



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Traffic Operations Committee

July 18, 2017, 12:00 PM
2nd floor Conference Room
City Hall, 41 Green Street, Concord, NH

Staff Present:

Rob Mack, Engineering Services (Chair)
Ed Roberge, Engineering Services
Jim Major, General Services
John Stoll, Planning Division
John Thomas, Police Department

Guests:

1. Regular Discussion Items

a. Overview of City-Wide Crash Data

Crash data for June 2017 was reviewed. There were 113 reportable crashes in June 2017. This compares with 108 and 85 reportable crashes in June 2016 and 2015, respectively. 24 crashes resulted in total of 29 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There was one crash involving a pedestrian: a flag-person controlling traffic during construction of the Exit 16 roundabout project and being struck by a passing vehicle (injury, driver at fault).

There were two crashes involving bicyclists: two bicyclists aged 16 and 19 years traveling eastbound on the Loudon Road sidewalk going up Gully Hill and being struck by a motorcycle that lost control while racing another eastbound vehicle (significant injuries, automobile and motorcycle operators at fault with criminal charges pending; helmets worn); and a bicyclist aged 16 years traveling westbound on the eastbound-side Loudon Road sidewalk (wrong way), crossing the I-93 Exit 14 northbound off ramp against the signals and being struck by a vehicle making a right turn from the off-ramp (minor injury, driver not identified, helmet worn).

Following up on TOC's discussion last month, Engineering and CPD summarized crash history at the Pleasant/Langley intersection since January 2009 (after the opening of Langley Parkway South). There were 31 crashes reported in the 8.5 year period, averaging 3.6 crashes per year. TOC felt this was not excessive for an intersection that size. An intersection crash diagram indicated that nearly one half of the at-fault vehicles were on the Langley Parkway southbound approach, most of them resulting in rear end collisions. TOC members felt that long peak-period delays and queues at the intersection contributed to a more-aggressive driver behavior on exiting the hospital campus.

b. City Council Meeting Update

At its July 10, 2017 meeting, City Council accepted TOC consent reports on the Franklin Street speed investigation and the addition of a painted crosswalk on Storrs Street at Dixon Avenue. There was also a referral from City Council to TOC and CPD regarding a concern from residents of Woodcrest Heights with speeding in the neighborhood (see Item 4.b below).

c. Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update

At its June 22, 2017 meeting, TPAC again discussed the Pleasant Street rezoning proposal and is considering developing a recommendation for the Planning Board.

2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items

- a. None.

3. New Discussion and Action Items

a. Review of sight lines at the Sewalls Falls Road/Second Street intersection (*Administration: 6/19/17*).

At issue is a concern noted by Councilor Cohen to Administration that there appears to be a sight line restriction on the Second Street and the Sylvester Street approaches to the intersection at Sewalls Falls Road. Engineering staff measured existing sight lines at the intersection and found them to be appropriate. There is an 'appearance' of limited sight distance from Second Street westbound if one is looking to the right before coming to the stopping point (at issue is the golf course sign and the boulders along the golf course frontage). If a car is stopped just behind the stop line the sight line to the right is about 200 feet which is the minimum for the posted 30 mph. But when one pulls forward to a stop near the edge of travelway on Sewalls Falls Road, the sight line increases to about 400 feet which is the minimum for about 45 mph. Across the street on the Sylvester Street approach, the stop line is even further set back because of the painted crosswalk. If one stops behind the stop line, there is a fairly restricted sight line to the right. But safe practice is to pull forward (over the crosswalk, just like one needs to do downtown) to a full stop near the edge of the travelway on Sewalls Falls Road where the sight lines are many hundreds of feet.

TOC members concurred that sight lines at the current intersection appear reasonable and appropriate. Except for the current request, no attendee could recall hearing a prior concern with the sight lines here, and the number of drivers using the intersection over the years is high due to the nearby school. TOC felt improvements to the sight line from Second Street were optional. The least expensive option would be moving the stop line closer to Sewalls Falls Road; however concerns were noted with locating it closer to Sewalls Falls Road (as opposed to where it has been for years) that might pose an operational issue for some drivers accustomed to the current, historical location. A more expensive option would be to relocate the boulders and golf course sign further back from Sewalls Falls Road; the sign is old and implications of its relocation would need to be further assessed. General Services was concerned with the cost of the latter option given its current budget. Engineering would relate TOC's discussion back to Administration and request further direction.

b. Concern by Woodcrest Heights residents on speeding along Woodcrest Heights Drive (*Council: July 10, 2017*).

At issue is a request from the Woodcrest Heights Association for consideration of measures to reduce speeding along Woodcrest Heights Drive, including enforcement or speed bumps. City Council referred this request to TOC and CPD at its July 10, 2017 meeting. Engineering conducted radar speed counts on Woodcrest Heights Drive over a five-day period. Average speeds were about 26 mph and 85th percentile speeds were about 29-30 mph. With a posted speed limit of 25 mph,

TOC members did not think this data reflected a significant speeding problem. There were a few drivers recorded at higher speeds and enforcement was felt to be the appropriate solution.

John Thomas noted that CPD performed several directed patrols during the first week of July and no speeding was observed. A patrol officer also stopped and spoke with resident Carol Roberge, president of the neighborhood association, who was pleased with CPD's responsive efforts. Engineering will follow up with Ms. Roberge on her additional request to consider speed bumps.

c. Request by a resident of Fernald Street to place a weeble on the Mountain Road crosswalk at Fernald Street (*Engineering: June 28, 2017*).

At issue is a resident request to place a weeble in the Mountain Road crosswalk at Fernald Street. Attendees noted that this is a former school crossing location related to the old Eastman School. With the walk-to-school route to the former elementary school discontinued, coupled with the current very-low pedestrian crossing use, TOC did not feel that a weeble was justified here. However, TOC has long considered the desirability of calming Mountain Road traffic as it approaches the higher density East Concord village area in the vicinity of Exit 16. The realignment of the Mountain Road/Shaker Road intersection and the reconstruction of the Mountain Road/Shawmut Street/Exit 16 intersection into a roundabout are steps leading to that goal. Attendees suggested the addition of a weeble at the subject crosswalk on a trial basis for purpose of introducing a raised feature in the roadway could be another potential traffic calming element in this area. Given the traffic calming application proposed, it would be beneficial to retain the signage at both sides of this crosswalk, and merely swap out the school crossing signs with pedestrian crossing signs. General Services would add the weeble and swap out the signs at it first opportunity. Staff will monitor.

4. Open Discussion Items

a. Staff response to miscellaneous inquiries (refer to correspondence in agenda packet).

None.

b. Request by a resident of Washington Street to place weebles on the crosswalks at Millstream Lane and at the Merrimack Valley Learning Center (*Engineering: July 17, 2017*).

At issue is a request from the resident at 72 Washington Street to place a weeble in the Washington Street crosswalk at Millstream Lane to slow traffic. Also requested is another weeble at the Washington Street crosswalk at the Merrimack Valley Learning Center to the east.

The City uses only a limited number of in-street crosswalk signs (weebles) citywide, placing them seasonally at locations of high pedestrian use such as in the downtown area or at active public school crossings. TOC reviewed both Washington Street locations and felt that the existing crosswalks were appropriate and did not justify placement of weebles due to very light pedestrian crossings and good sight lines. The resident's concern with speeding cars was noted to the police department which would follow up with enforcement efforts.

Next meeting date: August 15, 2017