

**City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 23, 2016 - 6:00pm to 8:00pm
City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Councilor Todd called the meeting to order as Chair Dick Lemieux had not yet arrived. He suggested Item 9b be considered first as a member of the public was present to speak on this item. Dick Lemieux arrived shortly thereafter and took over as Chair at the beginning of the Item 9b discussion. Those in attendance included:

Committee Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (Vehicle Traffic Safety Operations; Chair)
Brent Todd (Council Representative)
Jennifer Kretovic (Council Representative)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Committee Members Not Present:

Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Ursula Maldonado (Pedestrian and Trails Community)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

Ed Roberge, City Engineer
David Sky, Concord Resident (agenda Item 9b)

2. Approval of April 28, 2016 Meeting Minutes

The April 28, 2016 minutes were approved as submitted (Motion-Kretovic; Second-Tufts; Unanimous).

3. Presentations

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. New Business

Councilor Kretovic noted her observations of some cars parking too close to intersections and limiting sight-lines for minor-street traffic trying to turn onto or cross a major street. Parking along Centre Street near cross-street intersections between N. State Street and Liberty Street were noted as an example. Rob Mack noted that the Ordinance limits parking to no closer than 30 feet to intersections controlled by stop signs or signals unless signs or markings indicate otherwise. Staff will check out parking along Centre Street and determine if supplemental signing is necessary to maintain proper parking setbacks. Attendees suggested that a public information

announcement (Manager's Memo or Concord Cable TV) of minimum parking setbacks might also be of benefit city-wide.

6. Old Business

None

7. Consent Reports

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

The following subcommittee reports were accepted by unanimous consent: Bicycle/Pedestrian - April 4, and May 2, 2016; Public Transportation - March 15 and May 17, 2016; and Traffic Operations - May 17, 2016.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Ed Roberge reported that at its May 9, 2016 meeting, City Council appropriated additional funds for CAT as well as for construction of the S. Main Street 'bookend' (restriping-only to continue the new two-lane Main Street operation from Concord Street south to Storrs Street). Councilor Todd complimented TPAC's efforts to promote this 'complete-streets' addition to the Main Street project, as well as TPAC-PT's efforts to enhance Council's awareness of CAT's operations and ridership needs.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from Engineering to discuss speed limits city-wide (Engineering: 11/19/15)

Rob Mack presented a progress worksheet of a potential city-wide revision in street speed limits. A city-wide speed limit of 25 mph (unless otherwise posted) would cover the vast majority of local residential streets. Current postings of 30 or 35 mph on most 'through streets' would remain. Staff continues to refine options for select major streets such as in the downtown core where the lower speed limit might be appropriate due to intensity of parking and pedestrian activity. Another option being investigated was the potential to pair 25 mph speed limits on local streets with the absence of pavement markings, a current city practice on most local-only residential streets. That might provide drivers with another 'visual cue' of the lower travel speeds expected in neighborhood areas.

TPAC members concurred with staff's approach to this proactive effort to address the current disparity in posted speed limits on local residential streets city-wide. TPAC suggested that staff consider preparing an introductory report for Council documenting the purpose and need for a city-wide speed limit update in order to gage support for continued efforts to this end.

b. Referral from Engineering regarding a request from David Sky, Concord resident, asking that consideration be given to the installation of a STOP sign on the Concord Street eastbound approach to South Street (Engineering: 5/19/16)

David Sky addressed his concern that this intersection approach does not have a STOP sign posted while other side street intersections along this section of South Street do. He noted that he was bicycling southbound along South Street when a Concord Street motorist turned out in front of him to head south without yielding the right of way. He noted that CPD followed up with that motorist who indicated that she did not see the bicyclist approaching when the turn was made.

Staff distributed a map illustrating the intersection location as well as the current utilization of STOP signs at all other side-street intersections along the subject segment of South Street between Pleasant Street and McKee Square. Of note is the fact that the Concord Street eastbound approach is the only minor side-street approach of ten on this street segment that does not have a STOP sign posted. This segment of South Street (also designated as NH Route 13) is classified as a major arterial. The City's policy on the use of STOP signs, accepted by Council in August 2011, recognizes that STOP signs are not required at every cross street or driveway intersection, particularly at intersections where the normal right-of-way rules are obvious such as at minor T intersections. Per Federal guidelines, the use of One-Way or Two-Way STOP should be based on engineering judgment.

TOC considered the operational characteristics and safety of the intersection at its June 21, 2016 meeting. TOC recalled considering the necessity for a STOP sign at this location in 2011 during development of what would later become the City's STOP sign policy. At that time it was determined that the configuration of the Concord Street eastbound approach to South Street functioned safely as a stopping side-street approach and that the need for a stop sign could be considered optional. In the over five years since January 2011, there had been two reported crashes here, or about one crash per three years; this is quite low for an urban arterial street in the urban core and not indicative of a safety problem. As such TOC reaffirmed that the potential use of a STOP sign on this approach was considered optional. TOC did, however, recognize a potential benefit in maintaining signage consistency along the segment of South Street between Pleasant Street and McKee Square in that Concord Street is currently the only stopping side street that does not have a STOP sign posted. TOC referred the request to TPAC for additional review.

TPAC members noted that the incident Mr. Sky described was apparently caused by an inattentive driver and that stop signs do not necessarily make inattentive drivers more attentive. Members noted that this stop sign recommendation should not be seen as a precedent and it should not be seen as eliminating the possibility of future similar incidents or necessarily making the intersection appreciably safer. TPAC members further considered the request in terms of the City's policy on the use of STOP signs. The policy states in part that STOP signs will generally be located on side-street approaches to collector and arterial streets, which would be the case in this instance as the segment of South Street between Pleasant Street and McKee Square is classified as an arterial. Furthermore, TPAC/TOC's accompanying July 28, 2011 report to Council recommends that if additional STOP signs are to be considered at side-street intersections, that preference is given to locating new signs on side-street approaches to the collector/arterial street network. Additionally, TPAC noted a preference for adding a STOP sign at the Concord Street location for consistency with the other side-street approaches along the segment of South Street between Pleasant Street and McKee Square.

TPAC moved to recommend the installation of a STOP sign on the Concord Street eastbound approach to South Street (Motion-Kretovic; Second-Zakre; Unanimous). Staff would prepare a report for Council consideration of this recommendation to so amend the Ordinance.

c. Referral from Council regarding a request from John Cook, Concord resident, asking that consideration be given to the installation of a 4-way stop at the intersection of Union and Maple Streets (Council: 5/13/16)

At issue is a resident request to install a 4-way STOP at the intersection of Union and Maple Streets to slow traffic. The stated concern is that the atypical one-way signing at the

intersection can be confusing to drivers unfamiliar with the area and that the recent repaving of Union Avenue will increase traffic speeds, exacerbating the situation. Council referred the request to TPAC at their May 13, 2016 meeting.

Rob Mack reported that this is the intersection of two local streets in an urban residential area. Union Street is the non-stopping through street and is one-way from Centre Street north to the subject intersection at Maple Street, and two-way from Maple Street north to Washington Street. A large bump-out with a tree on the southwest corner is a physical feature, in addition two Do Not Enter signs, indicating to drivers heading southbound from Washington Street or Maple Avenue that continued southbound travel to Centre Street is prohibited. Maple Street is posted as the stopping side street at the Union Street intersection. It is two way east to N. State Street and one-way entering the intersection when coming eastbound from N. Spring Street. Dual one-way and do-not-enter signs are also located on the one-way Maple Street approach. This atypical configuration of one-way street approaches was implemented some years back to mitigate what was a substantial volume of traffic otherwise cutting through this neighborhood to circumvent delays at the signalized N. State/Center Street intersection.

TOC discussed the intersection configuration at its June 21, 2016 meeting. TOC had checked the intersection out and felt that the Do Not Enter and one-way signage and bump out on Union were reasonable to control traffic, understanding that the folks most-likely to be 'confused' are the 'first-timers' that try to cut through the neighborhood to circumvent delays at the N. State/Center street intersection only to find the one-way restrictions; they quickly learn to not do that again. Implementation of a multi-way stops has to meet Federal warrants and that traffic volume at this intersection would be well below minimum thresholds. A review of crash history at the intersection indicated one reported crash in the over-five years since 2011; this is not indicative of a safety concern. In summary, TOC found current intersection signage to be reasonable and that the addition of a 4-way STOP would not be appropriate.

TPAC indicated its concurrence with TOC findings in that current signing appears appropriate and sufficient at the intersection. Staff was endeavoring to contact Mr. Cook to further discuss his concerns, and would report back to TPAC at the next meeting.

- d. **Referral from Council regarding a request from third grade students at Christa McAuliffe Elementary School for the installation of a 4-way stop at the intersection of Warren and Rumford Streets (Council: 5/13/16)**

Further TOC discussion with the school district deferred until classes resume in September.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

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

Craig Tufts presented a draft report summarizing TPAC-BP's bicycle-pedestrian traffic count program, and specifically the results-to-date for the Loudon Road corridor. A subset of TPAC-BP's city-wide count program, the subcommittee felt it important to share the results for Loudon Road with TPAC in light of Council's reconsideration of the 3-lane conversion project. The report summarized counts of peak period bicycle and pedestrian movements at four key intersections along the corridor including the following findings: walking and bicycling trips appear to be for utilitarian rather than fitness/recreational purposes; children make up a significant percentage of these trips in the center of the Heights neighborhood, likely due to the close proximity of high-density housing, Keach Park and the community center; and

substantial bicycle travel is along the sidewalk rather than in the street, not only illegal but unexpected by vehicles turning to/from driveways compounding safety problems.

TPAC members discussed the reported bicycle and pedestrian usage of the corridor. It was noted Loudon Road is a corridor of walkable destinations which also included a significant resident population which might not have access to private motor vehicles for their day-to-day travel needs. Members further concurred that for the above reasons, it benefits the public good to focus corridor improvements that enhance walking and bicycling. It was suggested that TPAC-PT also contribute to this discussion of corridor travel needs in terms of alternate travel modes.

TPAC members concurred that it would be beneficial to refine and share this report with Council. Craig Tufts offered to provide an updated draft for further review at TPAC's next meeting. If finalized, TPAC would endeavor to submit it to Council as a consent report for their August 8 meeting.

b. Public Transit Committee, Sheila Zakre

Sheila Zakre reported that TPAC-PT met on June 21 and further considered the issue of improving snow maintenance at bus stops. Member Dean Williams of CNHRPC prepared a map showing city-wide bus stop locations together with bus stop patronage numbers and the applicable sidewalk snow-plowing priority by the City. The subcommittee hopes to enjoin General services in the discussion at a future meeting. The Chair offered kudos to CNHRPC for the significant contributions to TPAC by both Dean Williams and Craig Tufts.

c. Traffic Operations Committee, Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC met on June 21, 2016 and discussed: Items 9b, 9c and 9d, above. Also noted was NHDOT's plan to investigate the removal of the traffic signal on NH Route 106 at the Steeplegate Mall entrance near TD Bank due to low traffic usage.

11. Staff Updates

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

Not discussed.

b. US Route 3 North Improvements (CIP 35)

Not discussed.

c. Sewalls Falls Bridge Replacement Project (CIP 22)

Not discussed.

d. Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)

Ed Roberge reported that staff continues efforts to follow up on Council's January request to explore 4-lane alternatives to the proposed 3-lane conversion. Options include retaining the current 4-lane corridor and considering safety improvements limited to sidewalks, driveway consolidations and crosswalks. Staff submitted additional safety and benefit/cost analysis to NHDOT regarding the latter option and its potential eligibility for Highway Safety Improvement Program funding. NHDOT's response is pending.

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

Not discussed.

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

Not discussed.

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

Not discussed.

h. **Storrs Street Extension North (CIP18)**

Not discussed.

i. **Water Street Signal Coordination (CIP283)**

Rob Mack reported that updated traffic signal coordination had recently been implemented by staff during the morning and afternoon peak periods for the system of traffic signals along S. Main/Water/Manchester Streets from the S. Main Street/Storrs Street intersection, through Exit 14 and south to the Manchester Street/Old Turnpike Road intersection. Reduced stop delays for northbound and southbound through traffic were notable.

12. Other Discussion Items

- a. Rob Mack noted that at its meeting earlier in the week, TPAC-PT had inquired as to subcommittee membership and who is entitled to vote. Staff planned to follow up with the City Clerk and would report back to TPAC and each of its subcommittees. Current subcommittee membership lists were distributed to subcommittee chairs.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 9:05 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: July 28, 2016
August 25, 2016
September 22, 2016