



CITY OF CONCORD

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MINUTES

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

June 22, 2017, 6:00 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room
City Hall, 41 Green Street, Concord, NH

Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (Vehicle Traffic Safety Operations; Chair)
Brent Todd (Council Representative)
Jennifer Kretovic (Council Representative)
Craig Tufts, (Bicycling Community)
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer (City Manager's Designee)

Members Absent:

Rob Werner (Council Representative)
Jim Sudak (Public Transportation Representative)
Ursula Maldonado (Pedestrian and Trails Community)
Sheila Zakre (At-Large)

Staff and Guests:

Ed Roberge – City Engineer
Heather Shank - City Planner
Bob Carey – Orr & Reno
Steve Pernaw – Stephen G. Pernaw & Co.
Carl Moskey – Concord Orthopaedics
Tim Paris – Concord Orthopaedics
Claudia Damon – Resident

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order with introductions for all attendees. Attending guests were present for the Item 6 discussion.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 24, 2017 meeting were approved as submitted (Motion-Todd; Second-Tufts; Unanimous).

3. Presentations – None

4. Public Comment – None

5. New Business - None

6. Old Business

a. Pleasant Street Rezoning Proposal

Rob Mack summarized the findings of an updated June 2017 Traffic Impact and Rezoning Study (TIRS) prepared by Stephen G. Pernaw & Company, Inc., regarding the proposed rezoning of a portion of the Route 202/9 corridor (Pleasant Street) from a residential to an institutional zone. The initial project at hand is Concord Orthopaedic's proposed redevelopment of a single-family house lot at 297 Pleasant Street to include a proposed ambulatory surgical center. While this is addressed, the primary purpose of the TIRS is to assess long-term traffic impacts of the potential rezoning of this and nearby lots along a segment section of Pleasant Street west of Langley Parkway.

The TIRS study area includes the segment of Pleasant Street about one-quarter mile west of the Langley Parkway intersection that is the subject of the proposed rezoning. The study area also includes the following key intersections: Pleasant Street/Proposed Surgical Center Driveway (stop sign); Pleasant Street/Langley Parkway (signal); Pleasant Street/Hospital East Driveway (signal); and Pleasant Street/Warren Street/Fruit Street (signal). Periods of analysis include the weekday morning and afternoon commuter peak hours during a 2018 opening year and a 2035 horizon year. The 2018 near-term analysis assumes the current street network and considers impacts of only building the proposed surgical center. The 2035 horizon-year analysis is multifaceted in that it considers various combinations of future area developments and/or roadway improvements, including: building (or not) the proposed surgical center; fully redeveloping (or not) the proposed rezoning area; and building (or not) the proposed Langley Parkway Phase 3 extension to Bouton Street/N. State Street.

The TIRS reports that the proposed rezoning area could support the additional development of up to about 262,737 square feet of the following uses: medical office space (116,484 sf assumed); general office space (49,922 sf assumed); educational/school space (39,331 sf assumed); and potential expansion of the existing assisted living facility (24 additional beds assumed). Potential development in excess of 262,000 sf of medical, office and educational uses could generate an additional traffic flow of about 500 (AM) to 600 (PM) peak-hour vehicle trips along this segment of the corridor, the majority of which would be to/from the east. While substantially less traffic would be generated at non-commuter-peak times, impacts at the peak-traffic periods typically define the operational characteristics and highway improvement needs of the corridor.

The section of Pleasant Street between the medical campus area and the Pleasant Street/Warren Street/Fruit Street intersection is not only the western arterial route for travel to the downtown area, but also the focal point for direct access to the medical campus area, the state office park and hospital and Concord High School. Peak traffic flows along this corridor are significant and much of it traverses high-density residential streets in the West End neighborhood to access regional travel corridors such as I-93 north, I-393, Loudon Road and US 3 North. In 2008, the southern extension of Langley Parkway to Clinton Street diverted a substantial volume of traffic from this section of Pleasant Street bound for Clinton Street to the west and I-89; commuter-peak-period delays and queues were noticeably reduced at the Pleasant/Warren/Fruit intersection, as was commuter cut-through traffic along the residential Upper School Street corridor. Further substantial traffic-flow reductions along the subject section of Pleasant Street are anticipated following the completion of the Langley Parkway Phase 3 extension to Bouton Street. This new corridor would provide alternative access for trips to/from the aforementioned regional corridors to the north and east of the city. Additional traffic demand related to the build-out of the proposed rezoning area adds traffic growth to the subject section of the Pleasant Street corridor. While this potential added growth would be significant without Langley Parkway Phase 3, it would be reduced with Phase 3 in place.

Traffic Volume Changes

Pleasant Street west of The Birches. Current AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes within the western section of the proposed rezoning area range from about 710 to 790 vehicles per hour. By 2035, with no new roadway improvements or zoning change (known background traffic growth, only) these peak-hour volumes will increase to about 1,190 to 1,250 vehicles per hour. The construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 is expected to result in a reduction of about 70 vehicles per hour at this location, while the hypothetical 2035 build-out of the proposed rezoning area could add an estimated 160 to 190 vehicles per hour with Langley Parkway Phase 3 or an estimated 230 to 260 vehicles per hour without the Phase 3 project.

Pleasant Street west of Langley Parkway. Current AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes in this area just east of the proposed rezoning range from about 770 to 870 vehicles per hour. By 2035, with no new roadway improvements or zoning change (only known background traffic growths) these peak-hour volumes will increase to about 1,190 to 1,270 vehicles per hour. The construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 is expected to result in a reduction of about 70 vehicles per hour at this location, while the hypothetical 2035 build-out of the proposed rezoning area could add an estimated 340 to 440 vehicles per peak hour with Langley Parkway Phase 3, or 410 to 510 vehicles per hour without Phase 3.

Pleasant Street west of Warren and Fruit Streets. Current AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes in this area range from about 1,070 to 1,140 vehicles per hour. By 2035, with no new roadway improvements or zoning change (only known background traffic growths) these peak-hour volumes will increase to about 1,180 to 1,560 vehicles per hour. The construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 is expected to reduce peak-hour traffic here by about 310 to 460 vehicles per hour at this location. The hypothetical 2035 build-out of the proposed rezoning area could add an estimated 170 to 260 vehicles per peak hour with Phase 3, or 220 to 300 vehicles per hour without Phase 3.

Long-Range Roadway/Intersection Improvement Needs

Pleasant Street west of Langley Parkway. Long-term redevelopment of the proposed rezoning area will require widening of this section of Pleasant Street to a three-lane section, with the center lane providing for left-turns (either individual left-turn lanes at major driveways or a two-way left-turn lane). Staff recommends that potential planning for such future widening consider gradual acquisition of additional right-of-way from redevelopment parcels for the lane widening, including space for bicycle shoulders, utilities and sidewalks. This three-lane section would extend from Langley Parkway westerly to either the limit of the redeveloped parcels, or more desirably, the entrance to St. Paul's School. Without the rezoning, the existing two-lane roadway would remain sufficient. The implementation (or not) of Langley Parkway Phase 3 by 2035 does not affect either of these findings.

Pleasant Street/Langley Parkway intersection. This intersection was enlarged in 2008 as part of the Langley Parkway Phase 2 extension to Clinton Street. Under its current configuration, long but acceptable delays and under-capacity operation can be expected through 2035 assuming no additional corridor improvements are made and rezoning does not occur. Construction of the proposed Langley Parkway Phase 3 project would divert significant area traffic to the Langley Parkway approaches, requiring additional intersection improvements including the addition of right-turn lanes on both the Pleasant Street eastbound and westbound approaches. These improvements, outlined in the 2015 Phase 3 study, will allow the intersection to operate at or below capacity through 2035.

With the additional traffic generated by the potential build-out of the rezoning proposal (and with Langley Parkway Phase 3), an additional right-turn lane will be needed on the Langley Parkway southbound approach in addition to the two aforementioned right-turn lanes on the Pleasant Street approaches in order to maintain below-capacity operations in 2035. This same level of intersection improvement (three additional right-turn lanes) would also be required if the proposed rezoning area becomes redeveloped while the Langley Parkway Phase 3 project remains deferred.

Pleasant Street/East Hospital Drive intersection. This intersection was reconstructed in 2016 to provide for two-way traffic flow on the hospital drive as well as traffic signalization. The intersection as currently configured is based on the 2035 intersection improvement needs reported in the Langley Parkway Phase 3 study. This intersection will operate well at low to moderate delay through 2035, with or without the Langley Phase 3 extension, and with or without the proposed rezoning.

Pleasant Street/Warren Street/Fruit Street intersection. This intersection currently experiences operational difficulties during peak periods, and very long delays can be expected by 2035 if no additional corridor improvements are made. Past city studies, including the Langley Parkway Phase 3 study, conceptualized future reconstruction of this intersection into a roundabout configuration. As construction of Langley Parkway Phase 3 results in a substantial reduction in future traffic flowing through the intersection to/from the west on Pleasant Street, it had been determined that a single-lane roundabout could service 2035 traffic flows. The TIRS reports that this would still be the case with the additional traffic generated by the rezoning proposal. On the other hand, without Langley Parkway Phase 3, a substantially larger intersection improvement becomes necessary, such as a two-lane roundabout. Without such substantial improvements the added delays resulting from the rezoning proposal would be a significant concern at this intersection.

Near-Term Findings – Build Ambulatory Surgical Center Only

The TIRS also considers a traffic impact assessment for the initial redevelopment of #297 Pleasant Street to include a 20,000 square foot ambulatory surgical center and conversion of the existing house to 1,700 feet of office space. The TIRS estimates that this will generate 26 AM peak hour trips and 19 PM peak hour trips. The larger AM value generally amounts to about one additional car along Pleasant Street per two minutes. Such a low traffic volume would not have a significant impact on Pleasant Street traffic operations assuming an appropriate driveway design.

Discussion

TPAC members inquired as to long-range access needs along the Clinton Street corridor from the Langley Parkway intersection westerly to I-89. Staff noted that peak-period traffic demands along this corridor are currently very heavy, and that significant intersection improvements will be needed in the future as traffic continues to grow, with or without the proposed rezoning. Both of the I-89 northbound and southbound ramp intersections at Clinton Street currently experience substantial peak-period queuing and delays. Reconstruction of both of these intersections is programmed for 2023 in NHDOT's 2017-2026 Ten Year Transportation Improvements Plan. Staff also noted that additional lanes will likely need to be considered at the Clinton/Langley intersection as growth continues into the future.

TPAC members reaffirmed their support for the Langley Parkway Phase 3 project as a needed corridor improvement, rezoning or not. It was felt that providing appropriate transportation needs for area redevelopment under the rezoning proposal would be more viable with Langley Phase 3 in place. Without Langley Parkway Phase 3, travel along the Pleasant Street corridor would continue to deteriorate through the years without substantial lane widening and intersection improvements; deterioration would be accelerated by potential further growth associated with the subject rezoned area.

The chair suggested that TPAC consider preparing its own report to supplement transportation-related documentation provided to the Planning Board. The report might consider a wider study area than the studies presented tonight, with recommendations for the Clinton Street corridor to I-89 as well as the Pleasant Street/Warren Street/Centre Street corridor through the northwest portion of the city center. Several members offered to craft up a draft matrix comparing area transportation needs versus development scenario for further discussion at the next meeting.

Attorney Bob Carey noted that the Concord Orthopaedics team felt that staff's presentation of the TIRS findings, as well as TPAC's consideration of same, was thoughtful and reasonable.

7. Consent Reports

a. Acceptance of Subcommittee Minutes

The following subcommittee reports were accepted by unanimous consent: Bicycle/Pedestrian – May 1, 2017; Public Transportation – April 18, 2017; and Traffic Operations – May 16, 2017.

8. City Council Meeting Update - None

9. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Referral from Councilor Kretovic regarding a resident request for review of the curb line constructed at the driveway to #244 N. State Street

Following up on TPAC's discussion of this request over the last two months, Ed Roberge reported that curb modifications had been discussed with the resident and will be constructed by the contractor together with the remaining punch-list items for the U.S. Route 3 North project. Ed Roberge will report back to TPAC when the work is complete.

b. Referral from Councilor Champlin regarding a constituent concern on Franklin Street speeding

Following up TOC and TPAC's discussion last month, CPD conducted six directed patrols on Franklin Street in May and June at various times during the morning and afternoon commuter peaks. No citations or warnings were noted during these patrols. Speeds on over one hundred vehicles were observed, with average speeds being between 30 and 32 mph.

TPAC concurred with TOC's recommendation that enforcement efforts were appropriate in this case. There was no support for the addition of multi-way stop signs for speed control at the requested Franklin street intersections. TPAC also noted strong support for the proposed Langley Parkway Phase 3 project which would make a long-term improvement to livability along this section of Franklin Street by diverting away a substantial volume of traffic, and particularly the daily commuter cut-through between I-393 and the medical campus area. TPAC members reviewed a draft report for City Council prepared by staff regarding this referral; TPAC approved the draft document by unanimous consent.

c. Referral from Councilor Champlin regarding a constituent request for a painted crosswalk on Storrs Street at Dixon Avenue.

TPAC received a referral from Council with a request to paint a crosswalk on Storrs Street at Dixon Avenue. Rob Mack reported that that this crosswalk had just been painted per TOC's recommendation on a similar request from last March. TPAC members reviewed a draft report for City Council prepared by staff regarding this referral; TPAC approved the draft document by unanimous consent.

10. Status Report on Subcommittees

a. Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (TPAC-BP), Craig Tufts

Craig Tufts reported that TPAC-BP met earlier this month and discussed the deteriorating condition of Silk Farm Road at St. Pauls School. Councilor Kretovic noted that the agreement between the city and St Pauls School regarding shared use of this street had been recently discussed by City Council and the City Manager had submitted a letter of inquiry to St Pauls School regarding street maintenance. A reply from school officials is pending.

b. Public Transportation Committee (TPAC-PT), Sheila Zakre

Rob Mack reported that the subcommittee moved its June meeting to next week, so there was nothing new to report.

c. Traffic Operations Committee (TOC), Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported that TOC met on June 20, 2017 and discussed: the Franklin Street speeding referral (see Item 9b, above); the Pleasant Street rezoning proposal; and a concern on sight lines at the Sewalls Falls Road/Second Street intersection.

11. Staff Updates

a. Loudon Road Corridor Improvements (CIP 19)

Ed Roberge reported that Pike Industries was the apparent low bidder for the project construction and that a contract was pending. A mid-July construction start is anticipated. Staff is meeting with abutting business regarding potential driveway modifications.

b. Mountain/Shawmut/East Side/Exit 16 Roundabout (CIP 24)

Ed Roberge reported that utility work would be finished up in two or three weeks. The general contractor will begin work on the roundabout in August.

c. Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP 543)

Ed Roberge reported that the design team had a productive meeting with NHDES to resolve outstanding environmental concerns. The city's design consultant is preparing final NHDES permitting and construction documents. Craig Tufts also noted that a walk of the Pan Am rail corridor from Horseshoe Pond to Penacook was planned for June 30, 2017 at 9 AM, and that anyone interested in participating should contact him.

d. I-93 Bow-Concord (NHDOT)

Ed Roberge noted that NHDOT hosted public information meetings on the project in both Concord and Bow a few weeks ago. The city has assembled a development-minded group to plan a vision for the potential redevelopment area. Staff has been discussing aspects of the MRGT and how it might best be incorporated through the Storrs Street redevelopment area with the NHDOT and Pan AM Railroad.

e. Storrs Street Extension North (CIP 18)

Ed Roberge reported that this project remains on hold until the NHDOT better defines its intended alternative(s) for the I-93 Bow-Concord study.

12. Other Discussion Items - None

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at about 8:50 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates: **July 27, 2017**
 August 24, 2017
 September 28, 2017