dockless-system programs; a potential bike-lane demonstration project with possible South Street location; and the new bike racks that were recently installed at City Hall.

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

Sheila Zakre reported that TPAC-PT met this month and discussed potential CAT application for a Federal Transit Authority 5339 grant for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that improves access to public transit. Potential applications discussed include: location of bike racks and bus shelters at select bus stops; and replacement of the bus schedule signs at CAT bus stops city-wide so that the schedule is more readable from the sidewalk. The bike racks and the sign relocations were deemed the most reasonable to apply for at the current time. CAT is willing to apply but needs help in preparing the application. Assistance was being sought through TPAC-BP.

11. Staff Updates

a. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP 543)

Brent Todd reported that while City Council has not approved funding for the project, it indicated its support for the project as a priority as well as support for staff in discussions with Pan Am Railroad. Dick Lemieux noted that MRGT was discussing with Pan Am the possibility of getting an appraisal on select portions of the rail corridor. Greg Bakos noted that the design team for the Terrill Park portion of the corridor is still investigating lower-cost design options.

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

Rob Mack reported that the NHDOT's next public hearing on the project is not yet scheduled. NHDOT had anticipated that this next hearing would be scheduled later in the summer.

12. Other Discussion Items

a. FY2019 Transportation CIP Projects

Rob Mack noted transportation-related projects for FY2019, including: bridge replacement on N. Pembroke Road, Birchdale Road and Hooksett Turnpike; completion of traffic signal improvements at N. Main/Bouton/I-393 intersection; partial funding for CAT's purchase of a third transit bus; completion of the design of Manchester Street improvements from Airport Road to Garvins Falls

Road; a land use and real estate analysis for the proposed Whitney Road Extension; and a \$1.9M street repaving program.

b. Langley Parkway Phase 3

The Chair requested that this project be added to the Staff Updates agenda item for potential discussion in upcoming meetings. He suggested a staff overview of the project would be beneficial for the several, new TPAC appointees.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 9:15 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: July 26, 2018
 August 23, 2018
 September 27, 2018