

**City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 26, 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 - Public Transit)
Ursula Maldonado (Resident)
Jim Sudak (Concord Area Transit) (CAT)
Alex Vogt (Pedestrian Community)
Domenic Ciavarro (Large Employer)
Tom Irwin (North/West Concord)
Brent Todd (Penacook)
Ed Roberge, City Engineer - Staff Representative

Committee Members Not Present:

Peter Rhodes (Bicycling Community)
Frank Drouse (East Concord)

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

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

2. Approval of November 17, 2011 meeting minutes

Following a brief review of the draft November meeting minutes, Dick Lemieux noted that a minor typing error was discovered in the first paragraph of Item 2 and would be revised in the final meeting minutes version.

There being no other discussions or comments on the minutes, Jim Sudak made a motion to accept the November 17, 2011 minutes with the minor revision noted above. The motion was seconded by Ursula Maldonado. The minutes of the October 27, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved as revised.

3. Presentations

There were no presentations at this meeting.

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 Pedestrian, Bicycle, Public Transit, and Traffic Operations Committees distributed with this agenda package.

6. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Request by West End Residents to Remove the Multi-way Stop Controls at School Street/North Fruit Street Intersection (*City Council: 12/2011; TPAC: 1/26/2012*)

Ed Roberge indicated that this referral had been forwarded to the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) in early 2011 and staff has been reviewing the request to remove the stops signs along School Street at the School/North Fruit intersection.

Engineering staff completed an updated engineering study and Rob Mack reviewed the findings with the TOC at its December meeting. TOC concurred that the engineering study indicates that stop controls along the School Street approach do not meet warrants and therefore should be removed as previously recommended. A detailed report prepared by Rob Mack was distributed to TPAC for final review and comment. Rob Mack noted that the recommendation to remove the stop controls at this intersection is consistent with the recently adopted Stop Sign Policy and added that since its installation in 2008, and following the opening of Langley Parkway later in June 2008; traffic along School Street has been reduced by some 25%. In that, Engineering staff concluded that removal of the stop sign is appropriate.

Through discussion, TPAC supported the recommendation but expressed concern that measures would need to be taken to notify the public of the change. Rob Mack indicated in the last paragraph of the report states that the City would install additional signage for some time following the removal of the stop signs to be sure the traveling public is aware of the change.

Ursula Maldonado made a motion to accept the report and forward it to City Council for adoption. The motion was seconded by Alex Vogt. Following brief discussion, the motion was unanimously approved and the report was accepted. Ed Roberge indicated that the report would be forwarded to City Council for February posting of a March public hearing to amend the City's stop sign Ordinance.

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

Dick Lemieux noted that the Bicycle Committee discussed this referral at its meeting in December and is preparing a documented response for TPAC consideration.

A lengthy discussion followed where TPAC expressed concern with the threatening nature of the comments made by the writer. TPAC also was concerned as to how to respond to the letter to Mayor and Council and to what extent do they respond to this referral.

Committee members noted that there are a number of well published documents that outline bike safety, rules of the road, and state law on vehicle and bike use on the roads and that these documents are readily available on the internet as well as at retail spaces throughout the community.

When asked on how to respond to this referral, Ed Roberge noted that TPAC is advisory to the City Council and where a letter was written to the Mayor and City Council; TPAC should address the concerns noted by Mr. Baer and recommend a response by City Council for their consideration. A lengthy discussion followed where TPAC concluded that while they prepare a response to the item, this matter should also be referred to Concord Police Department and the City Solicitor for their consideration. With that, Councilor Kretovic made a motion to forward this item to the City Manager for referral to the Concord Police Department and City Solicitor for their consideration of the threatening nature of the letter to members of the Concord community. The motion was seconded by Domenic Ciavarro. The motion was unanimously approved. Ed Roberge indicated that staff will forward this TPAC request to the City Manager for referral of Mr. Baer's letter to Concord Police and the City Solicitor.

Ed Roberge suggested that staff could draft a report response and distribute it to TPAC for review and comment. TPAC agreed so staff will prepare a draft response based on these discussions and distribute it via email for completion and consideration at the January Bike Committee meeting and final consideration at the February TPAC meeting.

7. Status report on subcommittees

a. Pedestrian Committee, Alex Vogt

Alex Vogt reported that the Pedestrian Committee last met on December 8th and continued reviewing the comments provided in the Walk Friendly Community Report Card to develop project priorities.

The committee also discussed the new lighting fixtures on Main Street at the "Smile" Building. There are 4 lighting fixtures closely spaced which generate quite a bit of light that is much brighter than most areas along Main Street. The committee compared lighting levels at the "Smile" Building to lighting at the State House Plaza and finds quite a disparity. Alex Vogt indicated that Engineering staff will review lighting levels with a light meter along Main Street to document those differences. The committee stressed the need for better lighting uniformity throughout the downtown. Brent Todd asked if there were City standards for site lighting that could have been applied to the new downtown development. Ed Roberge indicated that staff does in fact have site lighting standards and requirements but in the case of off-site lighting along and within the City's right-of-way, believed the developer was matching similar lighting fixtures and light levels of the Capital Commons project. Ed Roberge

agreed that the area is quite light intensive and the four fixtures are so closely spaced. Ed Roberge noted that a lighting strategy will be developed as part of the Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project and will adhere to the City's lighting design standards and promote better lighting uniformity throughout downtown.

Alex Vogt also indicated that the Pedestrian Committee is developing a pedestrian and bike counting program to document heavy use corridors and locations for better planning. The counting program should occur this spring/summer with a group of volunteers.

b. Bike Committee, Peter Rhodes

In Peter Rhode's absence, Dick Lemieux asked Craig Tufts, a Bike Committee member to update TPAC on their latest efforts. Craig Tufts reported that the Bike Committee met in December and considered the referral previously discussed as well as continued its development of a bike navigation map. The navigation map will outline high volume corridors, bike shoulder widths, trails, and paths in hopes to forward it to the NH Bike Coalition to publish the document.

The Bike Committee is also coordinating the development of a project priority list as a result of the projects outlined in the Bike Master Plan. Several working groups have been developed to look at different project types. Domenic Ciavarro asked how the committee or the NH Bike Coalition develops capital for the projects they are considering. Craig Tufts reported that the coalition is a registered 501-C3 non-profit agency and hosts a number of fund raising activities as well as generates revenue from grants and State funds for biking activities.

Dick Lemieux also noted that two new members have recently joined the Bike Committee so nominations will be forwarded to TPAC for formal acceptance.

c. Public Transit Committee, Jennifer Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic reported that the Public Transit Committee met in December and January and has been monitoring CAT's newly implemented route changes as well as the 10-week Saturday Service.

With respect to the new routes, CAT is experiencing some issues with transfers from one route to another. Some of the transfer problems can be attributed to route timings that are still being refined and that coordinating the pulse system is delicate and something as simple as a person loading groceries, laundry, dropping the lift to board a passenger can throw off the timing. Holiday traffic, particularly along the Heights Route caused delays as well. In response to the timing issues, Councilor Kretovic indicated that CAT is in touch with CTAA, which is the organization that awarded CAT the technical assistance grant to set up the timings. Ultimately CAT has a plan to make the refinements and improve the connections.

Councilor Kretovic reported that there have been an unusual number of complaints about the drivers which is odd in that the committee often hears

compliments about the drivers. The committee knows from CAT there is a little bit higher stress level on both the drivers and passengers during the transition and that the committee and CAT will continue to monitor the referrals.

Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) conducted a Boarding/ Alighting study for CAT back in November. It included an evaluation of the Boardings/ Alightings both before and after the new routes started. The committee is just beginning to evaluate the findings. Additionally, CNHRPC is close to completing CAT's new website design which will be a better communication source for people than the existing site. Craig Tufts reported that his group is working Google Transit functionality for the CAT route system. The Google Transit application can be used to indicate bus stop pick-up times on the internet as well as smart phones. This project is being developed now and once complete, will be quite a customer service enhancement.

Councilor Kretovic noted that ridership comparing old route structure to the new route structure shows the Heights trending about 1,000 more riders per month, from about 3,310 to 4,475 on average. The Penacook route has shifted from about 2,850 per month average to 2,860. It doesn't seem like a significant shift in ridership however, over the last 6-months Penacook had been trending at roughly 3,100 boardings a month. The single trolley operation plus the Industrial Park route had a combined monthly average of just under 3,000 riders per month (1,400/1,600 respectively). The new Crosstown route is running an approximate monthly average of 1,635. Some of the ridership was shifted to the Heights with the elimination of the Industrial Park route and the section of duplicative service. The committee noted some ridership is lost along Fort Eddy and NHTI which is not serviced every 15-30 minutes as was the case when there was the two trolley system.

On January 23rd, the committee held a public gathering to take rider input on the changes. There were three people from the public that attended and the committee as well as CAT gathered a great deal of insight. This Saturday (January 28th), CAT has scheduled a driver training day. Ruairi O'Mahoney from the Public Transit Committee and CNHRPC will be facilitating a focus group discussion with the drivers to get their feedback on the new routes.

With respect to Saturday service, Councilor Kretovic reported that Concord was fortunate to have 10-weeks of Saturday Service from November 5th through the holidays and to the first Saturday in January. CAT was concerned there would be a high number of the ADA Paratransit users which from a budgeting standpoint is very difficult to calculate but can also be very expensive to operate. In total there were about 20 users over the 10 Saturdays which helped keep costs low. Initial thoughts are the lower than anticipated ridership might be because family support is apt to be stronger on weekends. The Heights route seemed to be very successful averaging about 106 boardings a week. Penacook's average was somewhat lower at 57 boardings; however ridership to the hospital was very low. CAT and the Public Transit Committee will discuss opportunities in late 2012 to modify the Saturday routes (if funded) to include the Fort Eddy Road shopping district in lieu of the Concord Hospital stop.

Councilor Kretovic stated that the Public Transit Committee has been recognizing the efforts of Kevin Curdie, a Concord resident and public member that attends the committee meetings regularly and has supported CAT's and the public transit systems' efforts by continued volunteer service and proposed a proclamation to document that recognition. A copy of the proclamation document was distributed for review. Following a brief moment to read the document, Councilor Kretovic made a motion for TPAC to accept the proclamation document for award presentation at the February Public Transit Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Ursula Maldonado. Following brief discussion, the motion to accept and award the recognition to Kevin Curdie for his outstanding and continued efforts to support public transit was unanimously approved.

d. Traffic Operations Committee, Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) met in January and reviewed the 2011 annual traffic accident report prepared by Concord Police. Overall, accidents in 2011 totaled 1,100, down by 100 over 2010. Rob Mack indicated that over the past several years (2009, 2010, and 2011) have seen reductions in traffic accidents City wide. A number of factors can contribute to this including less vehicle traffic, increased enforcement, and focus on traffic operations improvements. The Loudon Road corridor led the way with 20% of all of the City's accidents in 2011 prompting the need to advance the Loudon Road Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Rob Mack noted that NHDOT has scheduled a public meeting for the I-93, Exit 12 Bridge Replacement Project for February 16th to be held at Council Chambers. The NHDOT has selected the roundabout option as their preferred option to advance for public review. The meeting is scheduled to start at 6:00 PM.

In a follow-up to the discussion on City-wide accidents, Dick Lemieux felt it important to note that he believes the culmination in creating a transportation policy advisory committee, the hiring of the City's traffic engineer, and the creation of a traffic enforcement division at Concord Police have all led to the successful focus on traffic safety and improvement in this community and the results are now showing. TPAC concurred.

8. TPAC Policy Objectives/Programs/Initiatives

a. City-wide Speed and Pavement Marking Policy Update

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

9. Old Business

a. TPAC Accomplishments Report

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

10. New business

a. FY2013-FY2022 CIP Program (for February TPAC Review)

Ed Roberge distributed copies of the FY2013-FY2022 transportation capital project spreadsheet for review. TPAC members were asked to rank projects in

the intersection, street corridor improvement, streets new construction, and sidewalks and streetscape categories as provided in the CIP. Members can rank by numeric (1, 2, 3, etc.) or by description (high, medium, low priority) as they desire. Ed Roberge requested that TPAC members provide rankings by February 13th in order to compile the final report for review and acceptance at the February TPAC meeting.

b. Penacook Village Association (PVA) Presentation by Staff, Brent Todd

Brent Todd reported that the Penacook Village Association (PVA) recently held their annual meeting where Engineering and Administration staff attended and presented projects completed and planned for the Penacook area. Brent Todd recognized Matt Walsh, Ed Roberge, and Rob Mack for their efforts at the meeting and noted that City staff will be coordinating design charrettes in Penacook for the US Route 3 (Village Street) project as well as an overall Penacook community charette with the PVA. Schedules have yet to be finalized but once complete, TPAC will be notified of the upcoming events.

c. State Capitol Regional Planning Commission, Brent Todd

Brent Todd noted that quarterly meetings of the Capitol Regional Planning Commission are held which facilitate coordination and discussion of State and City business. Brent Todd requested that because staff attends the meetings regularly, perhaps an update can be provided to TPAC. Often times there are a number of traffic and transportation items discussed on the agenda that make it worthwhile to hear from.

TPAC concurred and Ed Roberge indicated that while he regularly attends the meetings, a update report will be provided to TPAC on discussions and actions of the commission meetings.

d. Concord250.org, Brent Todd

Brent Todd reported that the City of Concord is approaching its 250 anniversary and as such, a Concord 250 organization committee has been developed and is looking to pitch a 250th project initiative. The Concord Historical Society has expressed their interest and support for any effort. A website has been developed; Concord250.org and all are encouraged to go to the site. Part of the events will include the opening of a time capsule currently placed in the State House Plaza with a June 7, 2015 opening date.

e. Merrimack River Greenway Trail Project, Dick Lemieux

Dick Lemieux noted that a walk has been scheduled along the Merrimack River Greenway Trail areas from south of Loudon Road to the wetland areas north of Terrill Park on Saturday, January 28th at 9:00 AM. The public is welcome to join.

11. Adjourn

There being no further items to discuss, Ursula Maldonado made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Domenic Ciavarro. The motion was unanimously supported by TPAC and the meeting adjourned.