

**MINUTES OF THE  
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

**December 12, 2012**

**Conference Room A**

**7:30 a.m.**

**Members Present:** Councilor Brad Lown, Paige Roberts, Eric Gregg, Cliff Sinnott, Bill Lyons

**Members Absent:** Councilor Ken Smith, City Manager John P. Bohenko, Rick Chellman

**City Staff Present:** Dave Allen, Rick Taintor, Steve Parkinson, Adam Cannon

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Vice Chairman Lown called the meeting to order at 7:38 a.m.

As the first order of business, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes from the November 13, 2012 meeting.

To begin the meeting, Planning Director Rick Taintor gave a presentation on Street Classification. Mr. Taintor stated that the purpose of Street Classification is to give balance to street design and focus on overall mobility. Street Classification distributes traffic through major and minor arterials and doesn't prioritize speed or high traffic volumes.

Roads are classified as urban or rural at first and then by whether they are a collector or arterial. From that point, arterials are classified as minor or principal arterials. As an example, Mr. Taintor discussed how Woodbury Avenue is classified as a minor arterial. Woodbury Avenue is interconnected with and provides access to principal arterials. Principal arterials are the roads that carry the most traffic volume and are unusually significant to the City, often serving as centers of commerce. Collectors provide land access and travel routes through residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Taintor then transitioned into a presentation on street design standards. Street design standards imply that there are a set of best practices for street design. The "Complete Streets" movement is an example of street design standards many planners recommend. Complete Streets considers all users, intersections, bike facilities, sidewalks, and transportation stops.

Next, Mr. Taintor gave some brief examples of recommended design guidelines. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and various major cities including Charlotte, San Francisco, Seattle and New York City, all have a set of street design standards. Some of the standards give guidelines on movement, context and land use. Others stress right-of-way improvements and travel-way guidance. Mr. Taintor noted how these design standards could be adapted to local context and that he is interested in updating standards to incorporate traffic calming.

After Mr. Taintor completed his presentations, Mr. Bill Lyons gave a presentation on the ideas and activities emanating from the Sustainable Portsmouth group. He first discussed the Transportation Vision report released in 2011. The group's idea was to create a five-year sustainability plan. During their meetings, the group concluded that the transportation trends were not sustainable. Next, the Committee arrived at five-year targets and goals relevant to the vision plan. The vision addressed core types of sustainability including affordability, walkability, health, and social fairness. The group stressed the need to think regionally and improve integrated planning.

Mr. Lyons also noted that parking was a large part of the discussion. The group worked to discover ways to balance supply and demand and provide alternatives for parking. Participants recommended using Woodbury Avenue as a pilot project to test some of the Committee's ideas.

After discussing Sustainable Portsmouth, Mr. Lyons then provided a brief summary of the 2012 Memorial Bridge and Regional Transportation Report. Bridging Communities and Portsmouth Listens met to discuss ways to make Portsmouth and Kittery the best places to live through a regional transportation system. Some of the common themes included:

- Memorial Bridge as a connector
- Connected and collaborative transportation
- Regional and sustainable

The group also proposed that the bridge closure be made a pilot project to test some ideas about regional transportation planning.

Mr. Taintor inquired about how the group obtained the data. Mr. Lyons replied that there was a UNH student collecting data on the Committee. He also noted that the key is to establish a baseline and target interventions while monitoring to see if you are accomplishing what you set out to do.

Mr. Taintor noted that the data from the group is unable to be obtained from the U.S. Census because they do not collect it from smaller cities.

Councilor Lown asked if some of the goals mentioned by Bill Lyons are going to be in the next Master Plan document. Mr. Taintor said that there could be some of the goals and that it is good to have goals with specific targets. Mr. Lyons noted that having the goals would signal that the Master Plan is heading in the right direction.

Mr. Cliff Sinnott stated that it was too much to accomplish all of the goals, but pilots can test their feasibility. Mr. Taintor stated that it was important to not make a change in the absence of context. Ideas are never introduced as fait accompli.

Mr. Eric Gregg asked if there is bus service from C&J into downtown Portsmouth. Mr. Lyons responded that there is service, but it's in a roundabout way. He also said that parking is a real problem in terms of transit and pricing. He suggested that the City work with C&J to provide alternatives from an equity standpoint. Mr. Sinnott elaborated on the COAST and C&J relationship. He noted that not many people use the COAST bus that comes to the C&J Trailways lot. The unlimited parking incentivizes commuters who are airline travelers. C&J is currently considering expansion of parking.

Deputy City Manager Dave Allen remarked that C&J came to the City and said they want to move the well and that they would build another well. Mr. Sinnott stated that there is the option of building a structure. Mr. Lyons stated that people could be charged to manage parking demand. Mr. Gregg wondered if there could be a convenience shuttle into Portsmouth to take people into downtown.

Mr. Sinnott agreed with Mr. Lyons that charging for parking is a part of demand management and noted that the DOT is beginning to charge for parking now. Mr. Taintor asked if there was any data on the users. Mr. Sinnott replied that 35-40% of the lot is long-term parking.

Next, the discussion moved to the possibility of new commuter options. Public Works Director Steve Parkinson said that public transportation is not sustainable with the costs. Mr. Sinnott noted that it gets close to sustainability with airport travel involved. Mr. Parkinson then noted that COAST is highly subsidized by the federal government and that local community costs are only going up. Various members wondered if C&J Trailways could be used as a regional transportation hub where airport and downtown service would increase.

Mr. Sinnott also suggested that there are opportunities to begin charging for parking at C&J's based upon when one buys a ticket. Mr. Lyons said that students and seniors could be a key target for discounts.

Councilor Lown then commented that during discussions on the parking lot, Susan Denenberg said that there should be a shuttle service, but in order to have the service there would need to be very expensive downtown parking and frequent shuttles.

Mr. Lyons stated that a few days down the road instead of five bikes you could see fifty. Mr. Sinnott suggested bike riding should be easier on Greenland Road.

Mr. Gregg then inquired about where the Committee is headed. Mr. Taintor answered that they had a list of items with a few items left to discuss including green streets, traffic calming, land use policies and specific implementation strategies. He said that there could maybe be one or two more meetings with conceptual discussions and questions. Councilor Lown then suggested that after those meetings they begin to draft recommendations to council. Mr. Lyons stated that there could be a short report with some bullet points.

Councilor Lown then asked how the policies will be implemented. Mr. Taintor answered that they could be put into actual street projects. Mr. Parkinson stated that Public Works builds upon standards. Deputy City Manager Allen stated that the standards could be useful as a model for classification.

Following this discussion, the Committee set the next meeting date for January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 7:30a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Adam Cannon  
Assistant Project Manager