

**CITY OF CONCORD
TRANSPORTATION POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2024**

The Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) met at 6:00 pm on January 25, 2024, in the Second Floor Conference Room at Concord City Hall, 41 Green Street.

Members Present: Greg Bakos (Chair), Councilor Todd, Councilor Foote, Councilor Brown, Nicole Fox, Terri Paige, Boyd Smith, Craig Tufts, Ian McGregor

Members Absent: None

Guests: Mark Coen (resident), Ron Rayner (resident)

City Staff: Mike Bezanson (City Engineer), Karen Hill (Transportation Engineer), Alec Bass (Senior Planner)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Introductions

3. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes – December 7, 2023

The meeting minutes of December 7, 2023 were approved as amended.

Motion: Todd. Second: Smith. Passed. All in favor. Abstain: Paige.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. New Business

a. *Transportation Policy Advisory Committee Ordinance (30-3-14) overview*

Bakos brought attention to the ordinance 30-3-14 last updated in 2010, which describes the mission of TPAC and topics the Committee should be focusing on. Hill mentioned that TPAC currently has 4 vacancies according to the ordinance.

b. *2024 Committee goals and work plan*

Bakos provided an overview of the draft 2024 work plan prepared by Hill and asked if there are any other new initiatives to consider.

Todd recommended that the 2025-2034 CIP project review/rankings occur at the February meeting, following up with a report to Council to aid in the

CIP/budget process. Hill will prepare and send out the CIP project details along with a ranking spreadsheet to members which will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Bakos added the I-93 Deck Park as an item to discuss at a future meeting as the project moves forward.

Brown suggested that the Transportation Master Plan include the Bicycle and Pedestrian master plans in the future so that they are not stand-alone documents. Hill did share that the Committee is welcome to do preliminary brainstorming and work sessions for the master plan.

Foote pointed at that there is no bicycle route connecting the Heights to the community college. In addition, the path on the I-93 bridge over the Merrimack, is too narrow and not plowed or cleared in the wintertime, mentioning that it is the most direct route from Exit 16 to NHTI and downtown Concord.

McGregor mentioned that with the relocation of the middle school this will most likely bring more needs to East Concord.

Tufts agreed that TPAC-BP could look into this State-owned bridge at their next meeting to review. Adding the City would likely need to assume maintenance and have discussions with the State.

Paige stated that the TPAC – Public Transportation Subcommittee is currently understaffed and always looking for new members.

Hill clarified that the 2005 Traffic Management Policy is essentially a traffic calming policy which is now outdated.

Smith asked if a 2024 TPAC goal and workplan should be to look into maintenance of certain items. Paige added that even reviewing plowing maintenance and snow removal procedures and priorities. Possibly reviewing bus stops and adjacent sidewalks priorities. Hill suggested the Committee have a representative from GSD attend a future meeting to discuss the maintenance procedures and current problems or obstacles they have.

Tufts stated that the Committee has addressed this in the past, and did see improvements as the Department was able to get new equipment and set priorities.

Rayner suggested Concord reconsider its pavement resurfacing policies and procedures. Tufts suggested that the maintenance and priorities could be asked

about at the same time as public input sessions of master plans even if they would not be housed in the document.

Tufts mentioned that CNHRPC is working on a planning document for communities to be eligible to apply for Safe Streets for All Federal grants in the future.

c. *Review Capitol, Green, School, N State Street block for pedestrian improvements related to paving and Legislative Parking Garage Project.*

Hill provided a summary of the project. She mentioned that GSD held off on paving this block until after the State's project is complete. Staff previously prepared a conceptual drawing of traffic calming measures on Green Street.

The Committee commented on the Capitol Street midblock crosswalk. Citing concern over the two travel lanes which may queue across the crosswalk while waiting at the signal. Fox asked to revise the striping to be consistent with an unsignalized crossing. Additional concerns were discussed in regards to the 4 angled spaces backing into queue lanes.

After review of the City's concept for Green Street improvements, there were some concerns with turning movements. Bakos mentioned that the southern crosswalk at School/Green is too far from the intersection.

Rayner mentioned he hopes to provide a letter to submit to the City. However, he wishes that during the months that the Legislature is not in session, the upper two floors, which may not be used by State Staff and Committees should be made available to the public to alleviate some of the parking demands around the Capitol block. Hill responded that it is supposed to be a very secure parking garage.

Hill did call attention to the spaces in front of City Hall proposed to be removed. There could be consideration and further evaluation to see if removing one of the crosswalks does offset the loss of parking. McGregor thinks expanding the sidewalk area in front of City Hall is a benefit. Bakos summarized that the committee is in support of the traffic calming proposal on Green Street, with some minor considerations. Todd suggested depending on future review and consideration, perhaps some parking on Prince Street could be altered to allow more 20-minute parking.

6. *Old Business*

a. *Continued Discussion on N Main Street (Storrs to Bouton)*

Hill discussed that GSD is proposing to perform a pavement overlay in the near future on N Main Street between Storrs Street and Bouton Street. TPAC-BP

previously reviewed and recommended a traffic study be conducted. City Management has concerns that a study would delay the repair, as it is very much needed. There are also many future projects which impact this area. It was suggested that a study be performed in the future in conjunction with the study of other projects and intersections in the area. Hill suggested, knowing these details, that TPAC-BP Subcommittee re-evaluate the corridor for shorter term safety improvements that could easily be incorporated into the paving project.

Foote asked if the sidewalks will also be upgraded. Hill responded that GSD is looking to secure some funding for sidewalk improvements, but it would not be a focus of the project and limited in scope.

McGregor thinks that access management should be considered as well.

Tufts suggested that TPAC-BP commit some time for a work session at their next meeting to assist in this review.

Todd made a motion, seconded by Smith to amend the December motion to state “to create a CIP for N Main Street from Storrs Street to the Bouton Street/I-393 Intersection and recommend a traffic impact study be conducted ~~this coming year~~ **in a future year**” All in favor. The motion passed.

b. *Continued Discussion on Complete Streets Policy*

Bakos summarized discussion at the last meeting and asked the Committee how to move forward.

Hill added that while drafting the report it led to some questions about what exactly is being asked of Council. Staff and City Management discussed this effort and suggested a small working group to vet and plan the effort and report back to TPAC with a summary and recommendations.

The Committee agreed to establish a working group to begin. Bakos suggested that Fox be the facilitator. Tufts, Bakos and Brown volunteered to assist in the effort.

Tufts made a motion, seconded by Councilor Todd, to rescind the December motion “to recommend to City Council that TPAC move forward with setting new Complete Streets policy/guidelines as a precursor to the master plan.” **Instead the Committee will focus a working group to better determine the effort.** All in favor. The motion passed and the request has been rescinded.

7. Consent Reports**a. Acceptance of Subcommittee Minutes**

- i.* TPAC-BP – None.
- ii.* TPAC-PT – None.

8. City Council Meeting Update

Referrals discussed below under items 9a and 9b.

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Mayor**a. Referral from City Council in regards to a communication from Ari Pollack requesting consideration be made to relocate the Concord Area Transit (CAT) bus stop now located between 214 and 220 North Main Street.**

Hill summarized the request for the Committee and confirmed that the bus stop has been in this location since 2021. In 2021, a TPAC report went to Council to propose the consolidation and relocation of bus stops on the east side of N Main Street, stemming from concerns from CAT bus drivers with the previous stop at #238 being too close to the signalized intersection of N Main and Bouton and challenges with the bus needing to cross over to the left most lane.

Paige shared that the drivers performed boarding and alighting counts between 1/11/24 and 1/22/24 for 7 full days, resulting in a total of 75 boardings and alightings at the current stop at #220. This reduces to approximately 11/day, which further reduces to 3/day on the crosstown route and 8/day on the Penacook route.

Hill reviewed the information, map and matrix provided with the agenda, which helped to summarize the consideration put into bus stop locations along this corridor.

Todd asked if a bus pull out could be easily added in a different location with the resurfacing of North Main Street. Hill responded, that it is likely, but it would need to be designed and programmed.

Tufts referenced the matrix data showing that the current location seems to be the preferable location. Moving it would create additional problems or require additional funding.

Brown asked if it may be possible to have a police presence in the area.

Paige asked if the referral request has a direct connection between a patron of the bus service.

Hill noticed that the matrix is missing the number of parking spaces that would be impacted, she confirmed it will be updated.

Todd recommended that Hill consolidate the information in the matrix in a report back to Council.

Tufts made a motion, seconded by McGregor, to recommend the current bus stop location is the most suitable location in this area of N Main Street.

- b. *Referral from City Council in regards to a communication from Mark Coen, Thayer Pond Road, asking that consideration be given to implementing a "service modification" to the Penacook Bus Route to provide a stop at the Beaver Meadow Golf Course.*

Resident Mark Coen, representing the request on his own behalf, shared a concern that the golf course has been working on receiving grants and funding to allow low or no cost programs for youth. They have been receiving feedback that there is a challenge for youth who cannot transport themselves as a reason why a program was not attended. He is asking if it would be possible to add an "on call" stop for the Beaver Meadow Gold Course, similar to a few other locations in Concord. Recommending a 2-year trial period to see if it is utilized.

Brown asked if Coen had a number of Concord kids who attended. Coen responded he did not. Paige asked what the hours he would be looking for. Coen responded probably 6am – 6pm, likely not outside current operating hours.

Paige started to evaluate what this pilot might cost. She mentioned that it is important that the circulation does not involve missing other stops as well as considering ease of access, and tight timing of the existing Penacook Route.

Paige shared that for students and youth, it might be best to coordinate with CAT's mobility coordinator. She also recommended reaching out to the Boys and Girls Club, which has buses and perhaps public transit could assist with a feeder service. There could also be an issue with baggage being brought onto the bus, and something like golf clubs are typically not permitted. Coen shared that the clubs are provided at the course.

Coen shared that the ages of program is between age of 6 – 15 years.

Smith made a motion, seconded by Brown to recommend that this item be coordinated directly with CAT. Hill will follow up with a formal report to Council.

10. **Status Report on Subcommittees**

- a. *Bicycle / Pedestrian Committee (TPAC-BP), Craig Tufts*
Tufts shared that the Subcommittee is meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024.
- b. *Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Karen Hill*
Hill circulated the TOC agenda for information, no further discussion.
- c. *Public Transportation Subcommittee (TPAC-PT), Terri Paige*
The Subcommittee met on January 9, 2024 and discussed the City Council referrals under items 9a and 9b.

Paige shared that the Concord to Laconia Connector (CLC) has started with a soft open. The stop on Canal Street will be utilized once it is designated. There have been 5 riders so far, however two of them shared that they are using it to commute to work. Hoping by the end of February to do the official opening.

Paige also shared that they are hoping to receive an 18 passenger, 2016 bus with 20,000 miles on it from COAST. Hoping to equip it with a 3-bay bike rack on the front.

11. **Project Updates (Staff)**

- a. *CIP #17 – Sidewalk, Bikeway and Streetscape Improvements*
Hill shared that a report will be submitted to Council for further decision.
- b. *CIP #31 – McKee Square Intersection Improvements*
Hill shared that the updated traffic study and concepts will go before Council and a public meeting in the near future.
- c. *CIP #520 – Intersection Safety Improvements (Sewalls/Abbott)*
Hill shared that a report will be submitted to Council for further decision.
- d. *CIP #543 – Merrimack River Greenway Trail*
Bakos provided an update that the Sunflower field project is ready to go to bid once the City is all set. He also mentioned that a report is being drafted to go to Council for a RAISE Grant funded 100% for the boardwalk and the horseshoe pond? Anticipated costs for both projects individually are approximately 2-3 million.
- e. *CIP #657 – Deck Park Feasibility Study*
Bakos shared that the City and study team had some initial meetings with abutters that went surprisingly well. The team has also met with NHDOT. The next step is likely to plan a public workshop.

11. **Other Discussion Items**

Tufts shared that he saw a notice for a community listening session for the Loudon Road Corridor from the Concord Green Space Coalition.

Fox added that this is to get a pulse from the public about safety concerns on Loudon Road and if the direction of the corridor is to revisit safety improvements.

Fox added that the Concord School Board is beginning to form committees for the construction of the new middle school, one of which is a traffic committee and to reach out to the School District if interested.

12. Adjourn

On a motion made by Tufts, seconded by Paige, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM by unanimous consent.

13. Upcoming Meeting Dates

February 22, 2024

March 28, 2024