

City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 28, 2015 - 6:00pm to 8:00pm
City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Dick Lemieux, Chair, called the meeting to order. Those in attendance included:

Committee Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (At-Large - Chair)
Brent Todd (Council Representative)
Byron Champlin (Council Representative)
Ursula Maldonado (At-Large)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Committee Members Not Present:

Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Tom Irwin (At-Large)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

None

2. Approval of March 26, 2015 meeting minutes

The March 26, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as submitted (Motion-Maldonado; Second-Todd; Unanimous).

3. Presentations

There were no presentations.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. New business

- a. Councilor Todd suggested consideration of potential use of vehicle-bicycle lateral clearance signs. A number of sample signs were distributed from state and municipal installations nationwide that inform drivers of the '3-foot rule'. The signs might be of benefit as far as promoting public information about New Hampshire's new law and increasing public cognizance of the need to share the use of roadways by both vehicles and bicycles.

Rob Mack noted that NHDOT has elected to not use the sign since it does not yet have any demonstrated value in terms of safety and is not an approved sign in the MUTCD.

Several signs have been installed by private or municipal organizations in New Hampshire, one of which was a larger sign in Newport that showed the 3-foot rule for 30 mph and one extra foot for each 10 mph increment in speed. Craig Tufts noted that the Bicycle/Pedestrian committee had discussed potential use of this sign in the past but put further consideration on low priority in deference to other issues; the NHDOT's decision to not support the sign was one reason for this.

TPAC members were favorable to considering use of the sign, particularly as it may have value as an empathetic message to the driving public about responsibly and safely sharing the road with bicyclists. Craig agreed to bring item back to the Bicycle/Pedestrian committee for further consideration and would report back to TPAC.

6. Old Business

a. Review/update Comprehensive Transportation Policy

The Chair noted that pursuant to the May 11, 2015 public hearing on this item, City Council questioned the wording in TPAC's proposed policy amendment, specifically: the appropriateness of the word 'incidental' in Item 1.b regarding fully integrating bicyclists into the City's transportation system; and the applicability of the 'policy exceptions' statement at the end of the document. City Council moved to table consideration of the amended policy pending clarification and/or amended language from TPAC on these two items of concern.

Item 1.b of the amended policy considered by City Council on May 11, 2015 stated in part that the City's Complete Streets initiative would *"fully integrate bicyclists into the City's transportation system, via improvements as incidental parts of street building and resurfacing projects, as well as by separate projects for that specific purpose."* Public comment included a statement of concern that the word 'incidental' could imply that bicycle improvements were considered minor or by chance.

TPAC concurred that the word 'incidental,' as used in the original policy statement, was intended to mean something that is likely to happen in subordinate conjunction with street improvement projects. This has been city practice since adoption of the original policy in 2010, one result of which was the city earning national recognition as a Bike Friendly Community in 2010, the first in New Hampshire. However, to avoid potential misinterpretation of this policy statement, TPAC members concurred on the following rewording for Item 1.b: *"Fully integrating bicyclists into the City's transportation system, both through opportunities that arise as part of street building and resurfacing projects, and through separate projects for that specific purpose."*

City Council also questioned the need for the proposed statement on policy exceptions as approval of such exceptions would be under their purview; the statement being, *"exceptions to this policy are allowed only where it is documented that rigid implementation would be inappropriate, such as accommodating users where they are prohibited; where the cost is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable public value; in the absence of current or future need; or for routine maintenance that does not change mobility, safety, street geometry or operations."*

Recognizing that this Comprehensive Transportation Policy is authorized by City Council, TPAC members concurred that any exceptions to the policy are subject to the same review and authorization. As such, TPAC concurred on the following rewording for this item: *“Exceptions to this policy shall be approved by the Concord City Council.”*

A resident, Robert Baker, submitted two documents to TPAC for consideration in developing the policy amendment. Included were: HealNH Policy Analysis, Helping to Achieve Healthier Communities, December 2014; and the FHWA’s Separated Bikeline Planning and Design Guide, May 2015. TPAC members concurred that the amended policy wording reasonably reflected the objectives outlined in the submitted materials. It was noted that Smart Growth America’s review of the amended policy language (at the request of Mr. Baker) indicated a very favorable policy rating versus the lower rating of wording in the 2010 policy. It was also noted that the HealNH Policy Analysis, recognizes Concord’s 2010 Comprehensive Transportation Policy as one successful tool NH communities might consider towards the goal of making healthier and more ‘complete’ streets.

TPAC approved the amended policy subject to the two changes noted above (Motion-Champlin; Second-Sudak; Unanimous). Rob Mack noted that the revised policy amendment would be resubmitted to City Council for further consideration at their June 8, 2015 meeting.

7. Consent Reports

a. Approval of Subcommittee Minutes (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Public Transportation, and Traffic Operations)

The following subcommittee reports were accepted by unanimous consent: Bicycle/Pedestrian – January 6, 2015 and March 2, 2015; and Public Transportation – March 17, 2015.

8. City Council Meeting Update

At its May 11, 2015 meeting, City Council considered TPAC’s recommendation for an Amended Comprehensive Transportation Policy but tabled the item to its June meeting pending further clarification from TPAC.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral by the Chair to discuss the status of the sections of N. and S. Main Street immediately north and south of the Downtown Complete Streets Project

The Chair noted a concern that following the Downtown Complete Streets Project, there may still be a short segments of non-‘complete street’ just north and south of the project area. Specifically, S. Main Street from Concord Street south to the West Street intersection where the bike lanes pick up to the south, and N. Main Street between Loudon Road and Washington Street where the bike lanes pick up to the north. The retention of the short, existing 4-lane segments was also a concern as the downtown section of the corridor will be converted to one through-lane in each direction. He suggested that TPAC consider some options, regardless of funding availability, that might mitigate these issues following the downtown project.

Rob Mack added that due to budget constraints, the downtown project area was currently limited to between Concord Street and Loudon Road. If budget is available at the end of the S. Main Street section in 2016, an option is to resurface S. Main Street between Concord Street and West Street and place the three-lane road markings as per the original project design; no parking changes or curb/sidewalk work would be done. The N. Main Street segment from Loudon Road to Storrs Street might also be repaved but with the current lane markings replaced in kind. Lane-width changes and installation of bicycle lanes cannot be done without relocation the existing raised median north of the Loudon Road intersection which is thought to be unlikely at this time due to cost.

TPAC voted to refer the item to Engineering with a request that some lane-improvement options be conceptualized to assist TPAC in its review of improvements that might address these potentially incomplete segments of N. and S. Main Street. These concepts should strive for consistency with the new lane-use patterns developed for the Main Street Complete Streets project (Motion-Maldonado; Second-Champlin; Unanimous).

10. Status report on subcommittees

a. **Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, Craig Tufts**

Craig Tufts reported that CNHRPC and volunteers conducted another round of bicycle/pedestrian counts on Main Street in May 2015. The committee also reviewed bicycling/walking aspects of several site-development plans which are currently under review by the planning board.

b. **Public Transit Committee, Tom Irwin**

Rob Mack relayed an update from Tom Irwin that noted that the committee: discussed concerns about the use of climate control on buses, especially in summer; agreed to explore performance measures being developed by the NH MPOs for development of the committee's mission/vision/goals document; and made plans to attend the June 1, 2015 City Council hearing to provide a statement of support for the bus-replacement budget item.

c. **Traffic Operations Committee, Rob Mack**

Rob Mack reported that TOC did not meet in May. The Washington/Borough/River intersection realignment was temporarily installed in early May, with full construction planned at the end of May.

11. Staff Updates

a. **Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project - TIGER 2012 (CIP460)**

Rob Mack reported that construction of the northbound side of the N. Main Street segment of the corridor is underway and will be complete by the Market Days event scheduled from June 25 to 27 this year. Construction on the southbound side of the N. Main Street segment will begin afterwards.

b. **US Route 3 North Improvements (CIP 35)**

Rob Mack reported that construction work would begin in early June.

c. **Sewalls Falls Bridge Replacement Project (CIP 22)**

Rob Mack reported that advertisement for construction bids was scheduled for the end of May.

d. Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)

Rob Mack reported that delays in Federal and state funding have caused the NHDOT to push the construction start date to mid-January, 2016. As such construction will be delayed until next spring. The design team is continuing with the final design effort.

e. I-93 Bow-Concord (NHDOT)

Rob Mack reported that traffic modeling for the project continues. The NHDOT team has not yet decided on how public outreach would be handled. One suggestion was to meet individually with existing committees, perhaps starting with the Transportation Advisory Committee at CNHRPC.

12. Other Discussion Items

There were no discussion items.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 8:35 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: June 25, 2015
July 23, 2015
August 27, 2015