

Saco and Scarborough Route 1 Corridor Complete Streets Plan
Saco Public Meeting Report
Saco City Hall Auditorium
December 5, 2018

Attending: Patrick Fox, Saco public works director; Zach Mosher, Saco city planner; Kevin Sutherland, Saco city administrator; Emily Roy, marketing and communications manager; Jessa Berna, PACTS; Tom Errico, TY Lin; Carol Morris, Morris Communications

The meeting began at 6 pm.

Zach opened the meeting, explaining that Saco and Scarborough are partnering with this study along with PACTS (Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System), because this enables them to take advantage of State and Federal funding for planning studies of this kind instead of using local tax dollars.

The major concern from Saco's point of view is the increasing amount of pedestrian activity taking place in the community. Town officials and planners want to make the corridor safe for multi-modal (bike, pedestrian, transit) travelers before increasing vehicle activity along this corridor could potentially make that too difficult.

Zach turned the meeting over to Carol Morris, who showed the audience the Purpose and Need Statement developed for the study. She explained that ultimately, every recommendation made by the study would be judged against whether it meets the purpose laid out here, essentially making Route 1 safe and accessible for all travelers. The Purpose and Need Statement reads:

"The purpose of this study is to make the Route 1 corridor for Downtown Saco to Pleasant Hill Road in Scarborough safe and accessible for all travel modes, including motor vehicles, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Making the corridor more accessible will stimulate economic development, reduce vehicle delay and improve safety for users."

Carol showed the audience the study area map, and then explained the public outreach program: Each town has a study page with updates and meeting information; there will be two public meetings in each community, the first one like tonight's to provide a study overview and hear local concerns, and the second two in April to show residents what the study was recommending and get feedback on those specific ideas. She also mentioned that there is an online public survey available that has pulled in more than 200 responses so far.

She encouraged the audience to take the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SacoScarboroRte1 and that it is available on the City of Saco website. Carol also noted that there would likely be some time spent reaching out to

business owners should changes be needed to their access points (driveways). With that, she turned the meeting over to Tom Errico to provide more detail on the study itself, as well as the kinds of things the study team would be looking at in the corridor.

Tom noted the while he would be providing background information, the main purpose of the meeting is to get feedback from attendees. He began by providing background on the study itself and the tasks involved, which include data gathering on street and shoulder widths, on bike paths and sidewalks, on the varying speed limits, specifics of high crash locations, where safety could be improved by a lane reconfiguration, how traffic signal settings are working, and more. Tom clarified in response to a question that statewide crash data comes from MaineDOT. Once draft recommendations have been created, these will be presented to the public at April meetings for feedback and subsequent revisions. Final recommendations will be available upon the study's completion this summer.

Tom also spent time explaining what a Complete Street is: a street that is safe, comfortable and convenient for all users, and includes bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users as well as vehicles. He showed many illustrations of what Complete Streets look like, and what options may be considered for Route 1. (These can be seen in the meeting PowerPoint [here](#).)

Tom also explained the principle of access management and how it would be applied to Route 1. Essentially, access management is the careful planning of the location and spacing of driveways, street connections, median openings and traffic signals. Access management uses medians to channel left-turning vehicles to safe locations, and provides dedicated turn lanes at intersections and access points in order to remove turning vehicles from through lanes. **The combined purpose of these strategies is to reduce crashes and traffic delay.**

Tom noted that anyone who drives this section of Route 1 is aware of all the vehicles slowing down or even stopped to make a left turn, forcing other drivers to stop quickly or swerve into the adjoining lane. He noted that converting a four-lane road to a three-lane with a center turn lane can reduce crashes up to 49%. (Again, many graphics are available in the meeting PowerPoint [here](#).)

Another tool used to make a road like Route 1 safer for walking are curb extensions. Curb extensions reduce pedestrian crossing distance, increase pedestrian visibility, prevent vehicle encroachment on crosswalks, encourage slower speeds by tightening corner radii, and provide improved opportunity for ADA ramps. It was asked if curb extensions made winter plowing more difficult, and while the answer is yes, the design of these has been improving so that is now less of a problem for plow trucks.

Tom and Carol asked the audience what their concerns were regarding this section of Route 1. Comments included:

- Several of the attendees provided good suggestions about sharing access connections between business parcels.
- There was discussion of how a service road parallel to Route 1 could better serve local traffic in some locations.
- The difficulty of navigating the stretch by Hannaford and Thornton Academy, where traffic backs up, cars are stopped to make a left turn across traffic, and it is just generally unsafe. The resident made the point that she needs to pick up her son at specific times so she has no choice in avoiding “rush hour.” She also noted she had moved from Portland to avoid the rush hour traffic there and she believes it is worse here.
- A resident noted that often driving through Scarborough, traffic on Route 1 is stopped so a single car can enter from a side street. He hoped that was not what was planned for Saco.
- A resident said that in Saco there are many old houses built close to the road. She asked what the remedy was to that in trying to add bike lanes and sidewalks. Tom responded that certainly old houses were not going to be taken down, so in those cases it is necessary to find a way to work around the problem.
- There was a question regarding the difference in the road winter to summer, with the individual noting that there is a very different feel to the road in the summer. Tom replied that unfortunately we do not have very good data winter to summer. He noted that the Turnpike has excellent seasonal data for their road and exits, which is being used for the Rte. 112 / Exit 36 Study, but for Route 1 there is very little.
- A transit professional informed Tom that the Route 1 transit schedule was going to change on July 1, 2019. Tom told him that McMahon Associates is the transit consultant for the study and they would keep him closely informed moving forward.
- There was some discussion about how Turnpike crashes affect Route 1 in terms of congestion.
- It was asked how far out the study would look in terms of time. Tom indicated that anticipated development time for a study like this is about 20 years, and that PACTS has a Travel Demand Model, which includes data for this area, and does as good a job as it is possible to do to predict travel patterns and volumes in the future.
- It was also asked if the effects of autonomous vehicles, rising stormwater and other anticipated changes were being incorporated into the study. Tom said that is asked of every study, and to whatever extent knowledge is available, yes, it would be incorporated.
- A resident wondered if Route 1 would get increasing traffic compared to the Turnpike as hybrid cars are more common. She noted that she will often take Route 1 because the braking patterns give her battery more of a charge than the vehicle would get on the Turnpike.

- It was asked if this study would look at the adequacy of culverts and other drainage along Route 1. Tom said that no, this is not an infrastructure study. However, Pat Fox noted that all these road-related items tend to be interrelated; the Goose Fare Impaired Waterway goes right through Route 1, and they make sure that when roadwork is done, either drainage improvement happens concurrently, or they ensure that older drainage is not damaged.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.