



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

## City of Newton, Massachusetts

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April 10, 2023

Honorable City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

Honorable City Councilors:

I respectfully submit this docket item to this Honorable Council requesting changes to roadway infrastructure as part of the Elliot Street Traffic Calming Project in Newton Upper Falls. Certain aspects of the proposed design require the approval of the Public Facilities Committee, specifically installation of a new crosswalk with a flashing beacon, intersection realignment, changes to roadway width, and creation of sidewalk-level bike lane.

The portion of Elliot Street that is included as part of this traffic calming effort is between Linden Street and Wetherell Street, with the focus being the sharp curve at the Mechanic Street intersection. The goals of this project include:

- Improved safety for all users;
- Reduced vehicular speed on Elliot Street;
- Improved pedestrian accessibility and connectivity;
- Maintain and improve space for bicyclists riding along Elliot Street

DPW utilized an engineering consultant to develop and evaluate conceptual options and make a recommendation for a preferred alternative. Our consultant evaluated two different alternatives in the Linden Street area, six alternatives in the Mechanic Street area, and three alternatives in the Cottage St / Wetherell St area. Our consultant then created 12 different “packages” with various combinations of the alternatives in each area of the project. Each of the conceptual alternatives were reviewed and discussed in detail with City staff and the City’s Complete Streets Working Group (comprised of City staff from DPW, Planning, Newton Police, Newton Fire, Parks & Rec, Schools, the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), and Safe Routes to School (SRTS)). The complete conceptual evaluation is detailed in the attached memorandum from BETA Group, Inc., dated February 20, 2023.

Based on the work completed to date, the preferred alternative is “Package 11” and includes:

- Elliot Street and Linden Street Alternative 2. The preferred alternative provides a new crosswalk across Elliot Street, with pedestrian-actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB’s)
- Elliot Street and Mechanic Street Alternative 3A. The preferred option for the Mechanic Street intersection proposes to:
  - Realign Mechanic Street to create a more typical intersection. The simpler intersection will reduce driver confusion and will provide clear guidance to all users to safely travel through the intersection.

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- Reduce roadway width in immediate vicinity of the intersection to reduce vehicle speeds.
- Creates sidewalk level bike lanes.
- Reduces pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, with only one short crosswalk across Mechanic Street, approximately 20-24 ft long. Pedestrians crossing Mechanic Street today must cross two roadway openings and are in conflict with vehicles for a total of 50 ft)
- Cottage Street Alternative 1. The preferred option provides:
  - A new crosswalk across Elliot Street between Cottage Street and Wetherell Street
  - Proposed to construct curb bump-outs to narrow the travel lanes and reduce pedestrian crossing distance
  - Creates sidewalk level bicycle infrastructure for safe bicycle travel.
  - Provides pedestrian-actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) at the new crosswalk.

The conceptual construction cost estimate for the traffic calming improvements described above is \$390,000. DPW is anticipating that both the engineering design work and construction would be funded with the Traffic Calming line item in DPW Transportation Division's operating budget.

Please see the attached memo from DPW Commissioner McGonagle and the detailed concepts development memo from the City's consultant Beta Group, Inc.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruthanne Fuller". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller