

**CITY OF CONCORD  
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2019**

The Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) met at 12:00 p.m., on April 16, 2019, in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street.

Attendees: Rob Mack, Chair  
Jim Major  
Sam Durfee  
John Thomas  
Rick Wollert

Absent: Matt Cashman  
Dave Cedarholm  
Fred Reagan

Guests: Dick Lemieux

## **1. Regular Discussion Items**

### **a. Overview of City-Wide Crash Data**

Crash data for March 2019 was reviewed. There were 121 reportable crashes in March 2019. This compares with 113 reportable crashes in both March 2018 and 2017. 7 crashes resulted in a total of 7 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There were no reported crashes involving pedestrians or bicyclists.

### **b. City Council Meeting Update**

Rob Mack reported that at its April 8, 2019 meeting, City Council set a May 13, 2019 public hearing to consider changes to the parking ordinance recommended by the Parking Committee along nine streets included in the first of four urban-core zones of the Narrow Streets Parking Study. Restrictions to be considered include: parking removal on one or both sides of the street; conversion to one-way street; and parking restriction during snow-season months.

### **c. Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update**

Rob Mack reported that at its March 28, 2019 meeting TPAC discussed potential new projects for CIP 17, Sidewalk/Bikeway/Streetscape Improvements. Projects conceptualized by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee included: Centre/Washington intersection reconfiguration; Green Street crosswalk improvements; Clinton Street bike lane and crosswalk improvements; Broadway bump-out and crosswalk improvements; and Loudon Road (Gully Hill) bicycle/pedestrian paths.

## **2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items**

### **a. Referral from City Council regarding a communication shared by Councilor Werner from Kensington Road residents with concerns about cut-through traffic and speeds on Kensington Road.**

Engineering staff conducted an updated traffic count on School Street between Westbourne Street and N. Fruit Street during the week of March 25, 2019. The average weekday traffic

volume (AWDT) was about 2,500 vehicles. This reflects a continuation of the cut-through traffic reduction initiated by TOC with the 2009 eastbound lane-use changes made at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. The historic trend of average weekday volumes at this location on School Street includes: 3,900 AWDT in April 2008 prior to opening Langley Parkway South; 3,600 AWDT in May 2009 after the opening of Langley Parkway and lane-use changes at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection; 2,900 AWDT in April 2016; and now 2,500 AWDT in March 2019. This trend attests to the success of the 2008 and 2009 traffic improvements on the Pleasant Street corridor in attracting a significant volume of School Street cut-through traffic back to Pleasant Street.

An updated traffic count was also conducted on Kensington Road during the week of March 25, 2019. The average weekday volume was 470 AWDT. Morning and afternoon commuter peak hour traffic volumes were 66 and 33 vehicles per peak, respectively. That averages about one vehicle passing by per minute in the morning and one vehicle passing by every two minutes in the afternoon, characteristic of a fairly light traffic flow. The current 470 AWDT is substantially lower than the 850 weekday vehicles recorded in May 2009 after Langley Parkway South opened, and 930 weekday vehicles recorded in May 2008 prior to Langley Parkway South. Some of this traffic reduction may also be due to a shift of some traffic to Rum Hill Road which was recently repaved, coupled with substantial removal of trees and brush on the northeast corner of the Pleasant/Rum Hill intersection which vastly improved the sight lines there. Staff observations of Kensington Road traffic flow were consistent with the counts recorded.

It was noted that the subject cut-through traffic complaints from Kensington Road residents were first received by staff in August 2018, concurrent with the substantial disruption of neighborhood street traffic due to the water main and street reconstruction work in the area last year. There clearly would have been times when substantial additional traffic would have diverted to Kensington Road as adjacent streets and intersections were impacted by construction activity. These construction-related traffic diversions were ephemeral and have since subsided, although additional street construction in this neighborhood will resume this year with potential for similar short-term impacts.

Regarding speeds along Kensington Road, the aforementioned traffic count recorded average speeds of 27 mph northbound and 29 mph southbound and 85th percentile speeds of 31 mph northbound and 34 mph southbound, with southbound being the downhill direction. The speed limit is 30 mph. While attendees did not find these overall speeds to be inappropriate, CPD did offer to schedule deployment of the speed trailer on Kensington Road facing downhill traffic to remind drivers of their speed.

As discussed last month, TOC attendees expressed concerns regarding potential traffic restrictions discussed with the neighborhood in the past such as left-turn restrictions and one-way streets. Only having these restrictions on Kensington Road would divert cut-through as well as some neighborhood traffic to the remaining three side streets (Rum Hill Road, Pleasant View Avenue and Minot Street), increasing the negative effects of traffic there. To be fair to the overall neighborhood, such measures would need to be applied equally to each of these streets. These restrictions can certainly force cut-through (as well as some neighborhood traffic) traffic back onto Pleasant Street and through the signalized Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. However, the signalized intersection is close to capacity as evidenced by the long traffic queues and delays during peak periods. Only major intersection reconstruction/enlargement and/or Langley Parkway Phase 3 can improve that. Until these improvements occur, the signalized intersection will bear the continued increase in traffic as has occurred over the last ten years, including the pending opening of the new 150,000 sf medical office building on the hospital

campus. The additional and significant traffic increase due to potential neighborhood street restrictions would divert cut-through traffic as well as some neighborhood traffic to this over-capacity intersection and act to accelerate the breakdown of intersection operations increasing queues and delays even more. Of particular concern is: the location of this key intersection along the sole regional access route to the medical center for traffic from the north and east (potential for impacts to emergency response vehicle access); and the location of Concord High School on Warren Street which would also bear the burden resulting from increased traffic loads and intersection delays mixing with heavy pedestrian flows.

In summary, attendees did not support the placement of traffic restrictions to limit or deter travel along Kensington Road at this time, for reason of avoiding increasingly- negative impacts to traffic operations at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. The current traffic volume on Kensington Road is fairly light, and in fact, considerably reduced from what it was a decade ago. The supplemental connectivity provided by this street as well as the many other local streets in the urban core, give the travelling public choices. The preference for such transportation choice (i.e. opposition to street restrictions) was voiced by a number of Upper School Street residents during neighborhood meetings in 2008 and 2009. Furthermore, maintenance of street network connectivity is one of the stated objectives of the City's Transportation Master Plan.

Attendees concurred that the construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP 40), followed by the reconstruction of the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection to a roundabout configuration (CIP 570) was the appropriate course of action to improve traffic operation along the Pleasant Street corridor, including reduction of neighborhood cut-through traffic. The occasional deployment of the speed trailer on Kensington Road to remind drivers of their speeds was also endorsed. These findings and recommendations will be reported to TPAC at its April 25, 2019 meeting.

- b. 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 - Further discussion on hold pending additional engineering evaluation.**

### 3. New Discussion and Action Items

- a. None

### 4. Open Discussion Items

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

None.

- b. Referral from Councilor Kretovic regarding a constituent concern with on-street parking along Sewalls Falls Road during the afternoon student pick-up period at Beaver Meadow School**

At issue is a concern on the stacking of vehicles along both sides of Sewalls Falls Road at the entrance to Beaver Meadow School during the afternoon student pick-up period. Parked and waiting vehicles often restrict the travel way to a width insufficient to allow two-way traffic to pass without taking turns.

TOC considered this same concern in April 2015. At that time it found that the school had recently organized its afternoon student pick-up to be as efficient as practical, however the school driveway was still inadequate to store all the parents' waiting vehicles. As a result, one to two dozen vehicles remained parked along the berm on Sewalls Falls Road until the school driveway was clear of other vehicles so that they could drive in to the student pick-up area.

Observed interference with the movement of through traffic along Sewalls Falls Road lasted about 5 minutes. Police and Fire did not indicate any concerns with the occasional interference since all the parked/waiting vehicles had drivers in them so that vehicles could move immediately if an emergency responder had to pass through. These parked and waiting vehicles are going to be out there since they can't fit in the driveway; the option of adding no parking signs would just push the on-street parking to a new location, with potentially extensive signage resulting. At the time, TOC members concurred that the traffic condition seemed to be working as well as possible given the constraints within the school grounds.

TOC attendees discussed the 2015 findings, with CPD offering to monitor the current situation near the school driveway over the coming days. TOC will continue the discussion of this item next month with additional feedback from CPD.