

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ROADWAY SAFETY PLAN COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 20, 2024

4:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

J.B. Mack, Chair
Councilor Laura Tobin, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
Erin Roark
Ockle Johnson
Frank Linnenbringer
Fred Roberge
Debbie Bowie

Staff Present:

Brett Rusnock, Infrastructure Project
Manager
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager (via
Teams)

Members Not Present:

Autumn DelaCroix
William Lambert

1) Call to Order

Chair Mack called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.

Mr. Roberge clarified that he was not acting on this Committee as a disability advocate, but as a representative of the Governor's Commission on Disability. Mr. Rusnock noted that Mr. Lambert would be unable to attend the remaining Committee meetings this summer, so he submitted his resignation to take effect by the next meeting.

VHB project consultants Phil Goff and Frank Koczalka were present in-person and Eric Tang was present via Teams.

2) Roll Call

Roll call ensued.

3) Approval of Minutes – March 25, 2024

A motion by Mr. Johnson to approve the March 25, 2024 minutes was duly seconded by Vice Chair Tobin and the motion carried unanimously.

4) **Project Update**

Mr. Koczalka thanked those who were able to attend the public outreach meetings (April 29–30 and May 13). The outreach portion of the project had concluded, and the consultants had met with the two neighborhood groups (i.e., west and east sides), Human Service Agencies, Keene State College (KSC), Keene High School, and the City’s larger employers. Next, the consultants and this Committee would be focusing on goal setting, organization, and considering countermeasures to inform the Roadway Safety Action Plan. Ahead of the next meeting, Mr. Koczalka will share the draft Action Plan for the Committee to review and bring comments to help the consultants refine the Plan. The project survey had also concluded, with over 500 responses that Mr. Goff was analyzing. Mr. Koczalka recalled that original project schedule included a presentation before the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee, which was pushed to June 26.

Vice Chair Tobin recalled expressing concern that the stakeholder meetings were at a location that was not accessible to all community members, particularly those without transportation. She walked 1.5 miles to get to one of the meetings and the other meeting would have been farther. She wondered how the consultants reached the downtown pedestrians who might not have been able to access the public meetings. Mr. Roberge recalled suggesting that public transit should be consulted when planning the public outreach, and he was under the impression that the communication occurred and that rides were available. Mr. Koczalka said that was correct. Vice Chair Tobin said her understanding was that the rides were not available to the two community meetings.

Discussion continued as Committee members tried to discern the issues with public transport to project meetings. Mr. Rusnock clarified that because the public meetings were at 6:00 PM and therefore outside of the regular public transport hours, the City contracted with a local company called SMART Ride LLC, which was available from 5:00 PM—8:00 PM/9:00 PM for the two public meetings; announced in the press release. Unfortunately, Mr. Rusnock said the turnout for these neighborhood meetings was low, and he was unsure how to garner greater participation at meetings like these. He thought that because the project was so early in the planning phase, it might have been hard to pique the interests of community members. Mr. Goff said that in his planning experience, the larger the scale of planning, the harder it is to gain public input; it is easier when residents know a project will be impacting their street, for example.

Mr. Roberge asked Vice Chair Tobin whether any citizens contacted her indicating that they could not attend one of the meetings due to transportation. Vice Chair Tobin replied that she did not hear from anyone who knew the meetings were happening. However, she spoke about how there could be more effort to ensure that meetings like these are advertised where pedestrians would see them; she acknowledged that this could be challenging. To reach these road users, Mr. Roberge suggested doing so via the various human services organizations, as well as public transit, to help users who might be interested in the survey but unsure how to access it. Mr.

Koczalka said the consultants had seen an overarching theme in the data, which they hoped was related to pedestrian and bike activity. He hoped that such a large sample size would cover the concerns of those who were unable to access the survey. Mr. Koczalka added that the grant period for this project was from January–May; if the project period had been during the summer, for example, the survey could have been available at the many City festivals, for example, without the need for electronics.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, recalled the Committee’s discussion at the last meeting about reaching users who might not have access to the survey or meetings. She asked Josh Meehan of Keene Housing to reach out to all Keene Housing properties to let them know about the survey and its purpose. Mr. Goff said that some of the survey respondents might have resided in public housing, but they did not collect that data. He knew there were concerns about not having received enough feedback, but he said that the survey results showed over 500 specific locations of roadway concern in Keene that will be mapped and prioritized.

On the topic of low physical participation at these project meetings, Mrs. Roark recalled a previous survey about Central Square/downtown, and users could put pins on maps of the area. Having participated in that process digitally, she had assumed that her survey perspectives/opinions would equally match the verbal communication that was happening. She said it appeared that many users cared about bicycle safety, but the verbal responses were stronger than the online feedback. She said a lot of people think that their voices are heard and therefore, they do not need to attend the physical meetings, whereas individuals are more likely to absorb information during physical participation at meetings. Mrs. Roark questioned how to advertise the survey better to indicate that it is a unique opportunity to provide feedback. Mr. Rusnock said that in compiling and cleaning the data, the consultants and City staff were assigning equal weight to everything. He did agree that the consultants and staff enjoy the in-person feedback too because it provides a better sense of context. Mr. Koczalka added that the two neighborhood meetings complemented the survey and solicited different points-of-view from different users (e.g., school district or bus company) who would not take the survey. He thought the other six meetings with entities like social service agencies or large employers were helpful to offset. The goal all along was not to prioritize any users over others, but to treat all of the data equally.

Mrs. Roark recalled seeing updates about the upcoming downtown reconstruction project—including a post card on what downtown might look like after—and said it was related to this roadway safety effort in terms of pedestrian safety (though different project consultants). She said it was scary to see suggestions of things like parallel parking on Central Square, which would be dangerous for cyclists; there are real dangers to cyclists from parked motorists opening their car doors. The City Manager clarified that the design recommended by the City Council did not include parallel parking on Central Square, but did include protected bike lanes. Vice Chair Tobin supported Mrs. Roark’s point, asking whether concerns about roadway safety expressed during the downtown project were being documented as data for this roadway safety project. The City Manager thought it was actually the opposite, with themes from this roadway safety project

informing decisions for the downtown project (e.g., raised crosswalks). Mr. Rusnock agreed. Mr. Roberge thought that any coordination between the two projects would only promote efficiency.

Mrs. Roark recalled mention at the last meeting that out-of-town visitors are uncomfortable with the roundabouts in Keene. She thought Central Square—which is not technically a roundabout—was the primary area of confusion for visitors. Vice Chair Tobin had also heard concerns about the Winchester/Marlboro/Main Streets roundabout by KSC, especially for newer drivers. The City Manager agreed that the City had to move some crosswalks and add crossing beacons because of accidents in that area. Mr. Goff agreed that the complexities of roundabouts are exacerbated in a more urban environment, in which pedestrians are also using the roundabouts. He mentioned the roundabout off Rt-12 coming into Keene that rarely has pedestrian users, and he anticipated there was less vehicle driver confusion there compared to a roundabout like the new one at Key Road/Winchester Street with vehicle and pedestrian users. Committee members commented on how much more efficient the new roundabout was, and Mr. Koczalka noted that it was not only more efficient, but safer too. He thought this conversation pointed to the need for not only physical improvements to roadways, but also educating the community. Some drivers' education programs teach how to use roundabouts; Ms. Landry, Deputy City Manager, noted that some programs will fail student drivers for using roundabouts incorrectly or not honoring bike lanes. Mr. Johnson said that after 30 years in Keene, he did not understand how some people make very incorrect decisions while navigating through Central Square.

The City Manager noted that there would be an upcoming May 22 MSFI Committee meeting on the downtown project discussing the lanes around Central Square. The public can watch these and other Council Committee meetings on the City's [YouTube](#).

Mrs. Roark asked whether the issue of delivery trucks parking on Main Street would be a consideration in this project or the downtown project. The City Manager replied that unfortunately, a route for the trucks behind the downtown buildings is typically not possible. When designing the new Main Street lanes (and Central Square), they will be wide enough for trucks to stop and other vehicles to go around them.

5) Project Development Process

Mr. Goff said that a few months ago, this Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) focused more on locations in the City. There was a similar process at the 7–8 stakeholder meetings to understand people's preferences for possible roadway safety improvements. At the April 29–30 community meetings, Mr. Goff said the consultants presented pedestrian and roadway related improvements that could potentially end up in the Roadway Safety Action Plan to gauge the public's interest in various options. For example, there was the greatest interest in raised crosswalks to improve roadway safety in Keene.

Mr. Goff explained steps in the qualitative project development process:

1. Collect suggestions from this Roadway Safety Plan Committee (RSPC), the TAC, and the stakeholder meetings.
 - a) All of these meetings led to ample qualitative data that helped in developing a list of prioritized projects.
2. Collect suggestions from the public survey's online input map.
 - a) 528 responses, but not all placed points on the map.
 - b) Over 1,000 map points were collected.
 - c) Many comments on places of concern.
 - d) It was essential for the consultants to weed out overly broad or vague (does not mean they were "negative" comments) recommendations and comments.
3. Combine Step 1 and Step 2 into an Excel spreadsheet/table.
 - a) 778 comments on specific places of concern in the City (approximately 85% of which were from the input map).
4. Place recommendations into a Google map to indicate locations and to color code by concerns.
5. Export Google map data into GIS (Geographic Information System).

Vice Chair Tobin asked about an area on the map displayed by the consultants that was labeled as "disadvantaged census tract," and asked how many comments there were about specific sections in that area. There was a question of what City ward that referred to, but Mr. Goff thought that there were comments grouped by ward. Vice Chair Tobin asked more specifically about how many survey users indicated roadway concerns in the disadvantaged census tract. Mr. Koczalka showed a map with all of the locations mapped by survey participants, with a lot on the east side. Vice Chair Tobin clarified that she was interested in the number of qualitative responses that pinpointed the disadvantaged census tract. Mr. Koczalka and Mr. Goff confirmed that the consultants were still in the process of analyzing that data; the map shown only displayed about 5%–10% of the data.

In terms of roadway accessibility for those with disabilities, Mr. Roberge asked if the consultants had initial data on where curb cuts are in the City, whether there were any audible crosswalks, and how many intersections had signs accessible to the blind community. Mr. Goff said no, not to the level of detail Mr. Roberge mentioned, which would be common in an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan that would focus specifically on locating every curb ramp at every intersection for every sidewalk, for example. However, the consultants were collecting stakeholder comments on accessibility concerns. Because this Roadway Safety Action Plan is intended to be an ongoing document for planning development into the future, Mr. Roberge wondered if the Plan would include a section on roadway accessibility for those with disabilities. Mr. Tang said that the focus on accessibility could be an action step in the Plan, with recommendations like curb cuts, for example, so that it is something the City works toward. If it was too large of an effort for the whole City, it could be explored by wards. Chair Mack agreed that Mr. Roberge's recommendation should be considered as an activity in the Plan. Mr. Rusnock noted that Chair Mack's organization—Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC)—had a lot of data on curb ramps and other pedestrian features throughout the City

and there was an effort to incorporate that data in the City's Sidewalk Management Plan. Mr. Roberge understood that not every activity mentioned in this Action Plan would be enacted, but he said it could lead to 10-year projects, thinking ahead for the City. Mr. Koczalka agreed that if an asset management inventory showed issues with 25% of curb ramps, for example, it would indicate action is needed, which would help the City to seek funding. Mr. Roberge said there were a lot of funds available for making communities more livable. Mr. Koczalka shared the example of the Nashua Planning Commission mobilizing interns to map all curb ramps in the town. Also, for example, the state of ME has a database tracking details of every new curb ramp developed. Mr. Koczalka made a note to add this action to the Plan.

Next, Mr. Goff explained that once all of the data was imported into GIS, the next stage of the project development process was to overlay the qualitative data onto the quantitative analysis, with the following steps:

1. Amalgamate qualitative data in GIS with crash data (high injury network).
2. Evaluate locations based on combined data and place into a prioritization table.
3. Assign safety countermeasures for individual projects, intersections, etc., based on:
 - a) Traffic volumes
 - b) Posted speed limit
 - c) Number of lanes
 - d) Planning and engineering design judgement

The Federal Highway Administration has a guide for improving pedestrian safety at uncontrolled crossing locations, with recommendations for raised medians, speed limits, etc. There would be different recommendations at crossings with traffic signals. It would be helpful to know whether there were quick measures that could be adopted by Department of Public Works (e.g., pavement markings or signage) as a first step. Ideally, this process would result in clear short-, mid-, and long-term activities.

Vice Chair Tobin asked whether school zones were being treated differently. Mr. Goff said yes, there would be a buffer of approximately ¼-mile around all schools, with specific recommendations within those buffers. Vice Chair Tobin recently spoke with a constituent about concerns related to school loading/drop-off zones conflicting with crosswalks. She wanted those zones incorporated into this aspect of the Action Plan; this could mean extra signage is needed to keep loading/drop-off zones out of crosswalks. Mrs. Roark added that some schools have better systems than others. For example, Fuller Elementary School has a good process, with car pick-up behind the school, bus loading in front of the school, and open sidewalks for walkers that bypass car pick-up. She thought the schools with the greatest challenges in this regard were Wheelock and Franklin, and particularly the latter because it is on Washington Street (i.e., busier). Vice Chair Tobin recalled a resident telling her that a lot of students from the low-income Keene Housing neighborhood walk to Franklin. Mrs. Roark agreed and added that so many Franklin students walk that when there is an event, public transit is needed to transport the students. Whereas parents/family drive most Symonds students to school.

Discussion continued about schools, and Mr. Rusnock recalled a recent meeting with the School District. He said there was great feedback from Wheelock and Franklin about their challenges and concerns; he called it illuminating, particularly learning about how many drivers pass school busses. Mr. Koczalka said that past studies of school drop-off/pick-up in communities showed that in some cases, it is the drop-off that is the problem, with parking in unapproved locations compromising sight distances, for example. Schools with mostly walkers have different concerns, like visibility. Mrs. Roark agreed, noting that this issue in Keene is different than other communities; for example, many parents no longer want their children using public transportation, which changes the safety needs around schools. Chair Mack agreed, noting that at Symonds, they separated the car and bus drop-offs; Mrs. Roark said it worked much better, but Chair Mack said that was much to the chagrin of the neighborhood because of the busses. Vice Chair Tobin referred to the crosswalk locations around Franklin, noting that there were not crosswalks in logical locations, and some parents in cars turn around in nearby driveways. She suggested where the Franklin loading zone and crosswalk could be relocated but Mrs. Roark said the Franklin Principal disagreed. Mr. Goff thought this conversation highlighted that at this stage of developing the Roadway Safety Action Plan, it was not appropriate to make these very specific recommendations; rather, the recommendation could be for the City to do more of that planning.

Mr. Roberge asked if this Action Plan could include recommendations for how the School District reviews these roadway issues. Mr. Tang explained that there is a Federal requirement to show how the Action Plan informs policy and other guidance updates in the City. Based on this conversation, he heard a desire for a policy/guidance for how school zones (not specific to each school) are designed and monitored (or reference to guidelines that exist already, like pavement markings). These would be actions that the City would work toward in coming years. Mrs. Roark said the Franklin Principal did not like the crosswalk in the recommended location because it had to remain as the parent drop-off zone; the school bus system will not allow cars to go by where busses drop off. So, she said the only way to fix that situation would be to fix the property of Franklin School, not the road system. She added that it would help to have another crosswalk at Franklin with a push-button for students to cross safely when the crossing guard is not there. Further discussion ensued briefly on the challenges around schools in many communities.

6) **Action Plan Goal Setting**

Mr. Koczalka explained the requirement for *both* of the following to be true in this planning process:

1. A high-ranking official and/or governing body in the jurisdiction publicly committed to an eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries; and
2. The commitment includes either setting a target date to reach zero OR setting one or more targets to achieve significant declines in roadway fatalities and serious injuries by a specific date.

Mr. Koczalka provided four examples of meeting these requirements in different localities:

1. NH 2022–2026 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Goal
 - a) Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2035, working toward zero by 2050.
2. Boston Vision Zero Goal
 - a) Eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes in the City by 2023.
3. Greater Portland (ME) Vision Zero
 - a) Eliminate fatalities and serious injuries by 2045.
4. Saint Paul, MN, Transportation Safety Action Plan
 - a) Zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2045, and 50% reduction within 10 years.

By the end of this meeting, the consultants sought clarity on the Committee’s goal for this Roadway Safety Action Plan. Mr. Tang noted that most of the examples above were specific to reaching *zero* fatalities/serious injuries by a specific date, and/or partial goals with interim dates.

Mr. Johnson asked for the current number of fatalities and serious injuries in the City for baseline context to inform reasonable goals. Mr. Roberge also wanted to hear from Chair Mack about the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) 10-year plan and road safety. Chair Mack—Assistant Director of SWRPC—said they consider road safety when looking at candidate projects, with higher likelihood of funding for projects with serious safety issues. He said SWRPC also has a long-range transportation plan to improve safety, but had not gone to this level of declaring goals for zero fatalities/serious injuries. Mr. Goff said that in the nine years of rough data the consultants had reviewed, there had been approximately one fatality per year (including all vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes) and approximately 10 serious injuries. Ms. Bowie asked the definition of a “serious injury,” and Mr. Koczalka said acute in-patient hospitalization (transported by EMS). Whereas “minor injuries” are those one can walk away from/refuse treatment. Mr. Koczalka said that the NH 2022–2026 goal (above) was the same as the five previous years, and was essentially a sliding goal with some progress, but there were still 129 fatalities in NH in 2023. Thus, it was ideal for Keene to carefully consider their reasonable target date.

Ms. Bowie asked the timeframe of this data, citing several serious injuries she knew of recently. Mr. Koczalka confirmed that the consultants were working with data up to 2022. The NH Department of Safety had just completed its 2023 crash data, which would not be available until after Keene’s Action Plan is completed. However, the consultants did confirm that fatalities had increased statewide in 2023, but the data specific to Keene was not available at this point.

Vice Chair Tobin asked about timing, as any major projects recommended in the Action Plan would need to be programmed in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The City Manager said she was not too worried about the City’s project goal specifying a particular percentage reduction by a specific date, noting that it was more about moving the needle and keeping roadway safety at the forefront. For instance, the City also has very aggressive energy goals: 100% of electricity consumed in the City will come from renewable energy sources by the year

2030, and 100% of thermal energy and energy used for transportation will come from renewable energy sources by the year 2050. Thus, anytime the City considers a project, those aggressive goals are at the forefront of decision making. The City Manager said it would likely be a few years before a new project is added to the CIP. However, one reason this Action Plan process was underway was because of the new requirement for the City to seek Federal funds to pay for some of these roadway improvements. Therefore, if she can access Federal grant funds for a project, it could happen sooner because she would not need an outlay in the CIP. The City Manager envisioned some additional planning work for something like an inventory (e.g., curb ramps) or another top roadway safety priorities that she can seek Federal grant funding for. Chair Mack added that there would be several capital projects in Keene funded partially with Federal funds in the next decade, such as West Street from School Street to the Rts-9/10/12 interchange and lower Winchester Street; so, some of the concerning areas in the Roadway Safety Action Plan might already be in-line for improvements.

Mr. Tang said this exercise was about the public-facing, aspirational community goal, but actual measurement of that goal would be achieved through the actions outlined in the Plan. Behind the scenes working groups will monitor progress.

- 7) **Action Plan Organization**
 - A) **Strategies and Actions**
 - B) **NH SHSP or Safety System Element/Principle**
 - C) **Other**

Mr. Tang talked about how the individual actions in Keene's Plan could be organized. One method was to follow the NH SHSP, which is updated every five years and includes the following emphasis areas: intersections, roadway departures, distracted driving, impaired driving, speed and aggressive driving, vehicle occupant protection, older drivers, teen traffic safety, motorized vulnerable road users—motorcycles and mopeds, and non-motorized vulnerable road users—pedestrians and bicyclists. While the City would seek Federal funds for these projects, the State of NH would still have funds in the case of no Federal money. Thus, Mr. Tang advised aligning Keene's Plan with some of the NH SHSP priorities.

A second way that Keene's could organize its plan was based on the "safe system approach" elements: safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care. Mr. Tang explained that this safety paradigm had been championed across the country. From this perspective, crashes are inevitable, and we are all in this together. Thus, if one of the five elements fails, the remaining four elements should make up for it because of the systems approach.

Whether organizing by the SHSP, the safe elements, or something else entirely (some consider data analysis, public engagement, or partnerships, for example), Mr. Tang said the consultants would help the City develop strategy and action tables that would include: activity, lead agency, partners, timeline, funding sources, cost, staff, time, and resources. This method would follow

SMART measures: specific, measurable, action-oriented, reasonable, and time-bound. These measures will help the City to track progress and work with this Roadway Safety Action Plan as a living document. Mr. Rusnock added that the City discussed how operational staff (e.g., Public Works and Police) could be a part of these actions, and there could be a focus on policies. The consultants welcomed other ideas.

The Committee discussed preferences for organizing actions in the Roadway Safety Action Plan. Councilor Tobin and Ms. Dragon expressed a preference for organizing the plan similar to that of the State of New Hampshire Plan. Mr. Koczalka noted that organizing it this way might make requesting Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) funds from the NHDOT more attractive. Mr. Rusnock mentioned that previous internal discussions focused on how various improvements might be accomplished, such as by utilizing City maintenance staff. Chair Mack liked the idea of incorporating City staff, especially if this is intended as a living document, which should ensure the actions are being followed. Mr. Rusnock said there could also be options to create a sort of database of actions versus a static report; for example, searching specifically within a database for items related to roadway intersections under the Department of Public Works purview, or filtering for ways to improve Keene road safety with a policy measure. There was general agreement amongst the Committee in support of Mr. Rusnock's idea. Mr. Koczalka added that such a database could also allow for easily tracking when actions are finished.

The Committee indicated general agreement to proceed with organizing the plan generally following the New Hampshire Strategic Highway Safety Plan, with the addition of a live database for staff to use for planning and reporting.

The Committee returned to the topic of a project goal. When looking at the sample goals the consultants presented (above), Mr. Johnson felt the Boston goal was too aggressive and unrealistic, and that NH goal was not aggressive enough, so he thought Keene should be somewhere in between. To Chair Mack's point, when considering City capital projects planned in the next 5–7 years, Mr. Rusnock said it would be great to have a shorter-term goal like 2030/2035, with some incremental analysis so that in 10 years, the City can measure how its actions compared to its goals. To the City Manager's point, Mr. Rusnock said that would put the pressure on the City Council if there were relatively near-term goals for a certain reduction. Chair Mack thought that what Mr. Rusnock described was more logical, as the samples provided felt too "pie in the sky," because all of these goals require resources.

The Committee discussed the fact that if there are improvements to major roadways in the City in coming years—West, Lower Winchester, and Main Streets—where there are 50% of the crashes combined, it would address many actions in the Plan, and ideally reduce the number of crashes or the severity of crashes significantly. Mr. Koczalka added that there was not a lot of historical data on pedestrian and bicycle crashes. As the City collects more of that specific data, it could inform more specific goals and actions in the future.

The Committee debated whether 2030 was a reasonable goal. Mr. Rusnock noted that West Street was programmed for construction in 2032–2033, so 2030 might be too soon. Thus, Committee 2035 was mentioned but not confirmed.

A lengthy discussion ensued as the Committee considered whether their goal was to reduce only fatalities (1 in 2023), serious injuries (approx. 6–7 per year), minor injuries (approx. 60 per year), or a combination. Vice Chair Tobin wanted to include all three categories because the minor injuries could indicate something else that is not working; for example, people driving slower but still crashing, which could give the appearance of improved safety. Mrs. Roark disagreed, thinking that only including serious injuries could lead to more accurate data if minor injuries are reported less consistently. Mr. Tang said they were both valid perspectives. The Federal and State goals focused on fatalities and serious injuries because there is a larger sample size. Vice Chair Tobin’s concern was with only considering the fatalities and serious injuries specifically for Keene, because they were very low numbers and she imagined the data being skewed by increased crashes during a snow event, for example. While not all minor injuries are reported, she thought that if reporting of minor injuries decreased, it could be a helpful indicator. With approximately one fatality per year, and the planned roadway improvement projects, Mr. Johnson felt that a goal for zero fatalities and 50% reduction in serious injuries by 2035 would be reasonable; of course, fatalities would still happen on occasion, unfortunately, which the City Manager noted is sometimes due to driver behavior and not the roadway. Mr. Linnenbringer understood the thought process, but he did not think zero fatalities was reasonable from a traffic standpoint; he preferred the DOT’s approach of *working toward* versus achieving zero. He noted that the most recent fatality was at Rt. 9/Washington Street, where there is no upcoming project planned for roadway improvement, nor could he imagine one that would fix the issues at that intersection; he also did not anticipate the speed limit being reduced effectively on Rt. 9 anytime soon.

The Committee liked the idea of “working toward zero” by 2035 because accomplishing zero fatalities and serious injuries might not be possible. The Committee agreed that there should be some categorization focused on obstacles in the roadway, because the City can never prevent issues with driver behaviors, like driving drunk.

Vice Chair Tobin liked the idea of something measurable, like the SMART goals, because just saying “safer” is not necessarily measurable. She thought accident studies would be needed to determine whether an accident was due to a roadway or a driver. Mr. Tang said the safe systems approach could be helpful in this regard; all aspects of the system are accounted for and have a role to play. Mr. Rusnock agreed, noting that post-crash care is one of the safe systems elements.

The discussion returned to whether to include minor injuries in the City’s goal. Mr. Linnenbringer was unsure about including minor injuries, which he thought would increase with more roundabouts; Vice Chair Tobin said she would want to know that, even if she did not like the answer. The consultants confirmed that they were talking about minor injuries to persons, not property damage to vehicles. Mr. Goff agreed that transitioning to a roundabout, like at Key

Road, would likely reduce serious injuries but increase minor injuries and property damage. Mrs. Roark favored including minor injuries sometime in the future after focusing on serious injuries first, especially with all of the roadway changes pending in Keene, which could skew things. Mr. Johnson suggested that minor injuries could be an action item for the future, rather than a goal, and Mrs. Roark agreed. The City Manager said that focusing on the more serious injuries could help the City to prioritize projects, and Mr. Rusnock said there could also be a phased approach, with a goal to reduce minor injuries by a later date. Mr. Johnson suggested a goal of working toward no more than one fatality every two years. Mr. Linnenbringer favored the DOT's goal of working toward a 50% reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2035. However, he thought 2040 or 2045 could be a more realistic timeframe to work toward zero fatalities and serious injuries, which Mr. Tang noted was similar to the St. Paul, MN, goal.

Mr. Linnenbringer made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Mr. Johnson. On a vote of 8–0, the Roadway Safety Plan Committee unanimously agreed on a project goal: for the City of Keene to work toward zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 2045, with a 50% reduction within 10 years.

- 8) **New Business**
- 9) **Discussion Items**
- 10) **Next Meeting: June 24, 2024**

The consultants will try to share the draft Roadway Safety Action Plan two weeks before the next meeting. Mr. Roberge might attend the next meeting remotely. VHB will present the Action Plan to the MSFI Committee on June 26 and to the City Council on July 18. Ideally, the Council will adopt the Plan by early August to facilitate applying for a supplemental planning or demonstration grant, with a deadline at the end of August and a requirement to have the Action Plan approved in advance.

11) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mack adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
May 28, 2024

Reviewed and edited by,
Brett Rusnock, PE, Infrastructure Project Manager