

Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes - April 19, 2011

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services Division

Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services Division Jeff Warner, PE, Engineering Services Division

Jim Major, General Services Department Greg Taylor, Concord Police Department Bill Dexter, Concord Police Department Dan Andrus, Concord Fire Department Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division

Terry Crotty, Concord School District Jennifer Kretovic, Safe Routes to School

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.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: Traffic accident data for March 2011 was reviewed. There were 105 reportable accidents in March 2011. This compares with 82 and 106 reportable accidents in March 2010 and 2009, respectively. 18 accidents resulted in total of 20 people injured, with 6 of those injuries occurring on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There were three accidents involving pedestrians: a pedestrian loading groceries in the bed of his pickup in the Sam's parking lot and being struck by a vehicle backing out of a parking space (no injury, driver unidentified but at fault); a pedestrian walking westbound on the westbound side of Loudon Road near the Exit 14 overpass and being struck by the mirror of a passing vehicle (no injury, driver unidentified, pedestrian claimed to be walking in street due to snow on the sidewalk); and a pedestrian walking in the parking area between Burger King (Hall Street) and the Gateway Center and being struck by a vehicle travelling in the parking area (minor injuries, driver fled scene).

There were no accidents involving bicyclists.

2) City Council Meeting Update.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: The parking, sidewalk and crosswalk changes proposed by Riverbend Community Healthcare, Inc. on Pleasant Street west of N. State Street were approved. Council also accepted a report from General Services on a resident petition for winter sidewalk maintenance and a new bus shelter near Horseshoe Pond Place (a report from TPAC regarding the same request is pending).

3) Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Update.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: The Public Transit Committee presented its second quarterly CAT Progress Report and Performance Indicator Report. These reports were accepted by Council at the April 11 meeting.

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1) Follow-up discussion on the use of flashing STOP by school buses boarding students on streets adjacent to Concord High School. (Police: 12/10/10).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: Terry Crotty reported that for the past several weeks, school buses at Concord High School have all been using their red flashers when boarding students thereby stopping all passing traffic on Westbourne and Woodman Streets. While the number of cars driving past flashing buses on Westbourne is decreasing, there are still a few violations each day (mostly a problem by cars turning onto Westbourne from Warren Street). Terry asked if the Police Department could increase patrols of this area during school departure times to boost enforcement of violations. CPD will look into adding some patrols. Rob Mack noted that he observed area traffic operations during bus boarding times on several occasions and was not aware of any significant traffic impacts along adjacent streets such as Pleasant Street, Warren Street or School Street due to the new busflashing practice.

2) Referral from Police regarding a request from Revolution Cyclery to close select downtown streets for a bicycle criterium event on Sunday, August 21, 2011. (Police: 3/14/11).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: Rob Mack reported that Herb Hodgdon of Revolution Cyclery met with Police and Engineering staff on April 4, 2011 to discuss the proposed event on Sunday, August 21. Discussion at that meeting included: potential street closures and detours, downtown traffic operation and access to churches and other businesses. After reviewing available traffic count data in the downtown area, all concurred that the event could be better managed if Green Street remained open as the primary north-south detour of the west side of the downtown core. The suggested race circuit would be Main-Pleasant-N.State-Park. Follow-up information from Herb was pending.

3) 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).

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: Engineering had just completed traffic counts at the intersection last week. Additional engineering evaluation was pending. Staff plans to contact the family of the blind student that brought the request for the multi-way STOP in 2008 to get their opinion on the need for the multi-way stop condition now that the student no longer attends the high school. Terry Crotty will also solicit feedback from bus drivers that use the intersection.

4) Discussion of traffic operation along Thorndike Street between S. Main Street and S. State Street.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: At the March 15 TOC meeting, members concurred that this segment of Thorndike Street was too narrow for effective two-way traffic flow and on-street parking. TOC

recommendation at the time was to consider removal of the several existing on-street parking spaces as a short-term improvement, then wait until after the Sanel Block development comes into operation to assess area on-street parking demands. That input would be included in an assessment of the possible development of several one-way pairs of streets between S. Main and S. State Street between Perley Street and Fayette Street. Conversion to one-way could allow additional on-street parking on street segments where parking is currently prohibited due to two-way traffic operation.

Rob Mack reported that the Parking Committee discussed this topic at their March 31, 2011 meeting. The Parking Committee reaffirmed their 2008 suggestion that this segment of Thorndike Street be converted to one-way and that existing on-street parking be retained. The Parking Committee was not favorable to removing existing on-street parking spaces.

TOC generally concurred that there was potential public benefit to converting nearby streets (Thorndike, Concord, Thompson and Fayette Streets) to one-way pairs such as has been done in much of the downtown area, including the possibility to add on-street parking. TOC felt it would be prudent to wait until the completion the Sanel Block redevelopment to assess any area parking-demand changes that might occur. Input would also be needed from St. John's church and school, as well as the Kennedy Apartments, regarding potential one-way street operation and impacts on their operations.

C. New Discussion and Action Items

1) Discussion of potential STOP sign policy.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: Rob Mack presented a draft STOP sign policy that would be another component of a city-wide pavement marking and signing policy. The draft policy conforms to the Federal Highway Administration's 2010 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and generally reflects the practice of the City regarding STOP signs over the last five years or so. Policy statements on one-way or two-way STOP signs include: general location of STOP signs on all side-street approaches to collector or arterial streets; optional location of STOP signs on local streets based on engineering judgment and the need to identify the appropriate right-of-way for approaching vehicles; minimization of the use of STOP signs along collector and arterial streets so as to promote the travel function of these streets; and preclusion of STOP sign usage for sole purpose of controlling speed. Multi-Way STOP sign installations would require an engineering study that determines that the traffic characteristics and unique features of an intersection meet the criteria outlined in the MUTCD for installing Multi-Way STOP. The draft policy also includes provision for periodic review of Multi-Way STOP locations in the city for purpose of updating traffic control as appropriate.

TOC members supported the draft policy as presented. The draft policy would be presented to TPAC on April 28, 2011 for review and comment.

2) Referral from General Services regarding a concern by Richard Mark of South Concord Meadows regarding traffic speed along Birch Street. (Engineering: 4/1/11).

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: The resident's concern is traffic volume and speeds along Birch Street adjacent to his residential unit at South Concord Meadows. Birch Street is an unpaved Class V road extending between Clinton Street and Iron Works Road. General Services regraded the road surface last year at the request of the State of New Hampshire due to substantial pot holes. There are no

signs along the road which provides access to the public gardens located along the route. Although not posted, the defacto speed limit would be 35 mph for this location which is outside of the urban boundary. Rob Mack visited the site in mid-day and observed no vehicles, although an occasional vehicle might be expected. The road is generally straight and sight lines are ample. The Traffic Enforcement Unit was made aware of the resident concern. If the perceived speeding issue is related to a specific vehicle, a description of the vehicle or plate number and time of day would be helpful.

3) Referral from Councilor Shurtleff regarding a constituent request to install a STOP sign on the Abbott Road southbound approach to the Sewalls Falls/Abbott intersection. (Council: 4/1/11).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: The subject intersection is a skewed intersection, with Sewalls Falls Road from the east being the intersecting (and stopping) side street. Rob Mack visited the site and observed appropriate sight lines in all directions assuming vegetation is maintained along the fence line on the northeast corner. There have been 4 reported crashes at this intersection since 2006, or less than one crash per year.

TOC members concurred that the existing one-way stop on the Sewalls Falls westbound approach was appropriate for the condition. Members also concurred that the skewed intersection configuration was outdated and that the intersection should be considered for realignment to a 90-degree intersection at the next street-repaving opportunity (such as was recently done at the nearby Sewalls/Manor intersection). Reconfiguration of skewed intersections such as this would be programmed under CIP 520, Intersection Safety Improvements.

4) Request from Stephanie Alexander of 76 Carter Hill Road to install school bus stop and other signage in the vicinity of her property. (Engineering: 4/6/11).

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: At issue is a resident request for a SCHOOL BUS STOP sign and a CHILDREN AT PLAY sign on Carter Hill Road near her residence at #76. The concern appeared to be prompted by an observation of a vehicle driving by school bus that was stopped there and flashing its red lights. Rob Mack visited the site and observed that the available sight lines along Carter Hill Road provided adequate stopping sight distance for vehicles in either direction approaching a bus stopped at # 76 and displaying red flashing lights. The MUTCD suggests that the SCHOOL BUS STOP sign be used where appropriate advance visibility of a stopped bus is not available, which is not the case at #76. The vehicle alleged to have passed the bus flashing its red lights would have been in violation of the law and an enforcement issue.

Terry Crotty noted that bus drivers are vigilant of approaching traffic and will delay the release of children until they are confident that approaching traffic is stopping. This appears to have been the case as noted in Ms. Alexander's letter of April 6, 2011. Bus drivers will also act, to the extent possible, to report the plate number of any vehicle that violates the flashing red condition, leading to an enforcement action by the police department. TOC members concurred that a SCHOOL BUS STOP sign was not justified at this location and that appropriate action by the bus driver, approaching traffic and the waiting parent should act to provide for a safe crossing to the school bus.

It has been the stated practice of the City to not use the CHILDREN AT PLAY sign. This is not a sign recognized in the MUTCD.

5) Referral from Parking Committee regarding a concern from West Congregational Church related to potential overnight parking on Garrison Street. (Parking: 4/13/11).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: In a March 9, 2011 letter to the Parking Committee, the church expressed a concern that the recent lifting of the city-wide over-night parking ban would act to compromise the provision of on-street parking along Garrison Street which was installed and maintained by the church as required by the Planning Board as a condition of approval of their daycare facility in 2008. At issue is a concern that potential overnight parkers may use the Garrison Street spaces, making winter snow maintenance difficult (a church responsibility per their license agreement with the City) as well as usurping available parking spaces that were installed as part of the daycare facility approval.

TOC noted that the Garrison Street parking spaces are public parking spaces and available to all users; they cannot be for sole use of a private entity. While the option of a time-limited parking restriction was available, TOC felt that it was premature to consider at this time since a significant parking problem had not yet been evidenced. Regarding snow maintenance, it was noted that the City posts emergency parking bans city-wide during storms or scheduled snow-plowing events, and that such bans would also facilitate the Church's winter maintenance of Garrison Street parking. TOC recommended that parking conditions in the Garrison Street area be monitored over the coming year as residents get used to overnight street parking. If adverse parking issues arise, they can be further considered then.

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1)	Staff response to miscellaneous inquiries (refer to correspondence in agenda packet).
	DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.
R	espectfully submitted,

Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer

Chair, Traffic Operations Committee

The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on TUESDAY, May 17, 2011 @ 1:00 PM in the 2^{ND} Floor Conference Room.