

**CITY OF CONCORD
TRANSPORTATION POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JULY, 22 2021**

The Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) met at 6:00 pm on July 22, 2021, in the Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street.

Members Present: Dick Lemieux (Chair), Gregory Bakos, Terri Paige, Craig Tufts

Members Absent: Councilor Zandra Rice-Hawkins, Councilor Brent Todd, Councilor Rob Werner

Guests: None

City Staff Members: David Cedarholm (City Engineer), Sam Durfee (Senior Planner), Karen Hill (Transportation Engineer)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes – March 25, 2021

The meeting minutes of March 25, 2021 were approved as amended. *Motion:* Tufts. *Second:* Paige. *Roll call vote:* Lemieux, Bakos, Paige, Tufts. *Abstain:* None. *Unanimous.*

3. Public Comment

Chair opened the meeting for public comment; no comments were presented.

4. New Business

None.

5. Old Business

a. Discussion on Loudon Road Bridge Shared-Use Path alignment

Cedarholm shared a map showing various alternatives, for the north and south side of the Loudon Road Bridge, for the proposed Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) from Gully Hill Road to Storrs Street. He stated that discussions have been ongoing at the TPAC-BP subcommittee meetings. Cedarholm gave a brief overview of the Loudon Road Bridge Study, reminding the committee that it proposes a 6' sidewalk on the south side of the bridge and a 14' shared-use path on the north side, along with two 5' shoulders and 11' travel lanes.

Cedarholm and Lemieux did a field walk to explore the potential for a trail underpass similar to the Manchester Street Bridge, along the eastern abutment of the Loudon Road Bridge. Cedarholm stated that there is plenty of head room for a path with the 10' clearance that is needed. He mentioned that it will be tight closer to the park but believes it is technically feasible. Lemieux would like to see this option worked into the Loudon Road Bridge Project. The question would be whether the state would fund it. Dave would like to advocate for it and determine if the City may need to pay for it. It was discussed that it will be challenging for the trail to follow the river on the southeast quadrant because it is private property. Cedarholm mentioned that even if the alignment has to follow Gully Hill Road, he still believes the underpass to be a desirable option.

Cedarholm confirmed that there is a major challenge with the southern option in that it would require an additional railroad crossing near Storrs Street, making the option infeasible. He stated that it is an active track for Pan Am and NHDOT and that the City is not negotiating that portion of the track. Grades are also challenging.

He discussed that it is undesirable to cross the path at the Stickney/Bridge intersection as well as at Fort Eddy. For those reasons, he does not believe the southern route to be feasible. Committee members agreed and will focus on a trail alignment that ties into the northern route across the bridge.

Tufts stated that he likes the underpass under Loudon Road at the bridge because it lets people travel from Storrs Street all the way to the trail without crossing Loudon Rd.

It was discussed that the proposed tunnel would be approximately 250', crossing under I-93 and the off ramp and would cross to the proposed Storrs Street roundabout. Cedarholm felt this is an ideal spot for a railroad crossing as well. Tufts agreed that if the trail crosses near the roundabout then it will feel more like part of downtown.

Cedarholm mentioned that NHDOT took over Stickney Ave during a previous highway project, but that the City still has rights to a portion of it. A new development along Stickney Ave would need to go through Concord Planning Board. He suggested that the City advocate for a master plan for the area that includes the trail and a Storrs Street connection. Durfee recommended having a plan adopted prior to the development coming through. He would like to see a road connection through the development site, which could leave the tunnel option open for the future.

Tufts voiced his concerns with a 250' tunnel. Durfee recommended instead, a wide Loudon Road cross section, similar to Exit 13.

Lemieux recommended that the City, with the help of TPAC, develop conceptual plans that show the proposed trail alignment for:

- Now: When Loudon Road Bridge is modified. The trail would connect to Gully Hill, loop under the bridge to cross the bridge with the proposed two-way path on the northern side and end at fort eddy for now.
- Future: Interstate widening (2026-2031). Ideal alignment needs to be vetted.

Cedarholm mentioned the importance of connecting the trail to the northern MRGT route as well as downtown. He suggested this could be done using Storrs Street. He would like to explore modification to the cross section of the existing Storrs Street to determine if a side path would be feasible. It would require eliminating parking but would allow for a 12' wide separated bike path to connect the trail to downtown. Cedarholm to speak with Matt Walsh.

Paige is supportive of the trail as it will provide access to the bus station on Stickney Ave which is proposed as the new CAT Transfer point.

Lemieux wants the City to engage in a discussion with the property owner on the southeast quadrant of the bridge to get the feel for path support along the river. Cedarholm to speak with Carlos Baia. Tufts recalled conversations in the past about underground utilities on the southeast corner which may introduce conflicts. Bakos asked about the underpass elevation in regards to the flood plain. Tufts mentioned the possibility of a maintenance issue if the path floods.

A side discussion was held regarding the NHDOT TAP funding. Tufts mentioned that NHDOT is going to a 4-year application cycle which would double the funding and the number of projects per cycle. This year's funding is approximately \$13.4 mil. He stated that they are still in the process of selecting projects.

b. *Update on City-Wide Crosswalk Policy*

Hill distributed draft criteria. The committee provided comments. Hill will update and work on the associated flow chart and bring to TOC for review and further discussion before bringing it back to TPAC and then Council in the future.

6. Consent Reports

a. *Acceptance of Subcommittee Minutes*

i. TPAC-BP: April 5, 2021; May 3, 2021, June 7, 2021

Minutes approved by consent. Hill will send to Council.

ii. TPAC-PT: October 6, 2020; February 2, 2021; April 6, 2021

Minutes approved by consent. Hill will send to Council.

7. City Council Meeting Update

Lemieux reported that there was a City Council public hearing on the City's purchase of the Pan Am Railroad. The purchase was approved by Council.

Bog/Carter Hill/Horse Hill/River Road Intersection

Cedarholm discussed that a report was submitted to Council and a Public Hearing was held on May 10, 2021, and Council voted in favor of the conversion. The signage and pavement markings were installed to convert the intersection to 4-way stop on June 16, 2021.

8. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

- a. *None.*

9. Status Report on Subcommittees

- a. *Bicycle / Pedestrian Committee (TPAC-BP), Craig Tufts*

Tufts mentioned that the committee discussed the Loudon Road Bridge cross section and proposed draft striping policy. He stated that Smith is working on an outreach form for Market Days.

It was determined that the demonstration project on Pillsbury Street would not work due to the bike swap logistics.

Tufts asked about doing a Storrs Street demonstration. Cedarholm will speak with Matt Walsh. Lemieux discussed the need to perform periodic counts of parking utilization on Storrs Street.

- b. *Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Karen Hill*

Hill mentioned that TOC is responding to a variety of citizen concerns/requests through the new SeeClickFix program. Requests include, stop signs, signs, and crosswalks. Concerns are in regards to speeding on various streets.

- c. *Public Transportation Committee (TPAC-PT), Terri Paige*

Terri updated the committee on the re-branding of CAT and MST. She also mentioned that two of their cutaway buses are being wrapped with the new branding and should be seen on the roads shortly. She also provided an update that the 3rd and final new passport bus has arrived in NH and is awaiting final inspection. She stated that the passport buses will only receive new branding wraps on the cabs and will continue to have advertising wraps on the bodies.

Terri mentioned concerns with the propose language and conditions of the easement agreement for the new proposed bus stop at the Exit 17 development.

CAT would like to see a shelter at that location. She also mentioned that it would be the first stop on the new proposed inter-city route from Penacook to Laconia.

Terri asked members to let folks know that they are looking for drivers. Hill discussed that the N. Main Street bus stop relocations will be going to Council next month and will require an ordinance amendment and public hearing.

10. Staff Updates

a. *Storrs Street Extension (CIP 18)*

Cedarholm noted that the project is on hold pending resolution of issues with NHDOT and Pan Am.

He mentioned that the 4th leg of the proposed roundabout would need to be advocated for. He also mentioned that the relocation of the railroad is still pending negotiations with Pan Am and NHDOT and that a trail master plan in the area would be helpful for the City to identify priorities especially when the Stickney Ave area is re-developed.

b. *Whitney Road / Hoit Road Intersection (CIP 30)*

The City is working to finalize Development Agreement documentation with the Developer. The start of construction is pending NHDES and NHDOT Permit approvals.

c. *Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP 543)*

Discussed the need for a trail master plan during item 5a.

Lemieux mentioned that the segment of trail proposed through the corn fields is on hold due to a prior conservation easement through NHDOT. Bakos is tracking down the documentation. The LWCF grant decision is likely pending due to the easement challenges.

Cedarholm discussed that the City is purchasing the northern section. This section is also still pending a TAC funding decision.

d. *Langley Parkway Phase Three (CIP 40)*

No discussion.

e. *Loudon Road Bridge (CIP 588)*

Discussed during item 5a.

f. *I-93 Bow-Concord*

Lemieux has concerns that the project keeps slipping with each ten-year plan. He thinks it is an important project and that the traffic is worsening. He expressed the importance of advocating for the project. This project was also discussed during item 5a.

11. *Other Discussion Items*

None.

12. *Adjourn*

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm by unanimous consent.

13. *Upcoming Meeting Dates*

August 26, 2021

September 23, 2021