



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2013

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services
Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services
Steve Henninger, Planning Division
Jim Major, General Services
Greg Taylor, Concord Police Department
Rick Wollert, Concord Fire Department
Matt Cashman, Concord School District
Dick Lemieux, TPAC Chair

Guests: Nik Coates, Central NH Regional Planning Commission
Courtney Croteau, Central NH Regional Planning Commission

A. Regular Discussion Items

1) Overview of city-wide accident data, including prior-month accident summary and discussion of select accident locations, circumstances and potential action.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Traffic accident data for April 2013 was reviewed. There were 70 reportable accidents in April 2013. This compares with 78 and 82 reportable accidents in April 2012 and 2011, respectively. 10 accidents resulted in total of 14 people injured, 5 of which occurred on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There were two accidents involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 29 years walking through the parking lot at Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic and being struck by a driver aged 62 years backing out of a parking space (minor injury, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 31 years walking southerly on the sidewalk along South Street and allegedly being hit by a driver turning right onto Perley Street (no injury, no evidence of the collision which was reported after some delay, question as to validity of claim).

There were no accidents involving bicyclists.

2) City Council meeting update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its May 13, 2013 meeting, Council: accepted Engineering's report and recommendation on CIP 283-Pleasant/Warren Fruit intersection improvements; set a June 10 public hearing on the Abbot-Downing School area parking restrictions; and referred new traffic inquiries (Items C.2 and C.3 below) to TOC and the Parking Committee.

3) Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TPAC considered the Heather Lane STOP sign referral at its April 25, 2013 meeting with neighborhood residents invited to participate in the discussion. TPAC endorsed removal of the two existing STOP signs on Heather Lane but did not endorse addition of new STOP sign locations.

B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.

- 1) None.

C. New Discussion and Action Items

- 1) **Discussion of potential improvement recommendations developed by the Concord City-Wide Safe Routes to School Task Force (Round 7 grant application). (CNHRPC: 05/15/13).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Nik Coates of CNHRPC presented the draft findings of the Concord City-Wide Safe Routes to School Task Force. Copies of a May 21, 2013 draft report on the Task Forces' project identification and preliminary project rankings were distributed to facilitate the informal discussion. A list of 16 potential projects was initially identified and is being refined in anticipation of applying for SRTS Round 7 funding in the coming year.

TOC members concurred with a number of potential SRTS projects including improved school-zone signing (school crossing signs, 20 mph flashing speed signs and speed radar signs) at select schools and construction of corner bump outs at key walk-to-school crossing locations. TOC suggested that CNHRPC acquire traffic and speed data at a number of potential improvement locations to better justify improvement type and need. Nick will take TOC comments and suggestions back to the Task Force to work on refining the list of potential improvements. The application for Round 7 Funds through NHDOT will be developed by CHNHRPC over the spring and summer.

- 2) **Referral from City Council regarding a driver concern on traffic conflicts between Centre Street vehicles and traffic turning left at the driveways to the Prescription Centre and TD Banknorth. (Council: 05/13/13).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a motorist concern on traffic safety regarding left-turning traffic movements to/from the TD Banknorth and Prescription Center driveways. Full turning access is allowed at these driveways, but the location is close enough to the signalized Main/Centre/Loudon intersection so that traffic queues along Centre Street from the stop line commonly back across the driveway locations. Left turns at the driveways occur in gaps in the standing traffic queues resulting in safety concerns and traffic operation impacts. Police Department crash data for this area of Centre Street since January 2010 indicates seven reported crashes. The resulting rate of about two crashes per year is notable for driveways but not excessive. Interestingly, five of the seven crashes involved a left turner from Centre Street into the Prescription Center being impacted by an eastbound Centre Street vehicle travelling in the far-right lane. This situation may reflect left turns being allowed through by eastbound Centre Street drivers queued in the left through-lane and leaving a gap for them; traffic moving eastbound in the right-most lane may not be able to see a left-turner crossing between the stopped cars, with potential for a crash being elevated.

Rob Mack and Dave Florence (Parking Enforcement) field viewed the location during the busy lunchtime traffic period. Traffic queues along Centre Street from the signal at N. Main Street commonly extended beyond the driveway locations and many left-turns were observed to/from either driveway. Queued traffic frequently left gaps for the turners to cross, although a number of turning drivers used barge-and-block maneuvers to force their way through the traffic queues. A negative result of letting left-turns occur through the standing eastbound traffic queue is that it commonly occurs at the start of the Centre Street eastbound green phase at the signal; eastbound traffic west of, and blocked by, the left-turning vehicle is unable to

proceed in a timely manner to the intersection resulting in inefficient use of the green signal time with resulting loss of eastbound capacity. This loss of capacity translates into longer eastbound traffic queues which can extend west for several blocks and even to beyond the signal at Green Street.

TOC concurred that if these driveways were related to new-site development, left-turn access to Centre Street would likely not be allowed due to the near proximity of the traffic signal. Restricting left-turn access to the TD Banknorth driveway could be problematic for drivers exiting the one-way drive-through as there appears to be no way for drivers to U-turn back into the site in order to access Main Street from the driveways to Pitman Street. Improvements to the Main/Centre/Loudon intersection are currently being designed as part of the Main Street Complete Streets Project. Ed Roberge will further discuss this request and potential improvement options with the project design team as well as with applicable nearby businesses.

3) Referral from City Council regarding resident concerns on safety at the S. State/Thorndike intersection and requests to consider further parking restriction, installation of multi-way STOP and/or conversion of Thorndike to one-way operation (Council: 05/13/13).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern for intersection safety improvements following two motor vehicle crashes that occurred there with injuries in late March/early April. Requested are: installation of multi-way STOP to also stop all cars on S. State Street; prohibition of parking near the intersection to improve sight lines to traffic crossing from Thorndike Street; consideration of making Thorndike Street one-way to reduce traffic turning at the intersection; relocation of utility poles on Thorndike Street near the intersection; and consideration of constructing a speed table at the intersection to slow traffic.

Numbers of reported crashes since 2004 for the S. State intersections at Thorndike, Concord, Thompson and Fayette Streets indicate average crash rates of about 1 to 2 per year at each intersection, which over the long term, are not indicative of a high-crash condition. In 2013 alone, however, there have been 3 reported crashes to date at the S. State/Thorndike intersection, although such variation is not uncommon from year to year at any individual intersection. Engineering is presently conducting traffic volume/speed counts at the intersection to better identify existing traffic conditions and to investigate if there is enough traffic volume to meet Federal guidelines for multi-way STOP control. Engineering continues to assemble traffic data and will be preparing a more detailed investigation of crash patterns and problem identification for TOC discussion at the next meeting.

4) Request from a resident of Branch Turnpike to consider adding a painted crosswalk on Branch Turnpike at the sidewalk street crossing west of Edgewood Heights Drive. (General Services: 05-15-13).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is an unmarked sidewalk crossing on Branch Turnpike about 70 feet west of Edgewood Heights Drive. Sidewalk extends along the north side of Branch Turnpike west of this location and crosses here to the south side to continue further to the east. The resident request is to add a painted crosswalk here in conjunction with the upcoming street repaving project. It was noted that this crossing is similar to the sidewalk crossing at the Branch Turnpike/Chase Street intersection where the sidewalk crosses from the north side (east of Chase Street) to the south side (west of Chase Street). There is a painted crosswalk and signs at the Chase Street crossing location.

TOC members concurred that it would be reasonable to provide a crosswalk at this location given the current configuration of sidewalk and crosswalks along Branch Turnpike. General Services will add a crosswalk and signs at this location in conjunction with the upcoming street repaving project.

D. Open Discussion Items

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None

- 2) Inquiry to the Parking Committee from a resident at 15 Hutchins Street to reinstate parking on Knight Street between Hutchins Street and the existing crosswalk at Second Start.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue was a request submitted to Parking Enforcement by the resident at 15 Hutchins Street to reinstate on-street parking on the east side Knight Street next to his residence (between the crosswalk at Hutchins Street and the crosswalk to Second Start). On-street parking was removed in 2011 along the east side of Knight Street from Hutchins Street to 225 feet southerly, or through the frontage of #14 (former Scandia Hall) where back-out parking from the redeveloped Scandia Hall was approved by the planning board. At about this same time, curb and sidewalk improvements were being made to Knight Street as part of the CIP 35 US Route 3 North Improvement Project, and 17 parking spaces had been recently installed along nearby Garrison Street.

Rob Mack and Dave Florence visited the Knight Street area to overview the subject request. Allowing for appropriate setbacks from the two existing crosswalks next to 15 Hutchins Street, there would only be space for one potential parking space on the east side of the street. It did not appear that parking a vehicle here would substantially impede the sight line for potential vehicles backing out of the newly-constructed parking spaces at the redeveloped Scandia Hall. It was suggested that one or more parking spaces might instead be possible on the west side of Knight Street along the frontage of second Start, as these spaces would fit into unused pavement area resulting from the corner bump-out constructed at the Hutchins/Knight intersection.

TOC members concurred that adding a potential parking space to the east side of Knight Street between the two crosswalks next to #15 Hutchins Street appeared feasible. It was anticipated that any potential new spaces added to Knight Street would likely be used by vehicles related to the Second Start school, and might not be exclusively available for the resident at 15 Hutchins Street. TOC's opinion would be brought to the Parking Committee when this request is further considered.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer
Chair, Traffic Operations Committee

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, June 18, 2013 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***