



## Engineering Services Division

# Traffic Operations Committee

## Meeting Minutes - July 17, 2012

Attendees: Rob Mack, PE, PTOE, Engineering Services  
Ed Roberge, PE, Engineering Services  
Steve Henninger, Planning  
Jim Major, General Services  
Greg Taylor, Concord Police Department  
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.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: Traffic accident data for June 2012 was reviewed. There were 107 reportable accidents in June 2012. This compares with 93 and 98 reportable accidents in June 2011 and 2010, respectively. 27 accidents resulted in total of 37 people injured, six of which occurred on Loudon Road. There were no fatalities.

There were no accidents involving pedestrians or bicyclists.

- 2) **City Council meeting update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At their July 9, 2012 meeting, Council voted in opposition to NHDOT's preferred roundabout option (Alternative B) for the Exit 12 bridge replacement project. Council preference was for Alternative A which was the bridge replacement only leaving the interchange ramps as existing. A resolution on funding for the design of the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project (CIP 460) is scheduled for public hearing and action at the August 13, 2012 meeting.

- 3) **Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) update.**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At their June 28, 2012 meeting, TPAC discussed a referral considering rerouting the North-South Bike Route along Rumford Street to N. State Street rather than via Penacook Street as currently signed.

## B. On-going Discussion and Action Items.

### 1) Discussion of city-wide speed limits.

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is the disparate posting of speed limits in residential areas across the city. Through streets (generally collector and arterial streets) are generally posted 30 mph within the Urban Compact and 35 mph outside of the Urban Compact per NH Statutes. Some local residential streets (about 120 streets) have been reduced to a posted 25 mph speed limit through specific Council action. However, many local residential streets of similar nature remain at the statutory 30 or 35 mph speed limit, so posted or not. Inquiries on traffic speeds and requests for speed limit reductions on select residential streets are considered by TOC every year, with such requests initiating substantial engineering study and potential recommendation to Council on a street-by-street basis. Of potential benefit to the City and residential neighborhoods would be a more-uniform application of lower speed limits (25 mph) on all local residential streets. Such a speed limit would be associated with narrow, short or winding streets, many without pavement markings or having significant on-street parking, or such other conditions that warrant a lower travel speed.

A city-wide inventory of street speed limits was discussed by TOC. The current posting of statutory 30 and 35 mph speed limits on most of the collector and arterial streets was considered appropriate, but the disparity in posting of many local residential streets was evident. For example, all the streets in the Mayflower/Woodbine neighborhood in Penacook are posted at 25 mph, while similarly short and winding streets in the Pekoe/Bainbridge/Groton neighborhood in the East End are not posted at all (a defacto 30 mph statutory speed limit governs). In the Thackeray Road residential area off of Little Pond Road, speed limits are not posted with the legal speed limit being 35 mph per the statutory limits in this rural area. TOC also discussed the possibility of a special downtown speed zone (25 mph vs. the current 30 mph statutory speed) to encompass Main Street and other streets in the commercial core where high pedestrian traffic and parking movements can support a lower area speed limit.

TOC concurred with an option that might consider a 'city-wide 25 mph speed limit unless otherwise posted'. Such signage would be posted around the entrance perimeter of the city. Little change, if any, would be made to the collector/arterial 'through' streets already posted at 30 or 35 mph. However most local residential streets would become 25 mph including those currently so posted, those with no posted speed limit, or those currently having a 30 mph posting that would need to be removed. This option may have the least cost due to sign changes and the least impact to residential areas due to potential location of new signs. TOC felt that there were potential benefits to neighborhood safety and livability by instituting a uniform 25 mph speed limit on all streets within isolated residential pockets. Such uniformity can also promote driver awareness of appropriate travel speed in residential-only areas city-wide. Another substantial long-term benefit of a city-wide change would be a reduction in staff and Council time otherwise needed to individually study and respond to future requests for speed limit changes on a street-by-street basis.

Engineering Services will continue to refine a potential city-wide speed limit plan including consideration of potential cost and implementation issues. Plan refinements will seek substantial feedback from both TOC and TPAC. If a final plan is recommended, input from the community would be sought prior to requesting Council action.

## C. **New Discussion and Action Items**

- 1) **Request by a resident on Old Suncook Road to install a crosswalk on Manchester Street at Old Suncook Road (*Engineering: 7/05/12*).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a request by a Teresa Boutin, resident near Old Suncook Road, to install a crosswalk on Manchester Street at the intersection with Old Suncook Road.

Pedestrian crossings of Manchester Street are sporadic and spread out along the length of the corridor. Sight lines are very good at the Manchester/Old Suncook intersection and a street light is located on the northwest corner. Police Department records back to January 2006 indicate there are no reported pedestrian accidents at the intersection. One bicycle collision was reported near the intersection involving a cyclist crossing Manchester Street.

TOC felt that the installation of a crosswalk at this location would be inappropriate given the current configuration and operation of Manchester Street. In the absence of a high concentration of crossing pedestrians, installation of a crosswalk alone may not increase a driver's cognition of a crossing pedestrian and could instill a false sense of security to that pedestrian; a safe pedestrian crossing can be made by looking both ways and making 'eye contact' with stopping drivers to ensure mutual understanding of the pedestrian's intention to cross. The next phase of the Manchester Street reconstruction (CIP36) will include widening of the arterial for three lanes and construction of a traffic signal at the Old Suncook Road intersection (potentially with a new access road intersecting from the west to service the Garvins Falls redevelopment area). TOC concurs that a crosswalk of Manchester Street at this future intersection would be appropriate in conjunction with signalization.

- 2) **Concern by a resident on Currier Road with high traffic speeds (*Engineering: 7/06/12; Council 7/10/12*).**

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: At issue is a concern by Anne Clune of 15 Currier Road with traffic speeds along Currier Road and a request to consider lowering the speed limit to 25 mph and installing speed bumps and stop signs to deter speeding. A July 9, 2012 letter with this request was also sent to City Council. A similar request by Ms. Clune was also considered by TOC in October 2008.

Currier Road is under the jurisdiction of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). The road is posted for a 35 mph speed (statutory speed limit outside the Urban Compact) east of Deer Track Lane and 40 mph to the west. Any requests for speed limit or other traffic control changes would need to be considered by the NHDOT District 5 office.

Following up on Ms. Clune's inquiry, Engineering Services conducted traffic volume and speed counts on Currier Road near #15 (about 1000 feet east of Deer Track Lane in the 35 mph zone) during the week of July 13, 2012. Average speeds in either direction were 38 mph and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were 44 mph. Over the three-day recording period, several vehicles were recorded in excess of 51 mph. Current speeds were less than those recorded in October 2008 when average speeds were 40-42 mph and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were 46-48 mph. A daily traffic volume of about 1060 vehicles was recorded in July 2012. This reflects an increase from the 830 daily vehicles counted in October 2008. Concord Police Department accident reports indicate two accidents on Currier Road in the over-three-year period since January 2009: a driver fell asleep and struck a tree near #62; and a car slid down an icy Timberline Drive and struck a vehicle on Currier Road. Neither crash was reported to

involve excessive speed.

TOC felt that these overall speeds were not unusual in the rural zone and that the 35 mph speed limit on Currier Road (near #15) is appropriate and consistent with the 35 mph statutory speed limit posted on most rural roads outside of the Urban Compact. There were, however, a few inconsiderate drivers recorded in excess of 51 mph; TOC felt this was more appropriately an enforcement issue. The speed data was provided to the police department to assist in selecting a time of day for potential enforcement. Additionally, the police department always welcomes input from residents regarding observations of careless driving such as time-of-day/vehicle description/plate. Information like this is very helpful for enforcement efforts, particularly on low-volume roadways.

Although speed limits and traffic control along Currier Road are beyond the purview of the City, TOC feels that current speed data would not support an engineering study that might be needed to justify lowering the speed limit to below 35 mph. Furthermore, TOC felt it would be inappropriate to utilize speed bumps or multi-way stop signs along this rural route. The NHDOT's 40 mph posted speed limit along the westerly half of Currier Road, while not unreasonable, is atypical of the otherwise 35 mph currently posted on all other local rural roads outside of the Urban Compact. TOC is currently examining speed limits city-wide with the goal of developing a more uniform application of posted speeds. The option of posting a uniform 35 mph speed limit along the length of Currier Road will be part of TOC's assessment. Engineering Services will submit a copy of Ms. Clune's letter and TOC's follow-up investigation to NHDOT District 5 for their information.

D. 

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

DISCUSSION / ACTIONS: None.

Respectfully submitted,

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

***The next Traffic Operations Committee meeting will be held on  
Tuesday, August 21, 2012 @ 12:00 PM in the 2<sup>ND</sup> Floor Conference Room.***