



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes - September 20, 2011

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services Division
Steve Henninger, Planning Division
Jim Major, General Services
Greg Taylor, Concord Police Department
Bill Dexter, Concord Police Department
Dick Lemieux, TPAC Chair
Jennifer Kretovic, Concord 20/20

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 August 2011 was reviewed. There were 96 reportable accidents in August 2011. This compares with 98 and 117 reportable accidents in August 2010 and 2009, respectively. 28 accidents resulted in total of 30 people injured, with 5 of those injuries occurring on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There was one accident involving a pedestrian: a pedestrian aged 21 on rollerblades traveling in the southbound lane on N. State Street on a dark rainy evening and being struck by a northbound vehicle turning left into Monroe Street (injuries, pedestrian wore dark clothing, fault not indicated).

There were four accidents involving bicyclists: a bicyclist aged 21 years traveling through the McDonald's parking lot on S. Main Street and being struck by a vehicle turning into a parking space (injuries, belated notification of crash, driver not identified, helmet not worn); a bicyclist aged 53 years traveling southbound on Mountain Road and being struck by an eastbound vehicle turning left from W. Portsmouth street onto Mountain Road (minor injury, driver at fault, helmet worn); a bicyclist aged 48 years travelling from the Ralph Pill parking lot and crossing Loudon Road travelling eastbound in the westbound lanes and being struck by a vehicle turning right from the I-93 southbound off-ramp (minor injuries, bicyclist at fault, no helmet worn); and a bicyclist aged 34 years traveling northbound on the southbound-side sidewalk on S. Main Street and entering the crosswalk on Allison Street striking a northbound vehicle turning right into Allison Street (minor injuries, bicyclist at fault, no helmet worn).

Bicycle crashes at the Mountain Road/W. Portsmouth Street (Exit 16) intersection were discussed. At issue are three similar crashes reported at the intersection in the two-year period since July 2009: experienced cyclists traveling southbound on Mountain Road down the hill and being struck by a vehicle turning left or crossing from the W. Portsmouth Street from a stop. Rob Mack will visit the intersection to view sight lines and ascertain if specific improvements might be appropriate. Also noted was the possibility of getting word out to the cycling community to exercise caution when cycling through this intersection (i.e. making eye contact with side-street drivers); complex intersection geometry and high traffic volume creates challenges for side-street drivers turning onto Mountain Road and an approaching cyclist could get overlooked. All concurred that the proposed roundabout

(FY 2016) should alleviate difficulties for both vehicle and bicycle movements.

2) **City Council meeting update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At their September 12, 2011 meeting, Council approved the Ordinance change regarding the YIELD/STOP sign changes at Auburn/Penacook and Auburn/Forrest intersections. Council accepted the TPAC report on the Crickett Lane gate referral. Council also granted a resolution authorizing staff to apply for TIGER 3 grant funding for two projects: Langley Parkway Phase 3 and the Main Street Streetscape project.

3) **Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At their August 25, 2011 meeting, TPAC approved the final report on the Crickett Lane referral and discussed the city's Walk-Friendly report card. The Pedestrian Committee continues to work on a sidewalk condition inventory for a Sidewalk Transition Plan; a UNH student, with support from UNH's Technology Transfer Center, is providing assistance by collecting and compiling field data on sidewalks and curb ramps across the city.

B. **On-going Discussion and Action Items.**

1) **Referral from Council regarding a request from Alex de Nesnera to remove the STOP signs on the School Street approaches to the School Street/N. Fruit Street intersection. (Council: 3/14/11).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Terry Crotty provided Engineering with additional information on school bus movement through the intersection. In past years, the primary school bus boarding area was on North Fruit Street adjacent to the high school, resulting in significant bus movement through the School/N. Fruit intersection. In the past few years, primary school bus boarding activity has relocated to Westbourne and Woodman Streets, resulting in less bus travel through the subject intersection. Currently, several smaller buses that board students at the vocational education center head north to the School/N. Fruit intersection. A few large buses also traverse the School/N. Fruit intersection on their way around to Westbourne Street.

Rob Mack observed traffic operations at the subject intersection during the morning school peak. Five school bus movements were observed in a 40-minute period, consistent with the above-noted summary. Traffic volumes were light to moderate with short delays at the stop signs and generally minimal to no traffic queuing on intersection approaches. The longest observed traffic queue was about 3 to 4 vehicles occurring occasionally on the School Street westbound approach.

Further discussion was deferred to allow participation of additional TOC members who were unable to attend today.

C. **Items**

1) **Referral from Councilor Shurtleff regarding a constituent concern on traffic speeds on**

Penacook Street in the vicinity of Merrimack Street in Penacook. (Council: 9/04/11).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern from Kevin LeBlanc of 2 Penacook Street about high vehicle speeds turning at the corner of Penacook Street and Merrimack Street, as well as behavior of traffic to and from the boat launch area north of the intersection. Councilor Shurtleff additionally requested that TOC consider lowering the 35 mph speed limit on Penacook Street to 30 mph. Other options requested for TOC consideration included posting a school zone near Penacook Elementary School and possibly installing a speed bump or raised intersection table at the corner of Penacook and Merrimack Streets.

Mr. LeBlanc's prior and similar request for STOP signs at the intersection was considered by TOC at its September 15, 2009 meeting. At that time, TOC concurred that STOP signs were not necessary, but recommended the addition of 10 MPH advisory speed plaques on existing curve signs in advance of the intersection. The advisory speed plaques were installed by General Services shortly thereafter.

For purpose of this latest request, Engineering conducted vehicle speed and volume counts during last week. Counts were conducted at several locations along Penacook Street, but all data was not yet compiled. One 48-hour count on Penacook Street near the Rolfe House indicated average speeds of 26 to 28 mph and 85th percentile speeds of 32 to 34 mph (posted speed is 35 mph). Bill Dexter reported that the Traffic Enforcement Unit monitored speeds for 1.75 hours on the morning of September 7, 2011. Of all traffic observed, only two vehicles were exceeding the posted 35mph speed limit and neither was determined to be driving unreasonably for conditions. Additional speed data closer to the school would be compiled for discussion at next TOC meeting.

The implementation of a school zone in the area Penacook Elementary School had been discussed by TOC in the past. TOC understands that the school specifically did not want a school zone established as it requires all students to come by bus or car. Several walkers from the Abbott Road area are exceptions, but since sidewalk is along the school side of Penacook Street there is no need to cross Penacook Street in the school vicinity. School speed zones are limited by State RSA's to 45 minutes before and after school hours, and thus have little effect on traffic speeds throughout most of the day. In any event, a request for a school speed zone should come from the school district.

This potential use of speed bumps near the Penacook/Merrimack intersection was briefly discussed. Issues include: potential increased noise for nearby residents, potential for a vehicle to lose control if the bump was too close to the turn, and location of vertical deflection along an established emergency response route (Merrimack Street). Feedback would be sought from the Fire Department. Also discussed was the option to extend the double yellow line through the curve as is done at the Community/Allen intersection by MV High School.

The potential reduction of Penacook Street speed limit to 30 mph would be appropriate in that Penacook street is within the urban boundary and is essentially the only local street therein that is posted in excess of the statutory 30 mph. TOC concurred to defer discussion until the rest of the Penacook Street speed data was compiled.

- 2) **Discussion of traffic operation on South Street in the vicinity of Conant/Rundlett School campus.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is the new No Parking, Standing or Stopping zone implemented along South Street in the vicinity of the Conant/Rundlett school campus. The Safe-Routes-to-School (SRTS) project to reconstruct curbing and sidewalk along this section of South Street was approved by Council in January 2011. Construction was generally complete for the opening of classes in early September. One aspect of the project was the removal of the wide shoulder areas along South Street to deter parking and drop-off traffic in the vicinity of the school crossings and school frontage. Striped shoulders were reduced to five feet wide for bicycle traffic only; parking, standing or stopping is to be prohibited in this area.

Engineering presented a report and proposed Ordinance change on the new parking restriction as a housekeeping update to the Ordinance now that the construction is complete. The report and request for a public hearing would be submitted at the October 11, 2011 Council meeting. A new category in the No Parking locations in Parking Schedule I is proposed which includes No Parking, Stopping or Standing at all times. It was felt that this new category might also be appropriate at other locations in the city in future considerations. Rob Mack presented the subject South Street parking restriction to the Parking Committee on September 19, 2011; members attending concurred with the new restriction and Ordinance change. TOC members also concurred with same.

Staff from Engineering and Police met at South Street to observe traffic operation on Wednesday, September 14, 2011 during the afternoon release of Conant students. Up to a half dozen drivers continued to park cars within the new no parking zone, some to wait for students to arrive and some that parked for extended periods in order to walk on campus to meet their children. School staff indicated that they were still getting the word out to parents about the new no parking zone. At the site meeting, Engineering and Police concurred that additional No Parking Stopping or Standing signs are needed at regular intervals within the no-parking zone and that existing No Parking signs needed to be removed. Engineering was coordinating with General Services on getting additional signage installed.

D. 

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None

Respectfully submitted,

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

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, October 18, 2011 @ 1:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***