



CITY OF CONCORD

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MINUTES

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee met at 6:00 p.m., on February, 6, 2023, in Council Chambers, City Hall 37 Green Street.

Attendees: Craig Tufts, Dick Lemieux, Greg Bakos, Boyd Smith

Staff: Martha Drukker Acting City Engineer; Heather Shank City Planner

Guests: Mayor Bouley TPAC Chair; Nicole Fox, Susan Wood

1. Minutes of the August 23, 2022

The minutes of the August 23, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved. There were no suggested edits.

2. Introductions

Introductions were made to those who did not already know each other. Guest Susan Wood introduced herself and noted she was a resident who is interested in biking and walking, and has been working with the Concord Greenspace Coalition. She wants to learn what this subcommittee is all about. The group welcomed her to the meeting.

Heather Shank noted that Alec Bass was not able to make it to the meeting tonight because of a last minute emergency. The group looked forward to first meeting with Alec next time.

3. Paving and the CIP

Martha Drukker explained the past and current practice and plans going forward for the paving program and incorporating bicycle and pedestrian improvements to the paving program. Martha explained that General Services uses Road Surface Management Software (RSMS) to help identify which roads need treatment. Interns each summer go out and collect data on roadway condition including attributes like the type and extent of cracking. The RSMS software then programs recommended treatments, including crack sealing, cold plane, or reconstruction. Crack seal and cold plane are preservation treatments. Martha noted that General Services will strategically treat many roads in

one neighborhood in a season as a way to improve efficiency. It would be more costly for a paving contractor to go out to various far flung parts of the city each year rather than to focus on certain nearby streets all in one season. Martha also explained how the schedule is also aligned with other projects and work in the area to make sure the program is as efficient as possible.

She also noted that roads are checked against TPAC's ranked list of sidewalk needs. Any of those sidewalks would be added if roadway reconstruction is planned at that location, and then City administration and City Council would determine whether there is a need and a budget for the sidewalk construction added. It would also be common practice to check the paving program against any projects listed in the City's Master Plan, Bicycle Plan, and Pedestrian Plan.

It was noted that it should be an annual practice for this committee to review the paving program and discuss with staff any needs or options for improving bicycling or walking that could be coordinated with the paving program or lined up in the CIP. Examples may include sidewalk, bump outs, or signal treatments. Lane striping adjustments could be made at no additional cost, as has been done many times in the past.

It was also noted that having a list of needs and possible improvements could help give time to line up grant opportunities.

Examples were given on how this committee, City Staff, and City leadership have gone through this process successfully before. It was noted that it is good for everyone to be on the same page as to the process so it can continue to be successful.

4. Private Development and the Planning Board

Heather Shank noted to the group that the planning board is anticipating a few items at their next meeting February 15 that are transportation related and may be of interest to TPAC. She noted that the former gas station near the High School at the corner of Warren and Pleasant has submitted a request to the Planning Board for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to reopen the location as a gas station as is. TPAC PB committee members recognized the transportation concern with having a gas station on that site as is. It is a tight space with access management issues very close to the intersection. The long curb cuts disrupt sidewalk continuity and additional traffic will create additional hazards for pedestrians and bicyclists. The location's proximity to the high school and the amount of high school pedestrian traffic and pick-up/drop-of in the area elevates the concern.

Heather also noted that the State will likely be at the next Planning Board meeting to discuss development at the State Office Park on Fruit Street. This will present an opportunity for the City to request the land or an easement for a sidewalk along Pleasant St from Fruit St east to the existing sidewalk. The TPAC-PB noted that this sidewalk was deemed a high priority sidewalk segment in the TPAC sidewalk ranking, the Pedestrian Master Plan, and has had resident requests for a sidewalk there.

There was discussion on how TPAC is advisory to City Council, and not to the Planning

Board, therefore it would not be appropriate for TPAC or any of its subcommittees to advise the Planning Board. Planning staff can cite master plans and TPAC recommendations that have been accepted by Council already. Individuals who also serve on TPAC or subcommittees are also able to speak at public hearings representing themselves as residents. This led to discussion on the importance of incorporating transportation priorities in the Master Plan.

It was noted that it has been common practice for the planning representative on TPAC-PB to bring forward any plans or projects that have a transportation element that the committee might be interested in. Conversations in the past have proved valuable.

5. Other Business

Dick mentioned that he had concerns about the placement of temporary construction/utility work signs in the shoulder or bike lane. He noted that it is a safety hazard for a sign to force a bicyclist into the travel way, and that signs should be placed off to the side on a gravel shoulder or grass strip. Martha agreed that this is an issue, and explained some of the history and previous complaints about sign placement. She noted it may be time to remind everyone to not place a sign in the travel way of a sidewalk or bicycle lane/shoulder.

6. Overview of Recent TPAC-PB Activities and Next Steps

The Committee briefly reviewed the minutes from the August 1 meeting which listed multiple projects and tasks that TPAC-PB is or plans to work on. The group discussed which items should be covered at the next meeting.

One item may be to review the transportation related CIP items in the proposed FY24 budget that is expected to come out in spring. Martha mentioned there may be engineering plans to review for Sewall's and Abbot intersection and Washington and Center intersections. The group agreed it would be great to have a look at those plans and discuss. Third, there may be an update on spring biking events and bike to work day that may be in the works regionally or statewide.

The group agreed the next meeting would take place likely in early April or early May depending on the timing of the release of the draft budget.

The meeting adjourned around 8:00