



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2016

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services
Ed Roberge, Engineering Services
Jim Major, General Services
Heather Shank, Planning Division
Rick Wollert, Fire Alarm Division
Dick Lemieux, TPAC Chair

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: Crash data for December 2015 was reviewed. There were 113 reportable crashes in December 2015. This compares with 113 and 117 reportable crashes in December 2014 and 2013, respectively. 16 crashes resulted in total of 17 people injured. There were no fatalities.

There were two crashes involving pedestrians: a pedestrian aged 25 years crossing N. Main Street in the crosswalk at Park Street and being struck by a motorist aged 71 years travelling southbound on Main Street (minor injury, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 65 years crossing D'Amante Drive in the crosswalk near Michael's and being struck by a motorist aged 28 years travelling southbound on D'Amante Drive (injuries, driver at fault).

The annual crash summary for 2015 was also reviewed. There were 1284 reportable crashes in 2015 which is close to the 9-year average of 1272 since 2007. This compares with 1325 and 1100 reportable crashes in 2014 and 2013, respectively. 215 crashes resulted in total of 255 people injured. There were two fatalities: a motorcycle crash on NH106 near Agway, and a motorcycle crash on US 3 South in the dip south of Airport Road. 27 crashes involved an impaired driver, 19 involved a pedestrian and 17 involved a bicyclist.

It was noted that there were 233 reported crashes on Loudon Road in 2015. This compares with an average of 183 annual crashes during 2013 and 2014, and an average of 257 per year between 2004 and 2012. The atypically-lower number of reported crashes during 2013-2014 is coincident with construction activity along the corridor related to the former water main replacement project.

2) City Council meeting update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its January 11, 2016 meeting, City Council voted to reconsider the CIP19 Loudon Road Corridor Improvements project and requested staff to look into options for safety improvements other than the previously-approved conversion to three lanes.

3) Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its December 15, 2015 meeting, TPAC discussed programmed transportation projects in the CIP for purpose of developing a TPAC recommendation on project priority for City Council consideration.

B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.

1) Referral from City Council regarding a resident concern about traffic control at the Mountain/Hoit intersection and the passing zone on Mountain Road to the north (*Council: 10/12/15*).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a resident concern on traffic speed along the section of Mountain Road just north of the Hoit Road intersection. Of concern was the presence of a passing zone along Mountain Road just north of the Hoit Road intersection and in front of the resident's property at #569. Also noted was a safety concern at the Mountain/Hoit intersection where the passing lane ends.

TOC discussed this item at its November 17, 2015 meeting. At that time TOC concurred that the subject inquiry was an appropriate consideration for NHDOT as this section of Mountain Road is under their jurisdiction (not the city's). As a courtesy, staff followed up by sending a communication to NHDOT that included the resident's concern as well as TOC's suggestion to consider the possibility of eliminating the subject passing zone. The State Traffic Engineer responded in a January 4, 2016 letter that the passing zone was appropriate for the 40 mph posted speed, but added that the state could restudy speeds. If running speeds were found to be much higher, then a higher speed limit posting could be considered. The higher speed limit would require a longer passing zone than is currently available there, likely resulting in the elimination of the passing zone. Since this section of Mountain Road is under state jurisdiction, TOC felt it would be appropriate for the resident to contact them directly with her concerns.

C. New Discussion and Action Items

1) Request by the resident at #345 Elm Street to install a Hidden Driveway sign approaching his driveway from the south (*Engineering: 12/21/15*).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a resident request to install a Hidden Driveway sign approaching the driveway to #345 Elm Street from the south. This driveway location is on the inside of a curve and the view from the driveway to the left (south) is limited by both the curve and a side-slope along the road. Staff visited the subject driveway and measured the sight line from the driveway to the left to be about 200 feet which conforms with the minimum driveway sight line specified in the Zoning Ordinance. Elm Street has many private driveways along its length, including several in the area near #345.

The 'Hidden Driveway' sign, while available from some sign retailers, is neither an approved sign listed in the FHWA's *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) nor the FHWA's *Sign Manual*. The city does not utilize this sign. As such, TOC does not endorse its use. It offers little useful information to drivers and may instill a false sense of security in driveway users. While the sight line from the subject driveway appears limited, it does meet minimums specified in the Zoning Ordinance for residential driveways. General Services maintains the roadside vegetation along the bank south of the driveway and can be contacted if vegetation requires maintenance.

2) Request by a resident on S. Spring Street to designate Thorndike Street as a school walking route for priority snow plowing (*Engineering: 1/5/16*).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a request by a resident of S. Spring Street to designate Thorndike Street as a school walking route for priority sidewalk snow removal. The resident has a student that walks to St. John Regional School via Thorndike Street.

The school walking routes in the area were defined in 2012 pursuant the city-wide Safe Routes to School (SRTS) travel plan coordinated by Central NH Regional Planning Commission and the school districts. The intent of the plan was to re-designate primary walking routes used walking students to access key schools pursuant to the consolidation of several of the city's schools. Because of limitations on the ability of General Services to immediately clear all sidewalks in the city, the plan focuses on the most-used walking routes. In this area, South Street is designated as school walking route and gets priority sidewalk plowing. Main Street and the segment of Thorndike Street between State and Main Streets are designated as downtown area streets for priority sidewalk plowing. The subject segment of Thorndike Street between S. State Street and South Street is designated as a plowed sidewalk route, but plowing is scheduled along with other non-priority city streets. Staff contacted St. John Regional School and was informed that almost all students arrive via motor vehicle, with only a few nearby students walking to or from the school among the various street approaches to the school location. The 2012 SRTS travel plan considered Concord and Merrimack Valley School District schools but did not include private schools; bus transportation to the public schools is generally not available for students within one-half mile of their school.

TOC members concurred that the resident request for establishing a school walking route(s) to St. Johns School should be initiated by the school. If the school choses to pursue a request for its own SRTS travel plan, the school should direct its request to the CNHRPC.

D. Open Discussion Items

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

2) Discussion of city-wide truck route map.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Truck routing in the downtown area was discussed. It was suggested that Centre Street could be posted for no through trucking so that trucks coming off Exit 14 on Loudon Road don't mistakenly continue westbound on Centre Street only to be trapped by the current restriction which is posted at Liberty/Centre. Also discussed were potential options to the current though-trucking route which passes through downtown on US 3 (Main Street) and US 202 (Pleasant Street). Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

3) Discussion of CIP 520 intersection improvements and the planned 2017 paving program.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: CIP 520, Intersection Safety Improvements, includes select intersections that are currently configured as skewed, Y-shaped intersections with islands that form two intersection areas. The Y-shape allows some turning vehicles to continue at high speed, while others require an extreme turn of the drivers head to see oncoming traffic. Examples of recently reconfigured intersections

include Borough/River/Washington and Mountain/Shaker. It is very cost effective to reconfigure these intersections in conjunction with regular street repaving work. As such, the highly-skewed Old Loudon Road/Portsmouth Street intersection will be planned for reconfiguration in conjunction with General Services' programmed repaving of Old Loudon Road and Portsmouth Street in 2016 (CIP 78). Engineering Services will develop a plan for the reconfigured intersection and will coordinate necessary improvements with General Services.

Respectfully submitted,

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

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, February 16, 2016 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***