

**City of Concord
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 22, 2012 - 6:00pm to 8:00pm
City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Dick Lemieux called the meeting to order. Those in attendance are listed below. Guests included three students from St. Anselm College attending as part of their study on community involvement in transportation.

Committee Members Present:

Dick Lemieux (Downtown - Chair)
Councilor Kretovic (City Council)
Ursula Maldonado (Resident)
Jim Sudak (Concord Area Transit) (Public Transit)
Brent Todd (Penacook)
Craig Tufts, (Provisional Appointee)

Committee Members Not Present:

Peter Rhodes (Bicycling Community)
Alex Vogt (Pedestrian Community)
Tom Irwin (North/West Concord)
Domenic Ciavarro (Large Employer)
Ed Roberge, City Engineer - Staff Representative

Staff, Visitors and Guests Present:

Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer - Staff Representative
Dominic Geffken - Concord Hospital
Susan Hemingway - Concord Hospital
Kelly Collins - St. Anselm College
Angela Kimball - St. Anselm College
Stefanie Dewbury - St. Anselm College

Dick Lemieux noted that Craig Tufts application to become a TPAC Committee member is under review by Mayor Bouley and pending formal approval by Council in the coming months. Dick noted that Mayor Bouley gave him his interim concurrence on the appointment noting that Craig could begin contributing to TPAC as a provisional member pending formal approval by Council. As Chair, Dick ruled that Craig could assume the provisional TPAC member status as well as vote on TPAC matters.

2. Approval of February 23, 2012 meeting minutes

Meeting minutes will be considered at the April 26, 2012 TPAC meeting.

3. Presentations

a. Multi-Use Path/Trail along Langley Parkway, Dominic Geffken

Dominic Geffken and Susan Hemingway from Concord Hospital spoke on behalf of Jason Aziz, Concord Hospital and the Central NH Bicycling Coalition regarding a request to TPAC (see communication in Item 6a) to consider developing a multi-use path along the length of the proposed Langley North project. A multi-use path would be preferred to what they otherwise assume would be a five-foot sidewalk as was constructed along Langley South. They noted the high recreation and connectivity potential of the Langley North corridor and the health and safety benefits a multi-use path can generate.

Rob Mack summarized the Langley North project (CIP 40) which is currently in the conceptual design stage. He displayed an aerial map of the planned corridor alignment and highlighted potential walking and bicycling connections both along the corridor and to the existing network of existing trails crisscrossing city-owned land north and west of the hospital campus. A multi-use path would be a roughly 10-foot wide paved sidewalk/path to accommodate a mix of both pedestrian and bicycle travel and is an alternative to providing a five-foot wide paved sidewalk. Five-foot wide safety shoulders or bike lanes can still be provided along the Langley Parkway as is provided along the southerly half of the corridor. Langley South has become a highly-popular route for pedestrian and bicycle use, both for travel and recreation/health; the Langley North route may see yet higher demand for these uses due to potential connectivity to trails and higher nearby residential and business population.

TPAC discussion centered on the transportation, health, recreation and quality of life benefits of a potential multi-use path could provide in the project area. The addition of 'connector trails' (much like the groomed trails in nearby Wynant Park) to this project was suggested to link the multi-use path to nearby streets and trails. The benefits of a visual barrier to separate a multi-use path from the parkway travel way was suggested as a way to improve aesthetics for path users and to add separation to enhance safety. The potential for adding some areas for public parking in proximity to the path was also discussed, perhaps using some available city land near the parkway corridor. TPAC consensus was in support of the both Langley North and a multi-use path because it provides a balanced (complete street) transportation improvement for the city, improves regional and local access to areas west of downtown, enhances recreation benefits, and acts to reduce cut-through traffic in the upper west end of the City.

Councilor Kretovic made a motion that TPAC recommend development of a multi-use path along, and as part of, the Langley North corridor project including: consideration of adding trail connections to streets in the Upper School Street residential area; providing public parking area(s) near the multi-use path to facilitate and encourage recreational use; and to consider developing a physical or visual 'barrier' (e.g. fence or landscaping) between the parkway and the multi-use path to enhance the 'separation' of the path from the parkway travel way. Motion seconded by Brent Todd with unanimous approval by member attendees.

Rob Mack will share TPAC's recommendation with the City's design consultant for the Langley North project so that it can be considered in the layout of the new corridor. The conceptual layout of the corridor will be advanced over the coming weeks, including geometric, property and environmental resource considerations. When available, staff will share advanced conceptual layout plans and alternative intersection treatments with TPAC for further discussion.

b. Penacook Village Design Charrettes, Rob Mack

Rob Mack summarized the two design charrettes staff coordinated with the Penacook Village Association (PVA). The two charrettes were arranged to provide a forum for staff and the community to discuss transportation issues in the Penacook Village area and the upcoming design of the US Route 3 North Improvement Project (CIP 35), as well as a visioning session for land-use planning in and around the Village. The first charrette was held on Saturday, March 10, 2012 at the United Church of Penacook and offered a discussion of Village area transportation needs and potential improvements that could be considered in the upcoming CIP 35 Phase 5a design. The meeting was well-attended by roughly 60 community members, staff and city officials and featured four round-table discussion groups that each attendee was invited to participate in. Matt Walsh led a discussion group on potential streetscapes, gateways and landscaping; Steve Henninger led a discussion group on public on- and off-street parking; Jeff Warner led a discussion group on pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and Rob Mack led a discussion on Village area traffic operation and potential use of stop signs, signals and roundabouts. The discussion groups assembled a variety of thoughtful ideas as well as fostered a better understanding of how to best balance transportation improvements to meet the community's needs for reasonable traffic circulation, safety, parking and livability.

A second charrette is scheduled for Thursday evening, April 19, 2012 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the United Church of Penacook. Mike Santa will lead a group discussion on potential uses of the Rivco property; Steve Henninger will lead a group discussion on potential future uses of area public buildings (MVSD properties such as the old Washington Street firehouse and the former Washington Street school; Laura Aibel will lead a group discussion on potential commercial redevelopment in the Thirty Pines area; and Becky Hebert and Jeff Warner will lead a group discussion on public parks and travel connectivity. The results of this charrette may be an appropriate consideration for updating the City's Master Plan for the area.

Brent Todd noted that he attended the March 10 charrette and found it to be a highly informative and productive session, and very well-focused on the PVA's interest in both safety and future vision for the village area. He noted that one long-term resident attendee said that the charrette was the best PVA event he had ever attended. Brent commended staff for their well-planned, thoughtful and highly-professional presentation, with special commendation for Rob Mack and his presentation on traffic control options for the Village center. His use of graphics and traffic animations provided attendees with easy-to-visualize information that was very helpful in developing attendee consensus on potential improvements.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment 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 Traffic Operations Committees distributed with this agenda package.

6. TPAC Referrals from City Council, Staff and Chair

a. Communication from Jason Aziz, on behalf of Concord Hospital and the Central NH Bicycling Coalition, advocating constructing a multi-use trail that would run the length of Langley Parkway North. (TPAC: 3/5/2012)

See discussion of Item 3a above.

b. CAT Quarterly Report, 2012 Q2

Councilor Kretovic presented a draft report for City Council from the Public Transit Committee and TPAC regarding Concord Area Transit's (CAT) second quarter progress report and Saturday service evaluation. Following a brief discussion of the report, Councilor Kretovic made a motion to accept the report as drafted and submit same to City Council for their April meeting. The motion was seconded by Jim Sudak, and unanimously supported by TPAC members.

7. Status report on subcommittees

a. Pedestrian Committee, Alex Vogt

Rob Mack read a summary provided by Alex Vogt of the pedestrian committee held on Thursday March 15, 2012.

Chip Chesley and Jim Major presented a proposed priority snow removal route for the Friendly Kitchen and routes for the Concord Schools including Penacook. Concern was expressed with the proposed route to the Friendly Kitchen along N. Main Street to Horseshoe Pond Lane to Constitution Ave. The committee felt this route was not likely to be taken as it is long and out of the way. Walkers to the Friendly Kitchen likely will walk behind the former Rumford Press building and cross the rail road tracks. This is not a legal crossing. A better route was suggested to take N. Main Street and the sidewalk along I-393 to S. Commercial St. It was pointed out to the committee that the sidewalk along I-393 is not City responsibility, it is State DOT and this section would be difficult to maintain due to the amount of snow from the multiple lanes and with the guardrail leaving no place to push the snow. The committee felt that the I-393 route should be pursued with the State DOT with perhaps the State DOT providing funds for the City to do the work. This will need to be discussed further to develop a letter that the City can send to the DOT. In the meantime the proposed route following City streets will provide legal access. The proposed routes for the schools were acceptable with some minor suggestions. The routes will be reviewed with the school department.

The committee also discussed the draft ADA plan. It provides important information on the condition of all the sidewalks in the City and gives them an ADA score. Some edits and updates will need to be done. Overall the plan is a great resource that will identify problem area and priorities. The City of Concord is well ahead of other communities concerning this important issue.

The committee prioritized the walk friendly report card items to work on. The top items will be discussed at next meeting. Lighting levels along Main Street will be also be evaluated at a future meeting. There is no meeting in April. The next meeting is May 3.

TPAC discussed the proposed sidewalk snow plow route for the Friendly Kitchen. Attendees generally concurred that the proposed route via Horseshoe Pond Lane will probably not attract many walkers to Friendly Kitchen, but that it may be appropriate to provide one maintained route and allow walkers to choose their own route. TPAC consensus was to add the proposed Schools and Friendly Kitchen plow routes to the April TPAC agenda for further discussion.

b. Bike Committee, Peter Rhodes

Craig Tufts reported on Peter's behalf that the Bike Committee met in March and discussed a pavement restriping plan prepared by Jeff Warner of Engineering Services to accompany General Services' plans this summer to mill and resurface S. Main/Water/Manchester Street from the Perley/Storrs intersection to the Merrimack River bridge east of Exit 13. As this work will require complete replacement of pavement markings in the project area, the modified pavement marking plan would enhance bicycle travel by improving painted shoulder width. The plan maintains all existing traffic lanes, but increases the shoulder widths by a few feet (to 4 or 5 feet wide for bicycles) by reducing currently-wide travel-lane widths. Special bike-lane markings would also be introduced in areas where vehicle right-turn lanes occur at signals (e.g. in front of McDonalds and at the Hall Street intersection). Similar lane restriping modifications have been coordinated with General Services and NHDOT in the past with great success including: Clinton Street from S. Spring Street to I-89 exit 2; N. Main Street from Washington Street to I-393, Pleasant Street near Concord Hospital and Ft. Eddy Road from Loudon Road to Ft. Eddy Plaza.

c. Public Transit Committee, Councilor Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic reported that the Public Transit Committee met in March. Comments from the Public this month included very positive remarks regarding a passenger who became unruly with one of the Crosstown Route drivers. The subcommittee learned from this the procedures drivers take to ensure the overall comfort and safety of the other passengers.

Rob Mack presented the preliminary designs for safety improvements along Loudon Road, noting that although we are in the early stages, some of the bus stops will need to be moved slightly to accommodate the new complete street design.

Ridership is hovering about the same rides per month as prior to the route modifications, while there have been little dips, it is not the 10,000 rides that was

anticipated. Heights is still the strongest performing route with Penacook next. Crosstown does not appear to be performing any better than the trolleys or Indy Park. CAT expects the consultant that will be adjusting the timings to start refinement of the timings in the next couple of weeks.

Adopt-a-Spot: the Concord Safe Communities Coalition has been talking for some time about starting an Adopt-a-Stop program for clearing snow at bus stops. CAT noted there are some regulatory issues and recommended the group find a corporate champion...funds would then be used to hire a contractor to take care of the highest use stops. This way, CAT remains in compliance.

d. Traffic Operations Committee, Rob Mack

Rob Mack reported on TOC's March 20, 2012 meeting. TOC discussed and endorsed the Water Street pavement marking changes proposed by staff and TPAC Bike (see Item 7b above). TOC also considered General Services draft sidewalk snowplow priority maps for schools and friendly Kitchen (see Item 7a above), giving minor suggestions on the school routes but noting a concern that the proposed route for the Friendly Kitchen needs additional consideration. The PVA Design Charrettes were also discussed (see Item 3b above). Also discussed was a concern by Concord School District staff regarding coordination of bus access with this year's US Route 3 North construction to minimize delays to the extent practical.

8. Staff Updates

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

9. TPAC Policy Objectives/Programs/Initiatives

a. City-wide Speed and Pavement Marking Policy Update

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

10. Old Business

a. TPAC Accomplishments Report

There were no updates provided at this meeting.

11. New business

a. Memorandum from CAT-Public Transit on CAT Funding Consideration for FY2013, Councilor Kretovic

Councilor Kretovic and Dick Lemieux presented a draft memorandum to be submitted to the City Manager regarding the City Grant Application from Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. (CAPBMI) on behalf of CAT. The memo is intended to advise the City Manager that TPAC and TPAC Public Transit have for some time discussed the possibility of offering a 'fare-free' system for Concord, similar to the fare-free systems available through Advance Transit in Lebanon-Hanover. With prior knowledge and full approval of TPAC-Public Transit, CAT's grant application includes an *optional* cost for such a service. The memo further notes the consensus of TPAC-Public Transit that this is not an effort the city should support at this time for various reasons including recent route and service changes and potential impact of Para-transit and demand-responsive services. Craig Tufts added that CNHRPC also concurred that a free-fare system was a reasonable idea for Concord, but not at the present time.

After considerable discussion of the issue, the draft document was amended to the consensus of TPAC members. Councilor Kretovic made a motion to that TPAC approve the memo as amended. Motion was seconded by Ursula Maldonado, and unanimously supported by TPAC. Staff would submit the amended document to the City Manager.

12. Adjourn

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