

Engineering Services Division

Traffic Operations Committee

Meeting Minutes - September 18, 2012

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services

Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services

Steve Henninger, Planning Jim Major, General Services

Rick Wollert, Concord Fire Department

Dick Lemieux, TPAC Chair

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.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: Traffic accident data for August 2012 was reviewed. There were 86 reportable accidents in August 2012. This compares with 96 and 98 reportable accidents in August 2011 and 2010, respectively. 11 accidents resulted in total of 11 people injured, 2 of which occurred on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There was one accident involving a pedestrian: a pedestrian aged 55 years walking northbound on the sidewalk along the west side of South Street and being struck by a vehicle backing out of the residential driveway at # 264 (injury, driver at fault).

There were no accidents involving bicyclists.

2) City Council meeting update.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: No TOC items were considered at City Council's September 10, 2012 meeting.

3) Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: At its August 23, 2012 meeting, TPAC discussed a resident concern on sidewalk winter maintenance issues arising from driveway plows pushing snow onto sidewalks. Staff also provided an update on the Main Street Complete Street project (CIP 460).

- B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.
- 1) **None.**

C. New Discussion and Action Items

1) Request by George Pangakis of 18 Wilson Avenue to consider signage or markings to better inform Clinton Street drivers whether the westbound shoulder approaching the Clinton/Langley intersection is a breakdown lane or a right-turn lane. (Engineering: 8/23/12).

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: At issue is a concern on the width of the westbound-side shoulder on Clinton Street approaching the intersection with Langley Parkway and potential confusion as to whether this is a breakdown lane (not for travel) or a lane for right-turning traffic. There is currently a single 11-foot wide westbound lane approaching the intersection that is intended for through and right-turn traffic. The westbound painted shoulder approaches the intersection from the east at a 5-foot width but widens to about 7 feet at the stop line. While through and right-turning traffic is intended to occur from the single westbound lane, occasional vehicles do use the shoulder area, especially where it is wider near the stop line, in order to bypass traffic that may be stopped for the traffic signal and turn right-on-red onto Langley Parkway. Police Department staff indicated that it is not unlawful for a vehicle to bypass a stopped or slowed vehicle if it can be done safely and without leaving the pavement.

The existing westbound approach shoulder width of 5 to 7 feet is not wide enough to designate as a formal right-turn lane, but is intended to function as both a safety shoulder and for bicycle travel. However, the wider width near the stop line can be inviting to right-turn traffic. Reconstruction of the curb line to limit the shoulder width to a uniform 5 feet would involve substantial cost and does not appear justified at this time. TOC felt, however, that it could be beneficial to better delineate the intended use of the shoulder area for bicycle travel. General Services will plan to paint several bicycle lane markings in the westbound shoulder area approaching the intersection this fall. The existing westbound shoulder line will not be repainted this fall in anticipation that it will further wear off by next spring. At that time General Services will consider repainting the westbound shoulder line so that the effective shoulder width is closer to five feet (with extra width going back to the through lane). This future, narrower shoulder with bicycle markings should better indicate to drivers that this is not an area intended for right turns.

2) Request by Robin Loomis, resident of Fernald Street, with concerns that Winthrop and Fernald Streets are being used as a cut-through route for some vehicles trying to bypass the long traffic queues turning left from West Portsmouth Street (Exit 16) onto Mountain Road. (*Police:* 8/29/12).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: At issue are occasional vehicles (during peak traffic periods) intending to turn left from Exit 16 onto Mountain Road, and instead (to bypass long left-turn traffic queues), cross over to Shawmut Street and turn left onto Winthrop and Fernald Streets to gain access to Mountain Road northbound. Rob Mack observed traffic along Winthrop and Fernald Streets for about one-half hour during the afternoon commute on Tuesday September 4, 2012. Of the 15 vehicles observed entering Winthrop Street from Shawmut Street, 5 were destined for local properties and 10 were through vehicles bound for Mountain Road northbound. Inappropriate speeds were not generally observed.

It was noted that through traffic along these two streets has likely reduced significantly since the recent closing of the Eastman School on Winthrop Street. TOC considered the option of installing signage (say a "No Through Traffic" sign), but advised against it. Such a sign is typically used in a

dead-end application, say when a road or bridge is physically closed ahead, and all but local traffic is detoured elsewhere. Use of this sign on Winthrop Street, however, would set precedence in the city in implying selective prohibition of some drivers where all driver movements can be accommodated. This might become widely requested on many residential streets that connect between neighborhood areas which would then be contrary to the Master Plan which supports street connectivity between neighborhoods. Posting a No Left Turn sign on the Shawmut Street eastbound approach to Winthrop Street could alleviate the cut-through issue, but would also apply to all residents along the street (examples are the turn restrictions posted along Clinton Street at the 'college' streets). This type of restriction may have a significant effect on local residents' access, and might encourage some disregard for the sign; substantial neighborhood feedback would be necessary to explore this option. Another potential side-effect is that the subject 'cut-through' movement might be redirected to other residential areas such as Randolph Road and Cemetery Street.

TOC feels that the subject cut-through issue will disappear when the Exit 16/Mountain Road intersection is reconstructed to a planned roundabout configuration (CIP 24 currently programmed for Fiscal Year 2016). Traffic delays will be substantially reduced at this intersection minimizing the desire to detour through local streets during traffic peak periods at Exit 16. In the meantime, occasional speed enforcement along these streets is suggested and may be helpful in sending a message to those drivers cutting through the neighborhood.

3) Request by Bonney Longval of 5 Roy Street to consider installing a STOP sign and a NO OUTLET sign on Roy Street. (Engineering: 9/13/12).

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: At issue is a concern by a resident of Roy Street that some automobile traffic inadvertently enters Roy Street thinking it is a though street connecting north to Branch Turnpike, and having to U-turn and exit back to Pembroke Road. Also requested is a STOP sign at the Roy Street approach to Pembroke Road.

Roy Street is a cul-de-sac street about 1,000 ft long and serving about 13 residential lots. Roy Street only has access to Pembroke Road; a gate at the north end of Roy Street precludes access to Hemlock Drive and Edgewater Heights Drive within the condominium development to the north. Roy Street intersects Pembroke Road in a well-defined T intersection. There is a street light at the corner. TOC concurred that it would be appropriate to install a standard 'NO OUTLET" sign under the street name sign at the corner of Pembroke Road and Roy Street; General Services will plan to install this sign. TOC also concurred that a STOP sign is not necessary at the Roy Street approach to Pembroke Road because the rules of the road are readily apparent for Roy Street drivers approaching Pembroke Road (the through street); this finding is consistent with the City's STOP sign policy.

4) Request by Lynda Elliott of 430 N. State Street to consider installing a weeble on the N. State Street crosswalk at Lake Street. (Engineering: 9/17/12).

<u>DISCUSSION</u> / <u>ACTIONS</u>: At issue is a request to locate a weeble (in-street pedestrian crossing sign) in the existing crosswalk on N. State Street at the Lake Street intersection to better identify the crossing location to drivers.

It was noted that, due to the ongoing reconstruction of the street, this crosswalk is currently marked with temporary white lines. Final pavement markings are scheduled for this fall following installation of the final pavement overlay and will include high-visibility, thermoplastic markings for this crosswalk. TOC felt this would be an appropriate enhancement of this crosswalk location. Because city policy

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limits the number of weeble locations to 24, weeble installations are generally at high-use crosswalks (for example, downtown locations or near select school crossings). TOC felt that the subject crosswalk had a very low pedestrian use and concurred that it would not be appropriate to locate a weeble here.

D.

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

2) Discussion of a four-to-three-lane conversion project in S. Burlington VT.

<u>DISCUSSION / ACTIONS</u>: This past summer, the City of South Burlington, in conjunction with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, converted a roughly one-mile section of Williston Road from four lanes (two lanes in each direction with no turn lanes or shoulders) to a three-lane section (one through lane in each direction with a center turn lane and outside shoulders for bicycle travel). The corridor section carries about 20,000 daily vehicles (similar in volume to Loudon Road or Manchester Street on the Heights). The corridor traverses a mixed-use area with predominant residential use via a number of side streets. The road section was restriped to a three lane section as a 'test' in June. Following the trial period, the city approved the final lane conversion project in mid-August (for final construction in Fall 2012), and also extended the three-lane conversion about an additional one-half mile. Major signalized intersections at each end of the segment retained the existing four or five lane configuration to maintain traffic capacity, with merges into the three-lane section.

Staff met with S. Burlington staff to discuss the project and observe peak traffic operations on the test section of the corridor in September. S. Burlington staff noted that the test period generated mixed but more-positive-than-negative feedback from the public. Their observations during the test period included: no apparent diversion of traffic from the corridor; lower overall speeds (40 mph posted); and some increased traffic queues at the signals but generally only small increase in corridor travel time during peaks. Staff observation of peak period flow on the corridor indicated reasonable traffic operation with occasional long queues from one signal intersection that did not have a left-turn lane for left turns. S. Burlington staff is compiling additional traffic data pursuant to the change in lane configuration and will share it when available.

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

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The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 19, 2012 @ 12:00 PM in the 2ND Floor Conference Room.