



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

MINUTES

Traffic Operations Committee

December 19, 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
Bryant Anderson, Engineering Services
Jim Major, General Services
John Stoll, Planning Division
Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division
Jason Wimpey, Concord School District

Guests:

Anthony Tenczar, 33 Rockingham St.
Brian Sartorelli, 40 Rockingham St.

1. Regular Discussion Items

a. Overview of City-Wide Crash Data

Crash data for November 2017 was reviewed. There were 119 reportable crashes in November 2017. This compares with 102 and 125 reportable crashes in November 2016 and 2015, respectively. 21 crashes resulted in total of 24 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There were three crashes involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 28 years walking a dog on the southbound sidewalk of N. Main Street near Chapel Street and being struck by an out-of-control northbound vehicle (injuries, medical issue suffered by driver); a pedestrian aged 41 years crossing in the crosswalk in front of Shaws off D'Amante Drive and being struck by a vehicle traveling through the parking lot (minor injury, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 40 years crossing in the crosswalk in front of Walmart and being struck by a vehicle traveling through the parking lot (no injury, driver at fault).

There were no crashes involving bicyclists.

b. City Council Meeting Update

At its December 10, 2017 meeting, City Council referred three inquiries to TPAC (see 1c below) and one inquiry to TOC regarding a resident request for 'Children at Play' signs on Chapel Street (see Item 3b below).

c. Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update

At its December 14, 2017 meeting, TPAC discussed three referrals from City Council: resident concerns about the revised alignment of the Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection

(referred by TPAC to TOC, Item 3a below); a resident concern about increased volume and speed of traffic along Christian Avenue; and a resident concern about left turns at the Loudon Road/Woodcrest Heights/Dairy Queen driveway intersection. TPAC also heard concerns on traffic speeds from Rockingham Street residents (referred by TPAC to TOC, Item 3c below).

2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items

- a. None.

3. New Discussion and Action Items

- a. **Referral from TPAC regarding a referral from Councilor Bouchard regarding constituents' concerns on the revised alignment of the Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection (TPAC: December 11, 2017)**

At TPAC's December 14, 2017 meeting, Councilor Bouchard related concerns voiced by a number of constituents on difficulties turning right at the recently reconfigured Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection. At issue is the right turn from Old Loudon Road onto Portsmouth Street which is quickly followed by a curve to the left. Concerns are that it is dangerous as the yellow centerline on Portsmouth Street must be crossed and that the following curve back to the left is difficult for the elderly to negotiate. Councilor St. Hillaire noted similar concerns and that he has difficulty making the turn in his truck without crossing the yellow centerline at speeds greater than about 10 mph. He noted that the centerline is worn off in that area which indicates many drivers do the same.

Staff noted that the purpose of the intersection reconfiguration was threefold: eliminate confusion caused by the former 'two-intersection' configuration; improve drivers' view to the right from a stop at Portsmouth Street which was difficult due the adverse skew in the former intersection approach; and reduce the speed of the right turn from Old Loudon Road onto Portsmouth Street, a movement that used to act as a non-stopping through movement. Similar intersection reconfigurations had been done in the past including: Mountain Road at Shaker Road; Borough Road at Washington Street; and N. State Street at Bouton Street. The subject right turn had been designed to accommodate school-bus turns, but at low speeds akin to many city intersections. Engineering staff recently followed up with General Services, Concord Fire Department and Concord School District regarding the ability for large trucks, fire apparatus and school buses to negotiate the subject right turn; all responded that they can negotiate the turn and had no issues or concerns. It was also noted that Portsmouth Street is posted 'No Trucks.'

TPAC referred this request to TOC for further consideration, including a consideration of a conceptual-level intersection modification that might make the subject right easier to negotiate at higher speed. Engineering staff will further consider such an alternative and report back to TOC.

- b. **Referral from Councilor Champlin regarding a resident request for 'Children at Play' signs on Chapel Street to slow traffic (Council: December 11, 2017)**

The City does not post signs such as Children at Play or Slow/Children as they are not Federally-approved signs. They have not been shown to be effective in changing driver behavior. Allowing their usage also creates potential for the sign to proliferate exponentially since children can be expected on almost every block in the city; issues include spread of unnecessary signs; cost and aesthetics. These signs may also instill a false sense of security upon parents and children in the area. As such, not posting these signs has been accepted practice in the City for many years.

TOC attendees concurred that the requested signage is inappropriate. Because of the narrowness and shortness of the street, especially when parked cars are present, it was felt that excess speed is likely limited to a small number of inconsiderate drivers; no type of signage will correct that behavior.

Rob Mack will forward the resident's concern on speeding to CPD. Staff will prepare a report for City Council in February regarding TOC's considerations, including any CPD follow-up.

c. Referral from TPAC regarding a request by Rockingham Street residents for additional traffic calming measures on Rockingham Street (TPAC: December 14, 2017)

Rob Mack introduced the discussion and noted that Mr. Tenczar had contacted him several weeks earlier regarding a meeting of several residents wherein concerns about traffic speed were discussed. A follow-up resident meeting was attended by CPD's Sgt. Casey and enforcement was discussed including a recent deployment of CPD's speed trailer. Engineering staff was also planning to conduct an updated volume/speed count on the street in the near future following completion of recent street construction activity. It was noted that TPAC and TOC addressed a similar request from the neighborhood in 2008 resulting in a recommendation, accepted by City Council, to prioritize sidewalk construction, and in the interim, paint narrow traffic lanes with shoulders for walking and bicycling. Also included was retention of the 30 mph speed limit, addition two more speed limit signs and additional speed enforcement.

Mr. Tenczar acknowledged TPAC and TOC's work with residents ten years ago and noted positive outcomes including new sidewalk, several new painted crosswalks and signs, additional speed limit signs and use of the speed trailer. Since then there has been a noticeable increase in the use of the sidewalk by pedestrians, and six new families with children have moved in. The neighbors wanted to ask if TPAC could further consider additional traffic calming measures or speed limit reduction to help suppress speed. Other issues noted by Mr. Tenczar and neighbor Brian Sartorelli include: difficult pedestrian crossings at Bow Street and Donovan Street due to traffic not stopping; limited sight lines from resident driveways to traffic approaching eastbound and coming out the of dip in the road near Donovan Street; the possibility of installing a multi-way stop at the Bow Street intersection to slow traffic; installation of curb and bump-outs to suppress speed; and potential for repainting the narrow 9-foot lanes along the street. Several neighbors had recently posted 'Drive Like Your Kids Live Here' placards along their street frontages.

TOC members suggested that planting trees along the north side of street could add both traffic calming and aesthetic enhancement. The city has two street tree programs available to assist residents. One is through General Services and another is through the Planning Division which utilizes conservation funding. Mr. Tenczar would explore potential neighborhood interest in this option.

Staff noted that the option of striping the narrow 9-foot lanes included painting of edge lines to delineate 3-foot shoulders for walkers and cyclers; as such, on-street parking would not be allowed to encroach in the travel lane and would certainly be encouraged to not block the shoulders. Mr. Tenczar noted that residents prefer having the ability to occasionally park along the street for parties and other events. Installation of curb along a collector street such as Rockingham Street would likely be accompanied by street widening to include full bicycle shoulders, thus traffic calming benefits might not be realized in this situation.

A neighbor's request for a multi-way stop at Bow Street was considered a few years ago during the sidewalk construction project. Such an installation was deemed inappropriate as intersection traffic volumes were too low to meet minimum Federal thresholds. It is also City policy to not install stop signs for speed control. TOC had recently deployed a weeble at a Mountain Road crosswalk approaching the new roundabout as a test of a 'gateway' feature to help alert traffic to the East Concord Village area ahead. Perhaps a similar option could be considered at the Bow Street crosswalk near the dip in Rockingham Street.

Engineering staff planned to deploy the speed radar counter to measure current volumes and speeds and would report results back to TOC. It was noted that CPD was aware of the residents' concerns and feedback on their enforcement efforts would be requested. John Stoll offered to look into other

potential traffic calming options. Mr. Tenczar understood that the consideration of additional traffic calming measures might take some time and appreciated TOC's additional consideration.

d. Referral from Engineering regarding the potential need for additional street lighting at the N. State/Franklin roundabout (*Engineering: December 5, 2017*)

At issue is a concern reported by a motorist on low nighttime illumination at the N. State Street/Franklin Street roundabout. Rob Mack reported that the roundabout is currently illuminated by a single overhead cobra-head light mounted on a utility pole in the southeast corner. While this light is directly over the southern portion of the roundabout, it is well over 100 feet away from the N. State Street southbound-approach splitter-island and crosswalks. Observations at night indicated a low illumination level on the northerly side of the roundabout, with particular concern for illumination at the northerly crosswalk.

The City locates street lights at most intersections, and particularly at major intersections. Because roundabouts cover a larger area than most intersections, the need for more than one light can arise. For example, the Liberty Street/Centre Street/Auburn Street roundabout is illuminated by two cobra-head street lights. At the subject roundabout, there is an existing utility pole located on the northeast corner near the splitter-island and crosswalk of the southbound N. State Street approach. Installation of a cobra-head street light on that pole would be appropriate. If approved by Council, staff would request Unitol to install the light. The cost to the city would be the annual cost of power made out of the outdoor street lighting tariff account.

TOC endorsed the installation of a street light at this location. Staff will prepare a report with this recommendation for City Council consideration at their February 2018 meeting.

4. Open Discussion Items

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

None.

Next meeting date: January 16, 2018