



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

## MINUTES

### Traffic Operations Committee

January 15, 2019, 12:00 PM  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room  
City Hall, 41 Green Street, Concord, NH

**Staff Present:**

Rob Mack, (Engineering Services, Chair)  
Jim Major (General Services)  
Sam Durfee, (Planning Division)  
Rick Wollert (Fire Alarm)

**Guests:**

Dick Lemieux (TPAC Chair)

### 1. Regular Discussion Items

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

Crash data for calendar-year 2018 was reviewed. There were 1,420 reportable crashes in 2018. This compares with 1,322 and 1,238 reportable crashes in 2017 and 2016, respectively. 196 crashes resulted in a total of 208 people injured. There were three fatalities. The September 2018 bicycle fatality on N. State Street is still under investigation by CPD.

The 2018 total of 1,420 reportable crashes is about 11 percent higher than the average annual total of 1,278 reportable crashes over the last 11 years. 303 of last year's reported crashes were along the Loudon Road corridor which was about 25 percent higher than its 11-year corridor average of 242 reportable crashes. A similar annual jump was noted in the number of 2018 NH statewide fatalities which were reportedly up about 40 percent over last year. CPD was not in attendance, so further insights, if any, will be shared at future meetings.

#### b. City Council Meeting Update

At its January 14, 2019 meeting, City Council referred items 3b and 3c, below, to TOC/TPAC.

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

TPAC did not meet last month.

### 2. Ongoing Discussion and Action Items

#### a. None

### 3. New Discussion and Action Items

#### a. Through-Trucking Routes

Rob Mack noted that construction of Regional Drive was completed in 2004 and construction of Langley Parkway was completed in 2008. Both streets were planned and designed for truck use. Recommended as a housekeeping item is to formally add both streets to the City's list of 'Designated Streets for Truck Use' as identified in the Ordinance. Both new streets provide key connections between other truck route corridors specified in the Ordinance. Regional Drive connects with Old Turnpike Road and Airport Road to the west and Sheep Davis Road to the east. Langley Parkway connects with Clinton Street to the south and Pleasant Street to the north.

TOC attendees endorsed the designation of both new streets for truck use.

#### b. 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

At issue is a concern by five residents of Kensington Road on cut-through traffic and traffic speeds. Some traffic that otherwise should be using Pleasant Street for east-west travel to from the regional medical campus area chooses to cut through the Upper School Street neighborhood to avoid delays at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection. Of concern is the cut-through traffic that then uses Kensington Road as a link between School Street and Pleasant Street. Requested for consideration are: restricting left turns from Pleasant Street onto Kensington Road; installing corner bump-outs at the Kensington Road approach to School Street to slow turning traffic; and improving the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection to reduce traffic delays and hence attract traffic from otherwise using Kensington Street.

TOC and TPAC considered a similar request from several Kensington Road residents back in 2007 and 2008. That consideration included several neighborhood meetings, traffic data collection efforts, consideration of various traffic restrictions to deter through-traffic (i.e. left-turn restrictions, speed bumps, one-way streets, intersection improvements at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection); and potential benefits of Langley Parkway Phase 2 and 3. TOC and TPAC findings and recommendations were outlined in a December 15, 2008 report to City Council and included:

- Implement lane-use and signal timing changes at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection to improve capacity and reduce delays. *(Follow-up: Following diversion of substantial medical campus traffic to the new Langley Parkway Phase 2 connection to Clinton Street in July 2008, lane use and timing changes were made to the subject intersection in April 2009. Intersection delays and peak period queuing were substantially reduced).*
- Observe traffic operation in the Upper School Street area following the above changes. *(Follow-up: when the neighborhood's cut-through traffic concerns first came forward in 2008, there were 3,900 daily vehicles using School Street east of N. Fruit Street. An April 2016 traffic count at this same location indicated a substantially-reduced volume of about 2,900 weekday vehicles. But Upper School Street neighborhood streets are still used by some east-west traffic to/from the hospital campus and the high school campus in order to avoid delays along Pleasant Street near the high school).*
- If above-noted cut-through traffic reductions were not considered reasonable, further consideration of left-turn prohibitions on Pleasant Street might be considered through the city's Traffic Management Policy. *(Follow-up: Additional options were discussed with the Upper School Street neighborhood at a September 1, 2009 neighborhood meeting. There was no consensus on the implementation or not of select turn restrictions at that meeting,*

*and the initial request for restrictions from Kensington Road residents was dropped in the following months. There was, however, a consensus of neighborhood attendees that Langley Parkway Phase 3 was a good long-term solution to the cut-through problem).*

- Staff would coordinate with Concord School District to pursue options that enhance traffic flow in the vicinity of the high school during school peaks. *(Follow-up: A comprehensive plan for bump-outs and other crosswalk and parking improvements was developed in the following years and constructed in 2018. Staff also prepared a conceptual design study for intersection improvements in 2013-14 which resulted in programming of CIP570, a full intersection reconstruction in a future year following Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP40).*
- Continue support for the planning, design and construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 as a priority project. *(Follow-up: TOC and TPAC have been supportive of this project. The City prepared a conceptual design study for the project corridor in 2013-14. In an April 27, 2018 report to City Council, TPAC indicated its continued, strong endorsement of this project as a high-priority project for the FY 2019-2028CIP).*

The current request from Kensington Road residents appears to have started with complaints of increased traffic on the street that staff became aware of during the water main reconstruction along neighborhood streets late last year. Issues of increased traffic and speed arose during the period when Kensington Road pavement was disturbed for construction. Various street closures and other construction impacts also contributed to temporary volume increases on various neighborhood streets as drivers sought to avoid the daily construction areas. While these temporary construction impacts are now over, they may return later this year when planned reconstruction along School Street continues.

April 2008 and May 2009 volume and speed measurements on Kensington Road indicate volumes reducing from about 930 to 850 daily vehicles, respectively. Average speeds of about 26 mph and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds of about 31 mph were measured in either direction. Staff will plan to recheck traffic speeds and volumes on Kensington Road in the coming months after snow season ends.

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 other three side streets (Rum Hill Road, Pleasant View Avenue and Minot Street), increasing the negative effects of traffic there. As a consequence, 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 which would divert cut-through traffic as well as some neighborhood traffic to this same over-capacity intersection would 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 general, TOC continues to concur that the construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 (CIP 40) is the appropriate course of action to: mitigate the adverse traffic impacts across the West End due to: cut-through traffic, intersection capacity limitations and delays; pedestrian safety issues near the high school, and the need to provide for continued growth and vitality of the regional medical campus. Traffic reductions at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection resulting from Langley Parkway Phase 3 enable a lower-cost intersection reconstruction as possibly a single-lane roundabout which will further reduce delays and enhance safety. The previously-referenced TPAC report to City Council of April 27, 2018 also endorsed the Pleasant/Warren Fruit intersection improvement (CIP570) as a priority project and after completion of Langley Parkway Phase 3. If neighborhood cut-through traffic is still a concern after these improvements, then neighborhood traffic restrictions could be more readily considered as the new intersection would have ample capacity to accept the additional traffic loads.

This inquiry will also be discussed at TPAC's meeting next week.

**c. 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**

At issue is a growing and significant disregard for the posted No Left Turn restriction from East Side Drive northbound into the CVS driveway. This traffic movement was prohibited by signage as part of the approved CVS-Burger King site plan in 2011 for reasons of safety and traffic operations at the nearby signal at Loudon Road and East Side Drive. Safety concerns included the potential of vehicles turning left through two lanes of southbound stop-and-go traffic approaching the traffic signal. Operational concerns included vehicles potentially waiting to turn left due to signalized traffic queues while fully blocking East Side Drive northbound traffic, thus causing backups into the intersection at Loudon Road. Another operational concern was the potential for queued southbound vehicles on East Side Drive to stop and 'wave through' a left-turner instead of driving forward to the green light; the signal, detecting the resulting gap in southbound vehicle flow, can terminate the green light, stranding those following vehicles until the next signal, compounding queue lengths and delays.

The conditional approval of the CVS/Burger King site plan provided for a driveway on East Side Drive configured to allow right turns in and out, left turns out, but no left turns in. At the time, staff expressed strong concerns about potential safety and operational impacts if the proposed driveway configuration and turn-restrictive signing failed to prevent illegal left turns. As such, the site developer provided the city with an optional design of a raised median that would fit within the approved painted median area as is currently painted on East Side Drive. A \$15,000 donation was provided to the city to install this median or other traffic control measure it might deem necessary should safety or operational issues arise in the ensuing years. Also part of the conditional approval, the developer would provide the city with three post-construction-year traffic studies that examined traffic counts and reported crashes.

Follow-up traffic studies were submitted in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Staff has also monitored safety and operations since the site opened in 2012. Regarding safety, there had not been a significant crash history at the subject driveway when last checked through 2015. Staff will request an updated crash summary through the present from CPD. Regarding operational impacts, however, staff has observed increasing non-compliance of the left turn restriction with associated impacts to street traffic operations since the site opened in 2012. Counts sampled by staff indicated 883 illegal left turns in a 30-day period in June 2014 (about 29 violations per day). This number increased to 1,631 illegal left turns in a 30-day period ending on December 9, 2017 (about 54 violations per day). CPD has indicated exasperation at the sheer number and frequency of violations over the years in spite of

its substantial enforcement efforts. At the request of CPD, staff's placement of additional No Left Turn and Do Not Enter signage (totaling 5 signs for this driveway facing northbound traffic) in September 2017 had little reported effect on violations as can be seen in the number of violations recorded in December, 2017.

Operational issues were apparent in a video clip taken September 20, 2017 by GSD staff from a vehicle turning left from Loudon Road eastbound onto East Side Drive northbound. Coming to a stop while turning, a standing line of several turning vehicles ahead of them were blocked from continuing northbound on East Side Drive by a CVS semi-tractor trailer attempting to make the subject illegal left turn. The truck could not turn left due to the standing two-lane queues of opposing East Side Drive southbound traffic waiting for the light to change. Eventually this traffic leaves a gap for the truck driver who proceeds to make the illegal turn into the 'one-way exit' side of the CVS driveway. Staff noted that during the site-design process (planning board review) that large delivery trucks were intended to access the site via the Loudon Road driveway and a raised truck apron area between the CVS and the Burger King sites.

TOC is also concerned that the ongoing disregard for the subject turn restriction has continued to grow as more and more drivers see violations and feel it's acceptable for them to do the same. This can foster a driver disregard for similar traffic control devices elsewhere in the city.

A copy of the developer's raised-median plan was reviewed. The plan would physically and substantially restrict left turns at the subject CVS driveway. A No-U-Turn sign would be needed on the end of the median to also address potential U-turns. All of the 'illegal left turns' into the site would alternatively be made at the CVS's Loudon Road site driveway, as was the intention of the site's design. Raised median would, however, preclude the current left-turn out of the CVS driveway onto East Side Drive northbound. While this was noted by the developer to be a minor movement, its restriction would require CVS patrons to either revise the time of their visit so as to avoid the left exit (i.e. shop at CVS at the beginning of trip with a right in and right out at this driveway, as opposed to stopping at CVS on the way home by turning left into the driveway and then exiting left out), or turn right onto Loudon Road and circle back to East Side Drive northbound via Hazen Drive or Burns Avenue.

The proposed raised median extends roughly to the driveway of the Red Apple restaurant and might impact some driveway traffic there, although turning movements could still be made. An option could be to relocate the Red Apple driveway to the northerly end of their parking area, a location that would provide easier customer access to East Side Drive as well as put their circulating traffic along the back of their parking area instead of next to the building where patron walkers are concentrated.

Because of the significant operational and enforcement challenges posed by the overwhelming and increasing violation of this left-turn restriction, TOC has supported, and continues to support the installation of raised median at this location per the plan provided by the developer.

This inquiry will also be discussed at TPAC's meeting next week.

#### **4. Open Discussion Items**

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

None.

Next meeting date: February 19, 2019