

**City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 19, 2015 - 6:00pm to 8:00pm
City Hall 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)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)
Tom Irwin (At-Large)
Ursula Maldonado (At-Large)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Committee Members Not Present:

Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

Ed Roberge (City Engineer)
Nancy Larson (City Planner)

2. Approval of October 22, 2015 meeting minutes

The October 22, 2015 minutes were approved as submitted (Motion-Champlin; Second-Todd; Unanimous).

3. Presentations

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. New business

None.

6. Old Business

None

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 – September 8, 2015; Public Transit – May 19, 2015; and Traffic Operations – October 20, 2015.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Councilor Todd reported that at its November 9, 2015 meeting, Council referred a resident request to TOC for deer crossing signs on Borough Road near Blueberry Lane.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from City Council regarding a resident concern on wheelchair accessibility on Union Street (City Council: 8/10/15)

In follow-up to discussions at prior TPAC and TPAC-PT meetings, staff invited Mr. Pilch to attend tonight's TPAC meeting to discuss the sidewalk ramp improvements made to correct the wheelchair accessibility problem noted on Union Street, as well as to discuss funding sources for a potential wheelchair transportation service. Mr. Pilch was not in attendance. Staff presented a draft report for TPAC review that summarized TPAC and staff actions to address the requests in the referral. The draft report was approved as submitted (Motion-Champlin; Second-Irwin; Unanimous). The report will be submitted as a consent item to City Council on December 14, 2015. Councilor Champlin noted his conversation with Mr. Pilch earlier this fall and that Mr. Pilch was quite pleased with the city's prompt actions to address the sidewalk problem. Councilor Champlin commended TPAC subcommittees and staff for their responsiveness to this request and their efforts to reach out to Mr. Pilch.

b. 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 that a work session to refine a striping-only plan for the northern and southern segments of Main Street (referred to as the 'bookends') was held earlier in the month (attendees: Rob Mack, Jeff Warner, Dick Lemieux and Craig Tufts). Options to restripe the existing paved street width were explored, with particular attention given to implementing consistent vehicle lane-use and bicycle lanes compatible with those of the adjoining Main Street Complete Streets improvement.

Ed Roberge suggested that staff would finalize recommendations for the 'bookend' restriping plans and provide them to the Main Street design consultant in December for plan preparation and estimates. In December or January, City Council will decide on a Main Street up-lighting design. That decision will firm up the cost for the remaining year of construction in 2016. In particular, the amount of remaining funding will be better defined and the level to which the 'bookends' might be included will be determined. Staff will report back to Council in March on a study of the four additional parking spaces that were added in front of Bead It. This would be an appropriate time to include a TPAC recommendation on the 'bookends' improvements as a potential priority for Council consideration.

After considerable discussion, TPAC attendees concurred on the above schedule. The development of a TPAC recommendation and report will be continued in January.

10. Status report on subcommittees

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

The Chair reported that the subcommittee did not meet this month. The League of American Bicyclists awarded Concord recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the bronze level for an additional four years (2015-2019). In 2010, Concord became the first NH community to receive this recognition. Ursula Maldonado also reported that she, Sheila Zakre and Craig Tufts planned to set up an information booth on the Heights during the November shopping parade to share information get feedback from the public on aspects the proposed pedestrian master plan.

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

Tom Irwin reported that TPAC-PT did not meet this month. However, he did bring attention to TPAC-PT's considerable discussion at its last meeting regarding CAT's planned bus acquisition with particular regard to the type of bus that may ultimately be acquired based on either a front- or rear-engine mount specification. At issue is the lower maintenance cost of a front-engine bus versus the visual attractiveness of a modern rear-engine bus. TPAC-PT had requested specific cost data from CAT to help further the discussion, but none has yet been provided.

TPAC members had considerable discussion regarding the merits of each bus type. There was general concurrence that the visual attractiveness of a rear-engine bus could help promote CAT service to a larger customer base; however the added costs needed to be better defined in order for TPAC to make a recommendation. Brent Todd suggested that TPAC-PT request additional information from CAT at its next meeting regarding maintenance costs and operating data for the two different bus types so that a more-informed recommendation can be made. TPAC could then have a follow-up discussion on TPAC-PT's findings and recommendations, with goal to make an overall TPAC recommendation.

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

Rob Mack reported that TOC met on November 17, 2015 and considered: a resident concern on traffic speeds along the passing zone on Mountain Road north of Hoit Road; a referral from Council regarding a resident request for deer crossing signs on Borough Road; a resident request for a stop sign at the Union/Albin intersection; and a resident request to extend the 25 mph speed limit on Elm Street further west of Chandler Street.

11. Staff Updates

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

Ed Roberge reported that the reconstruction of N. Main Street would be completed this week, with all construction activity ending for the season. S. Main Street work will begin next spring.

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

Ed Roberge reported that corridor construction is active and that work on the new signals at the fire station and at the Borough Road intersection would begin next week.

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

Ed Roberge reported that the old land-span to the former bridge is gone and the new footing on the west side of the river is being constructed now. The eastern half of the old truss bridge will be removed next month.

d. **Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)**

Ed Roberge reported that final design and right-of-way coordination is underway. Advertisement for construction is anticipated in February 2016. City Council plans to discuss project and funding status at its January meeting.

e. **Mountain/Shawmut/East Side/Exit 16 Roundabout (CIP 24)**

Ed Roberge reported that staff is finalizing a design agreement with CMA Engineers, with design occurring this winter and construction being done next spring or summer.

f. **Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP 543)**

Ed Roberge reported that the project design will be by VHB, Inc. with construction anticipated next spring or summer.

g. **I-93 Bow-Concord (NHDOT)**

Ed Roberge reported that the Mayor has appointed a project review committee to represent city interests and provide feedback to the NHDOT as the study develops. The committee includes Mayor Bouley, City Manager Tom Aspell, Deputy City Manager Carlos Baia and Philip Hastings.

12. Other Discussion Items

a. **Main Street sidewalk step visibility**

Sheila Zakre noted a concern regarding the visibility of the steps on Main Street near The Works for pedestrians that choose to walk southbound along the portion of the sidewalk that crosses the raised patio area near the building faces. At issue is the visibility of the granite steps against the background of granite sidewalk pavers, particularly for vision-impaired walkers or those not paying attention to the walkway ahead. Ed Roberge noted that during sidewalk construction there was a large warning sign placed at the top of the steps to alert pedestrians to the new steps. The completed sidewalk now has features to enhance the visibility of the steps including: application of a granite stain to darken the steps (contrasting against the lighter granite sidewalk in the background); and placement of handrails on and near the steps. The possibility of adding a raised strip on the steps was considered, but was felt to contribute to a potential tripping hazard in this circumstance. He would offer to meet with anyone with impaired vision out on Main Street at the completed steps to get user feedback.

b. **New pedestrian crossing operation at the Main/Pleasant intersection**

Brent Todd inquired about the new pedestrian signal phasing at the Main/Pleasant intersection. At issue was concern expressed by a corner business owner and several walkers about pedestrian crossings that now have to mix with turning traffic. Ed Roberge noted that the new signal operation does not replicate the old exclusive pedestrian crossing with diagonal crossing movement, and that folks need time to become familiar with the new operation. The new intersection crossings are more compact and designed for pedestrians to

cross with parallel traffic movement (similar to signals along N. State Street between Pleasant and Centre). The new Main/Pleasant operation features an advance pedestrian interval, where the WALK phase starts about five seconds before the green light is given for parallel traffic movement, giving pedestrians the right-of-way first before traffic is given the green light. The operation is new for this intersection and it may take a few weeks for drivers and pedestrians to get used to the new operation. Variable message boards were recently installed at the intersection to remind drivers to yield to pedestrians. Rob Mack noted his observations of a gradual but significant improvement in pedestrian compliance with the new push buttons (and lack of diagonal crossing) since the new signal operation started a week or two ago.

c. **City-wide speed limits**

Rob Mack noted TOC's November 17 discussion of the apparent disparity in speed limits city-wide, particularly on local residential streets where there is a mix of 25 mph and 30 mph postings. He suggested that a review of speed postings on a city-wide basis would be an appropriate TPAC consideration. After some discussion TPAC members concurred that a uniform application of speed limits across the city would benefit the public by better defining travel expectations. For example, all local residential streets might be uniformly posted at 25 mph, while most streets carrying through traffic might retain their 30 mph or higher posting. The Chair asked that the item be included on the next agenda(s) for further consideration.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 10:00 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: December 17, 2015
 January 28, 2016
 February 25, 2016