



Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2013

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services
Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services
Steve Henninger, Planning Division
Jim Major, General Services
Greg Taylor, Police Department
Eric Crane, Police Department
Rick Wollert, Fire Department
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: Traffic accident data for September 2013 was reviewed. There were 102 reportable accidents in October 2013. This compares with 127 and 94 reportable accidents in October 2012 and 2011, respectively. 20 accidents resulted in total of 24 people injured, 3 of which occurred on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There were two accidents involving pedestrians: two pedestrians aged 77 and 83 years crossing Green Street in the crosswalk in front of City Hall (with temporary construction barriers in front of City Hall) and being struck by a vehicle travelling southbound on Green Street (injuries, driver at fault); and a pedestrian aged 5 years running around the Market Basket parking lot and being struck by a vehicle backing out of a parking space (minor injury, pedestrian at fault).

There were two accidents involving bicyclists: a bicyclist aged 27 years traveling southbound along S. Main Street just south of Fayette Street (near # 32) and being struck by a vehicle backing out of an angled parking space (minor injury, driver at fault, no helmet worn); and a bicyclist aged 8 years riding eastbound along Loudon Road in the grass in front of Morning Star Apartments and being struck by a vehicle exiting the apartment complex driveway (minor injury, bicyclist at fault, night conditions and dark clothing worn).

A discussion of city-wide traffic enforcement and education efforts was led by Officer Eric Crane. The discussion focused on major intersections along Loudon Road and N. Main Street. An enforcement challenge at some intersections was difficulty in finding a place near the intersection that was effective in allowing observation as well as prompt response to potential traffic violations. Access to a pedestrian push button at the Loudon/East Side intersection was also discussed and will be further investigated by Engineering and Fire Alarm.

2) City Council meeting update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At its November 12, 2013 meeting, City Council accepted the report on the proposed Knight Street parking ordinance change and set a public hearing for December 9, 2013.

3) Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: TPAC's October 24, 2013 meeting included review and approval of TPAC's Accomplishment document, as well as a follow-up discussion of the Langley Parkway Phase 3 public information meetings of October 8 and 10, 2013.

B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.

1) Referral from City Council requesting an examination of traffic performance at the Regional Drive/Chenell Drive intersection (Council: 08/12/13).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Further discussion of this item was deferred pending a study currently being conducted by Engineering.

C. New Discussion and Action Items

1) Request from the Community Loan Fund to implement an exclusive pedestrian crossing phase at the Pleasant/State intersection (Police: 11/10/13).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern by staff at the Community Loan Fund (office at 7 Wall Street) with pedestrian safety at the Pleasant/State intersection following minor injury that occurred in a crash involving one of their employees while using the crosswalk. Requested was increased enforcement of drivers' yielding to pedestrians and consideration of making an exclusive pedestrian phase at the intersection. An identical request was submitted to Engineering by Riverbend Community Mental Health last year and considered by TOC in its March 2013 meeting.

The intersection signal control provides for concurrent pedestrian crossing at the same time as parallel traffic movement, similar to all signals along the N. State Street corridor from Pleasant Street to Centre Street. Officer Crane reported that CPD performed multiple enforcement details at the intersection in response to the request. He reported that no negative issues were observed at the intersection regarding traffic not appropriately yielding to pedestrians. Rob Mack summarized the engineering study of the intersection pursuant to last year's similar inquiry, with finding that the traffic signal operation with concurrent pedestrian crossing was both appropriate and safe. Pedestrian crash data city-wide does not indicate a substantial difference between exclusive and concurrent pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections. Furthermore, the option of converting this signal operation to an exclusive crossing was found to be problematic as it would: increase traffic delay and contribute to longer traffic queuing extending through nearby signalized intersections; increase pedestrian crossing delay and potential disregard for the pedestrian signals; and be inconsistent with efforts to provide uniform pedestrian crossing operation at other nearby signals in the downtown (N. State Street corridor and the planned Main/Pleasant intersection).

TOC members reiterated their prior finding that the current intersection operation was reasonable. It was suggested that installation of countdown pedestrian signals might enhance pedestrian crossing operation as has been initiated at intersections along Main Street. An upgrade of signal equipment at the Pleasant/State intersection is programmed in FY 2018 under CIP 283. Staff will investigate if an interim upgrade of the pedestrian signal heads here to the new countdown-type is possible.

2) Request from the resident at #7 Sylvester Street to install a new street light on Sylvester Street between Margerie Street and Gallen Drive (Engineering: 11/15/13).

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a request to install a new street light on Sylvester Street about midway between the Marjerie Street and Gallen Drive intersections. The resident's concern is darker street conditions near his property due to the tree canopy along the south side of the street next to the cemetery.

TOC considered the locations of existing of street lights along Sylvester Street as well as the neighborhood area to the north. Streets lights are generally located at intersections only, with intersections being spaced at roughly 250 to 500 ft. The Sylvester Street intersections of Marjerie Street and Gallen Drive are approximately 400 ft apart. It was noted that there is a walk-to-school route through the neighborhood, including along Sylvester Street, but school walking hours are generally during daylight conditions. TOC members could not find a compelling reason to support a new street light at this location.

D. Open Discussion Items

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

2) Concord School District request for crosswalks at the Rumford/Warren intersection.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Rob Mack reported that Terry Crotty of Concord School District asked Engineering earlier this month if crosswalks and/or multi-way stop signs could be installed at the intersection to better facilitate school crossings of Warren Street. There had been crosswalks to cross Rumford Street, but none to cross Warren Street, apparently due to the walk-to-school routes at the former Kimball School. The new school walking paths now provide for a few crossings of Warren Street at that intersection. There is a crossing guard there to assist with that crossing, but there are no painted crosswalks to cross Warren Street. The option of multi-way stop signs was felt inappropriate as it would fall short of meeting warrants and is not relevant for school crossings as there is a crossing guard there.

Engineering, Planning and General Services staff concurred with boxing in the intersection with crosswalks. Adding the crosswalks would be consistent with the recent Safe Routes to School recommendation at this location, would add visual identity of the crossings to approaching drivers and would assist the crossing guard in guiding crossers to the appropriate and safest crossing. Terry Crotty felt that adding the two crosswalks would go far in addressing crossing concerns at this location that have come up in the past. The two crosswalks were painted by General Services last week.

Respectfully submitted,

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

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, December 17, 2013 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.***