

**City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 23, 2012 - 6:00pm to 8:30pm
City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Dick Lemieux called the meeting to order. Those in attendance included:

Committee Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (Downtown - Chair)
Jennifer Kretovic (City Council)
Ursula Maldonado (Resident)
Jim Sudak (Concord Area Transit) (Public Transit)
Alex Vogt (Pedestrian Community)
Tom Irwin (North/West Concord)
Brent Todd (Penacook)
Ed Roberge, City Engineer - Staff Representative

Committee Members Not Present:

Peter Rhodes (Bicycling Community)
Domenic Ciavarro (Large Employer)

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer - Staff Representative
Craig Tufts, Central NH Regional Planning Commission

2. Approval of January 26, 2011 meeting minutes

With no discussions or comments on the minutes, Jim Sudak made a motion to accept the January 26, 2012 minutes. The motion was seconded by Alex Vogt. The minutes of the January 26, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Presentations

a. CIP35 - US Route 3, Phase 4b Improvement Project, Ed Roberge

Ed Roberge presented a roll plan of the corridor improvement project from Call Street to Penacook Street, the so-called Phase 4b project area. Key features of this segment of the corridor plan is the lane taper merge just north of Penacook Street along North State Street departing northbound from the signalized intersection. The plan concept is to drop the 2 northbound travel lanes south of the Penacook Street intersection and have only one northbound lane. This eliminates the northbound lane merge and is a much safer condition. Another feature is to eliminate the Rumford Street northbound left onto North State Street by introducing a raised island. That movement experiences considerable delay during the peak hours of operation resulting in a number of accidents and near misses. Southbound access to and from Rumford Street is maintained.

The typical roadway section maintains 12' travel lanes and 5' shoulders and existing sidewalks along North State Street will be reconstructed. Parking is general maintained throughout the areas where parking is permitted today. Construction of both the Phase 4a and Phase 4b project areas is expected throughout the 2012 construction season.

Following brief discussion and review of details, the Committee concurred with the design effort and endorsed the project plan. Staff indicated the final design is underway and project plans are expected to be completed by March 15th for advertisement and bidding.

b. CIP19 - Loudon Road Improvement Project, Rob Mack

Rob Mack presented a roll plan of the Loudon Road safety improvement project outlining the project area from Hazen Drive to D'Amante Drive. The project features a lane conversion program where the current 4-lane section will be changed to 3-lanes, 1-lane in each direction and a two-way, left turn lane. The conversion project allows for 5' shoulders where currently there are none. The lane geometry at the existing major intersections at Hazen Drive, East Side Drive/Canterbury Road, and D'Amante Drive will remain the same to maintain existing capacity levels. Staff is also reviewing bus stop locations to improve location and layout for better safety.

Rob Mack noted that the project is part of the 3-phase project which includes the lane conversion safety improvements as Phase 1, followed by an intersection realignment of Branch Turnpike and Northeast Village Road (Phase 2), with final streetscape improvements to follow. The project will also consider access management strategies and staff will work with local businesses and residents to maximize opportunities. Strategies for access management are already considered during the development review process.

Rob Mack reported that staff is working with NHDOT to fund the first phase of the safety improvement project through the FHWA's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP); which funds safety projects at a 90% federal/10% local level.

Following brief discussion, the Committee fully endorsed this project. Dick Lemieux noted that this project is a top safety priority for TPAC given its opportunity to improve safety and reduce accidents. He requested that staff keep the committee updated on the progression of the project on a quarterly basis.

4. Public Comment

There were no public comments made at this meeting.

5. Consent Reports

a. Approval of Subcommittee Nominations

There were no subcommittee nominations to consider.

b. Approval of Subcommittee Minutes (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Public Transportation, Traffic Operations)

The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes of the Traffic Operations Committees distributed with this agenda package.

6. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Request from Jim Baer to consider publishing a bicycle rules and safety responsibilities. (City Council: 12/16/2011; TPAC: 1/26/2012, 2/23/2012)

Ed Roberge noted that a draft final report was distributed for review to the committee for consideration. Dick Lemieux reported that the Bike Committee has reviewed this referral and concur with the response provided.

Following a brief discussion and recommendations for several minor edits, Ursula Maldonado made a motion to approve the final report to Council including the minor edits discussed. The motion was seconded by Brent Todd. With no further discussion, the motion to approve the amended report to Council was adopted unanimously.

7. Status report on subcommittees

a. Pedestrian Committee, Alex Vogt

Alex Vogt reported that the Pedestrian Committee did not meet in February so no report was given.

b. Bike Committee, Peter Rhodes

In Pete Rhodes absence, Craig Tufts reported that the Bike Committee met in February and continued its discussions on Bike Master Plan projects and committee assignments to manage them. The committee reviewed bike parking plans and targeted areas for opportunities.

Craig Tufts indicated that the Central NH Bike Coalition (CNHBC) has been formed and continues to meet. The coalition includes 23 members of the regional community and focuses its efforts on fund raising and completing projects for the betterment of the biking community. TPAC Bike Committee will be partnering with the CNHBC to fund a number of upcoming projects.

c. Public Transit Committee, Jennifer Kretovic

Jennifer Kretovic reported that the Public Transit Committee met in February and reviewed a number of items. A Driver Feedback Meeting was held as a follow-up to the Boarding & Alighting study which CNHRPC conducted in November 2011. CNHRPC facilitated a focus group discussion with the CAT drivers to gather some deeper insight and hopefully shed light on some systemic timing issues in the new route structure.

In general, each of the drivers on the Heights route noted that the schedule is too tight in the PM and too spaced out in the AM. When increased afternoon traffic is combined with a schedule that is too tight, the drivers find it "impossible" to stick to the PM schedule. Heights routes drivers also noted that the PM Heights routes are on average 30 minutes behind schedule each day.

With respect to the Crosstown Route, both drivers and riders have stated that the Crosstown Route is too long. The length of the route makes it uncomfortable for riders and is also problematic in terms of making connections with the pulse system. Drivers feel that it would be better to target heavily used stops and specific employers on Fort Eddy Road allowing for more flexibility in the route.

The Penacook drivers estimate a 60% drop in ridership since the new schedule was put in place. Exact figures quoted by the drivers: "from 85-115 riders per day to 40-65 riders per day". Jennifer Kretovic noted that the ridership data are not reflecting this type of loss in ridership. Comparing January 2011 to January 2012, ridership saw an increase of 203 riders. Also comparing December 2011 to January 2012, the average daily ridership went from 132 in December to 128 in January - a loss but certainly not significant. Also reviewing ridership from October to November to January, again the fluctuation was minimal.

Jennifer Kretovic added that what is important to take away from this effort is that the drivers are stressed by the new routes. Drivers feel the scheduling of some of the routes is unrealistic and that the Briar Pipe stop is problematic.

No one anticipated a perfect system when the new Crosstown Route replaced the Indy Park and Trolley Routes, and the pulse system was implemented. CAT as well as TPAC recognized there needed to be a process for refinement. The Boardings and Alighting Study's combined with the Public Input Meeting and Driver Feedback Meeting are all part of the process to identify areas in need of improvement.

Jennifer Kretovic reported that the Public Transit Committee reviewed CAT's FY2013 Budget Applications for the City and NHDOT. The NHDOT Budget / Application for 5311 funding is due March 1st. At first glance, the budget proposal is shaping up and both the City and State application proposals look good. The committee expects some changes in what was presented as NHDOT is making some refinements in their application structure. CAT's City Application and NHDOT application are one in the same this year, and it is expected that CAT will submit the documentation to City Administration in the next week or so.

Jennifer Kretovic noted that the Quarterly Report is due to Council and will be distributed through the Subcommittee for input and approval shortly. It is expected that the final quarterly report will be forwarded to TPAC at its Match meeting.

d. Traffic Operations Committee, Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that the Traffic Operations Committee met in February and reviewed several referrals and CIP project priorities.

With respect to referrals, Rob Mack reported that TOC reviewed a request for a crosswalk at Pleasant Street between State Street and Main Street in the vicinity of the access alley to Bicentennial Square. Given that mid-block location of the crosswalk request, TOC did not support it.

Given several recent accidents, the TOC discussed the Manchester Street/ Airport Road/ Integra Drive intersection and its upcoming completion schedule. Several accidents have occurred and TOC requested that variable message boards be deployed to provide advanced warning to intersection work.

TOC reviewed the current CIP project list and made recommendation updates that will be considered by City Council in their planning efforts. A similar review effort is underway with TPAC.

8. Staff Updates

a. Sewalls Falls Bridge Closure for Inspections, Ed Roberge

Ed Roberge reported that as part of the final design efforts to replace and/or rehabilitate the Sewalls Falls Bridge, the bridge will be closed during the week of March 5th through March 9th to complete the in-depth structural inspection. Public safety has been notified and message boards have been deployed to provide notice to motorists travelling.

9. TPAC Policy Objectives/Programs/Initiatives

a. City-wide Speed and Pavement Marking Policy Update

No report given on this item.

10. Old Business

a. TPAC Accomplishments Report

No report given on this item.

b. FY2013-FY2022 CIP Project Priority Ranking

Ed Roberge distributed final report copies of transportation CIP project priorities to the committee for final review. The final report ranks projects in the intersections, street corridor improvements, and streets- new construction categories with a scale of high, medium, and low priority.

Following a brief discussion, the final report will incorporate staff and the TOC comments and forwarded to City Council for their consideration during the budget review process.

11. New business

a. Penacook Village Design Charrettes, Ed Roberge

Ed Roberge reported that design charrettes have been scheduled through the Penacook Village Association to review the US Route 3 corridor (Village Street) as well as neighborhood redevelopment opportunity areas and school building re-use in upcoming meetings. The first charette is scheduled for Saturday, March 10th at 9:00 AM at the Penacook United Church on Canal Street and will review aspects of the US Route 3 project including intersections and street village connectivity, landscaping and streetscapes, parking, and pedestrian and bike safety. A second design charette scheduled for Thursday, April 19th at 6:00 PM at the Penacook United Church will feature discussion tables on the redevelopment opportunities at the Rivco site, properties at 30 Pines, re-use of the school buildings on Cross Street, and Washington Street, as well as parks and neighborhood connectivity. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

b. Motor Vehicle Surcharge for Transportation

Ed Roberge reported that in recent discussions with TPAC members, there was a desire to review the existing motor vehicle surcharge tax and consider supporting legislation to allow Cities and Towns to increase the rate set by the NH Legislature.

The current law allows for municipalities to charge a fee to the maximum amount of \$5.00 per vehicle registration to fund a dedicated transportation improvement fund. The current legislation was adopted in 1997 and has not been amended since.

Following a brief discussion, TPAC unanimously endorsed a plan to recommend to Council that the City Manager be authorized to lobby Concord's legislative body to increase the current maximum rate of \$5.00 to \$10.00; or even up to \$15.00 to support an increase in the local transportation improvement fund. A document supporting this initiative will be forwarded to City Council.

12. Adjourn

There being no other items to discuss, Jennifer Kretovic made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alex Vogt. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned.