

CITY OF CONCORD
TRANSPORTATION POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF January 23, 2020

The Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) met at 6:00 p.m., on January 23, 2020, in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street.

Members Present:

Dick Lemieux, Chair
Councilor Brent Todd
Councilor Meredith Hatfield
Greg Bakos
Craig Tufts
Ursula Maldonado
Terri Paige
Sheila Zakre

Members Absent:

Rebecca McWilliams
Ryan Buchanan
Councilor Rob Werner

Staff:

Dave Cedarholm, City Engineer
Karen Hill, Traffic Engineer
Ashley Hamilton, Fiscal Supervisor
Sam Durfee, Senior Planner

Guests:

Ron Rayner, Concord resident

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 21, 2019 meeting were approved with minor word edits (Motion-Todd; Second-Paige; Unanimous).

3. Public Comment

Ron Rayner, a Concord resident, attended the TPAC meeting to voice his concerns about the I-93 Bow-Concord/Storrs Street Extension North alternative design that would depress I-93 and elevate Loudon Road over I-93. He stated that he was strongly opposed to the City supporting the alternative of putting Loudon Road over I-93, noting the following concerns and suggestions:

- Visual aesthetics would suffer: The City has made great strides to improve the appearance of downtown by improving building facades on Main and Storrs Street. The alternative proposes to elevate Loudon Road over I-93 and would require concrete sidewalks along the interstate, which would block the view of downtown and the Capitol Building from I-93. Ron noted that sidewalks would create a feeling similar to driving through a Boston tunnel without a roof.
- Stormwater runoff: Widening the interstate will increase stormwater runoff and the proposal to depress the interstate would lead to flatter slopes and create drainage issues that could increase the risk of local flooding, and increase the potential for snow buildup and freezing conditions along the shoulders in the winter, which would require the use of more roadway salt. He noted that an increase in roadway salt

would be harmful to the river environment and ecosystems especially considering the close proximity to the Merrimack River.

- Merrimack River Flooding: The river floods have been increasing in frequency and severity and will only get worse with climate change. Depressing I-93 would increase its risk of flooded during high flow events. If this is truly what the City wants, then Ron strongly recommends that the City insist on including a large stormwater pump station in the planning stages, at the State's expense, to mitigate the excess stormwater related to the project.
- Alternatives to consider: elevated highways and fly over designs. Ron suggested that these alternatives would make construction easier and would cause less disruption than the reversal design.

Dick Lemieux informed Ron that TPAC would be reviewing the I-93 Opportunity Corridor further and would be compiling a response to the State over the next few months. TPAC is awaiting marching orders from the Mayor and City Council.

Councilor Brent Todd thanked Ron for attending the meeting and engaging in discussions on the topic, and referred Ron to the "Draft Guidelines and Principals" document that was written by TPAC member Craig Tufts. Councilor Todd also mentioned that the Mayor would be forming a new committee for the I-93 project that would be similar to Concord 2020. Ron indicated that he knew the Mayor personally and would be reaching out ASAP regarding the Committee and further participation. Ron left at approximately 6:30pm.

4. New Business

- a. David Cedarholm stated that the Engineering Department is in the early stages of developing a crosswalk policy, similar to the stop sign policy currently in place. He mentioned that additional discussions are planned for the Traffic Operations Committee next week, and agreed that he and Karen Hill would put the materials together for TPAC to review once finalized.
- b. TPAC members briefly discussed possible criteria for a crosswalk policy, including definitions and terms to incorporate in the new policy, and expressed an eagerness to see what Engineering is putting together.
- c. Dick Lemieux initially requested to have the I-93 items removed from the agenda as he felt they would be discussed elsewhere, but later clarified that he meant to have the items deferred for future discussions as they became relevant to TPAC. He suggested creating a Matrix, similar to what was done for Main Street, to help organize TPAC discussions relating to the I-93 project. Ursula Maldonado agreed with developing a Matrix.

Craig Tufts requested feedback on the draft guidelines and principals document that he created in response to the Mayor's TPAC discussions in October. He also solicited advice from the committee on the format of the document, as the Mayor did not state what he was looking for in terms of a response.

Councilor Todd felt that Craig's drafted guidelines and principals could stand on their own, but agreed to defer the conversations regarding the I-93 project to a future meeting. He stressed that in time City Council would come to rely on TPAC for advice, information, and expert opinions on the project, as they did with the Main Street project, and agreed that a Matrix would be helpful.

TPAC agreed to move the I-93 discussion to the "Staff Updates" section of the agenda for future meetings. Members also agreed to review and send their comments on the State's Parking Garage and the closing of Capitol Street from Craig's guidelines and principals document, to Karen Hill. Karen Hill agreed to compile all responses so TPAC members could review at the next meeting and finalize a TPAC stance on the referenced items. The deadline for comments was set for February 13, 2020.

Dick Lemieux mentioned his concerns about the Storrs Street extension design being approved and implemented before TPAC had any input. Cedarholm commented that although HDR's design was already accepted and money was allocated, no work would start until the pending purchase and sales agreement was finalized with Pan Am.

Councilor Meredith Hatfield asked if HDR's design would be presented for public input. David Cedarholm responded that the design will be presented along with the proposal of the expansion of the Storrs Street TIF district. He explained that the TIF expansion requires a three City Council meeting process and will include a public hearing.

Several TPAC members voiced concerns and questions about the design and possible impacts. Dick Lemieux asked to have the design plans brought to the next TPAC meeting for review and comments. David Cedarholm agreed to bring the design to the next meeting for TPAC's review and comments.

Councilor Todd said that it would be good to include TPAC's comments with the Council package/ review for the TIF district expansion.

David Cedarholm and Karen Hill were tasked with locating the Main Street matrix and related materials to distribute to TPAC members for reference on creating the new matrix for Bow-Concord/I-93 project.

5. Consent Reports

All subcommittee minutes were reviewed and TPAC accepted by consent.

6. City Council Meeting Update

Councilor Todd mentioned that City Council approved funding allocations for the Loudon Road Bridge Engineering Study and the final design for the North Pembroke Road Bridge.

David Cedarholm briefly discussed the Engineering Department's initial design goals about making the Loudon Road Bridge more bike and pedestrian friendly. Dick Lemieux indicated that he would like to see the design plans for that project as well. David Cedarholm agreed to keep TPAC in the loop. Lemieux also suggested that the City share the Gully Hill/Loudon Road Concept Plan with the consultant as the project progresses.

7. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

- a. **Referral from City Council regarding a communication from Councilor Bouchard on resident safety concerns about illegal vehicle left turns from East Side Drive northbound into the CVS/Burger King driveway.** – David Cedarholm stated that driveway test plans have been drafted and would be discussed at the next TOC meeting. The supported plan will then go to Council and will also aid in discussions with CVS/Burger King. He said that Engineering is proposing bolt down flexible bollards with pavement marking and signing modifications. TPAC was in favor of this aesthetic.
- b. **Referral from City Council regarding communications from Councilor Champlin on resident safety concerns with the intersection of Mountain Road and Hoit Road.** – Hill reported the General Services has installed the additional "cross traffic does not stop" signs. Ursula Maldonado commented that she noticed the NHDOT signs were still blocking the intersection sight lines. David Cedarholm indicated that he and Karen Hill would be sending a letter to NHDOT regarding the safety concerns at the intersection and the cluster of signs that maybe impacting sight lines and adding clutter to the intersection.
- c. **Referral from City Councilor Kretovic regarding drainage issues at Palm Street and North State Street.** – David Cedarholm stated that this issue probably did not need to involve TPAC, but came through as a blanket referral to numerous Committees.

8. Status Report on Subcommittees

a. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC)

David Cedarholm reported that next week's TOC meeting had a full agenda and most items on the TPAC agenda would be discussed further there.

b. Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee (TPAC-BP)

Craig Tufts stated that the Committee discussed intersection improvement alternatives for the Washington Street and Centre Street intersection. The proposed project would reduce crossing distances and improve pedestrian safety. David Cedarholm stated that Washington Street is slated for new pavement in the

Spring, so the improvements would be completed alongside the paving project. The project will also be discussed at the next TOC meeting.

Craig Tufts mentioned that the sidewalk priorities in the Master Plan are being reviewed alongside the City's paving program (CIP 78) with the intent to allocate specific funds under CIP 17 to construct priority sidewalks throughout the City.

Craig Tufts commented that he and Sam Durfee recently attended a State wide Complete Streets Advisory meeting that discussed micro-mobility and the increased popularity of scooter use in Nashua. It was noted that electric scooters are becoming more popular than bicycles in some locations and seem to be more accessible. The topic of scooter use in Concord was briefly discussed by TPAC along with legal concerns, safety and feasibility.

c. Public Transportation Subcommittee (TPAC-PT)

Terri Paige was excited to share that the Subcommittee committed to meeting the 1st Tuesday of every month from 12pm-2pm starting in March. She mentioned that CAT has her researching the possibility of Concord going fare free and will keep TPAC updated on her progress.

Karen Hill stated that the Committee wanted to extend appreciation and gratitude to Sheila Zakre for all her hard work and dedication to the Subcommittee. TPAC members agreed and thanked Sheila as well. Sheila thanked everyone and said she was excited that Terri has taken over with a new energy.

9. Staff Updates

a. Whitney Road/Hoit Road Intersection (CIP30)

Cedarholm commented that TF Moran produced a rough draft traffic study report to Engineering that both Karen Hill and HDR reviewed and commented on. VHB would be taking HDR's results and working on a design. A future meeting will be held with HDR, VHB and the NHDOT to ensure everyone is in agreement.

b. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP543)

Engineering sent their comments to VHB for Terrill Park, and once updates are made Engineering will put the project out to bid in the spring. Lemieux noted that possible grant funds existed to deal with invasive species removal and suggested VHB look into that. It was also noted than any Federal funds not spent by September 30, 2020 would be taken back.

c. I-93 Bow-Concord / Storrs Street Extension North

No additional items were discussed.

d. Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP40)

No items were discussed.

10. Other Discussion Items

a. Greg Bakos asked if there were any updates on the Pan Am railroad right-of-way negotiations with the City. David Cedarholm responded that negotiations are still ongoing, but he remains optimistic that it will be finalized soon.

b. Councilor Hatfield asked if any discussions were held relating to the vacant TPAC positions. Dick Lemieux confirmed and commented that filling the vacant positions is ongoing and encouraged members to continue promoting within the community to stir up participation.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 8:30 p.m.