



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes – June 21, 2016

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services
Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services
Jim Major, General Services
Heather Shank, Planning Division
Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division
Dick Lemieux, TPAC Chair

Guests: David Sky (agenda Item C.1)

A. Regular Discussion Items

- 1) **Overview of city-wide accident data, including prior-month accident summary and discussion of select accident locations, circumstances and potential action.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Crash data for May 2016 was reviewed. There were 93 reportable crashes in May 2016. This compares with 96 and 84 reportable crashes in May 2015 and 2014, respectively. 17 crashes resulted in total of 19 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There were two crashes involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 61 years walking southbound on S. Main Street at the driveway to Concord Cooperative Market and being struck by a vehicle just leaving the driveway after a stop (minor injury, driver not located); and a pedestrian aged 20 years running across the multi-lane section of Loudon Road near Stickney Avenue and being struck by a westbound vehicle that tried to avoid the pedestrian (minor injuries, pedestrian at fault, attempted suicide).

There was one crash involving a bicyclist: a vehicle turning right onto Loudon Road from the traffic signal at the plaza at 8 Loudon Road and being struck by a bicyclist traveling westbound (wrong way) on the sidewalk (minor injuries, bicyclist at fault, helmet not worn).

- 2) **City Council meeting update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: No TOC items were considered.

- 3) **Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TPAC did not meet in May.

B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.

- 1) None.

C. New Discussion and Action Items

- 1) 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*).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: 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 she made the right turn.

TOC considered the operational characteristics and safety of the intersection. 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 a side-street intersection along an 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 regarding the city's STOP sign policy.

- 2) Inquiry from Jack Shields of the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) regarding the potential placement of advance trail signs on the public way in Penacook and heading out Canal Street toward Boscawen (*Engineering: 5/31/16*).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a request to place several directional signs along the US Route 3 corridor in Penacook to direct travelers to the beginning of the rail trail in Boscawen near the intersection of Commercial Street and River Road. Signs in Concord might include one at the intersection of Village and Canal Streets and perhaps a few along Village Street and Fisherville Road from the south. FNRT indicated they would provide the signs and posts. TOC members felt that a few such signs could serve the public interest and requested that FNRT submit a more detailed description of the intended sign legends and placement locations for further TOC review. GSD indicated that any materials would need to be provided by FNRT, but that GSD might consider erection of the signs within the ROW.

- 3) Request from Councilor Todd regarding a constituent concern on speeding along Merrimack Street in Penacook (*Engineering: 6/03/16*).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a resident concern on speeding traffic along Merrimack Street. Of particular concern are observations by several Merrimack Street residents of some cars racing each other along the street. Merrimack Street has a 25 mph posted speed limit. Engineering Services located a radar speed counter on Merrimack Street just east of Rolfe Street from Wednesday 6/8 thru Monday 6/13. The average speed was 24 mph and the 85th percentile speed was 29-30 mph. However, of the over 4,100 cars traveling by over the 5-day period, 15 (0.36%) were in the 40 to 50+ category, and possibly by the same individual(s). Speeds and time-of-day data were provided to CPD to aid in enforcement efforts.

4) Request from Councilor Matson regarding a constituent concern on speeding along Chase Street and a request to add signs on both ends of the street indicating slow heavily-populated area (or something similar) to slow traffic (*General Services: 6/9/16*).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TOC members felt that additional advisory signage would be neither effective nor appropriate. The city does not post signs such as 'thickly settled' or 'children at play' as they are not Federally-accepted signs; they have been shown to be ineffective and tend to give a false sense of security for residents. Chase Street is currently posted at both ends with a regulatory speed of 25 mph. Staff was in the process of measuring actual running speeds on the street.

Additional speed data on Chase Street was available the following week. The speed counter was placed near the center of the straight portion of Chase Street (near Ellsworth Street). Average speeds were 27-28 mph and 85th percentile speeds were 32-33 mph. There were, however, a few vehicle speeds measured in excess of 40 mph. Speeds and time-of-day data were provided to CPD to aid in enforcement efforts.

5) 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*).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: 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 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 stop has to meet Federal warrants, however 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.

TOC felt the current intersection signage was reasonable and that the addition of a 4-way STOP would not be appropriate. Staff was endeavoring to contact Mr. Cook to further discuss his concerns. This item would be further considered by TPAC at its meeting this Thursday.

6) 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: 6/13/16).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a request from third grade students to install a 4-way STOP at the intersection of Rumford Street and Warren Street. Council referred the request to TPAC at their June 13, 2016 meeting. Staff contacted the Concord School District (CSD) to further discuss the request. CSD noted that neither it nor the school principal were aware of the request. Since classes were ending for the summer, CSD suggested that further discussion be deferred until September.

D. Open Discussion Items

1) Communication from NHDOT regarding recommended removal of the traffic signal at the intersection of NH 106 and the northern Mall driveway (near TD Bank).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Rob Mack reported that the City received a May 25, 2016 letter from the NHDOT Bureau of Traffic regarding their planned removal of the traffic signal at the NH 106 intersection at the Steeplegate Mall northern driveway near TD Bank. All NH 106 intersections are under NHDOT jurisdiction. Appended was a study that indicated very low current traffic usage of the driveway, low enough to be insufficient to warrant the continued use of traffic signal control. It was felt that mall traffic turning onto NH 106 could still do so via the traffic signal at D'Amante Drive. NHDOT planned to initiate the signal removal process in the near future.

2) City-wide speed limit study.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: 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. TOC concurred with this approach to address the current disparity in posted speed limits on many local residential streets.

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer
Chair, Traffic Operations Committee

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, July 19, 2016 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***