



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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Office of the Mayor

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March 28, 2022

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 the approval of a 25% design for the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign Project in Auburndale. The Council needs to select one of two alternatives for the Ash Street intersection portion of this state-funded project.

The Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign Project will reconstruct a critical compromised segment of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway from Lyons Field to the Marriott Driveway. The timeline and design for this project is closely coordinated with MassDOT's larger \$23.8 million Project #110980 Newton-Weston-Bridge Rehabilitation South Avenue (Rt. 30) over the Charles River, which shares a project limit at the Marriott Driveway on Commonwealth Avenue. The Council has previously reviewed and approved that project design, including the new roundabout feature at Auburn/Commonwealth Ave.

The project will: a) improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connectivity and ADA compliance, b) increase green space and access to the Charles River by linking to myriad path and trail networks, c) improve intersection safety at Ash St (in alternative 1) and all crossings and, d) improve transit access in the area by upgrading and consolidating bus stops, and e) provide a brand new surface for vehicles.

Specifically, the design will:

- Convert the carriage road to pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Improve the sidewalk on the south side and reconstruct sidewalks
- Provide new pavement markings and signage
- Add pedestrian activated RRFB crossings
- Add raised crossings at side streets
- Reconstruct Ash Street (alternative 1 only)
- Maintain parking at Lyons Field

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To stay on a coordinated schedule for the MassDOT-funded project, the desired timeline for the Carriageway Redesign Project is follows:

- Public Facilities and Full Council Votes – April, 2022
- 75% design submittal – Spring 2022
- 100% design submittal – Summer 2022
- Construction start – Spring 2023
- Construction complete summer 2024

Two design alternatives exist for the segment of the project at Ash Street. MassDOT's preferred alternative reconstructs Ash Street to be fully accessible.

- There will be an accessible pedestrian crossing with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Ash Street across Commonwealth Avenue. The existing traffic signal will be removed.
- Traffic calming is provided on Commonwealth Avenue to slow speeds at Ash Street.
- More green space is added by closing the no-longer-needed exit onto Commonwealth Avenue from the Carriageway.
- South side crosswalks are reconstructed.
- The Ash Street intersection is tightened/squared to slow speeds and an accessible crossing is added across Ash where it currently does not exist.

Alternative design #2 reduces the limits of the project to leave Ash Street untouched. This maintains the existing traffic signal at Ash Street and none of the above improvements are made. Many of the residents of the Islington Peninsula prefer this option since they exit left out of Islington onto the Carriageway to use the existing Ash Street signal to head eastbound on Commonwealth Avenue. The State will not allow a traffic signal in a reconstructed Ash Street intersection since traffic volumes and patterns do not meet the warrant rules.

Both the Planning and Public Works Departments support Alternative #1, as does the City's ADA Coordinator Jini Fairley. The pros and cons of each alternative will be presented in detail at the upcoming council committee meeting to aid in decision-making.

There is no funding request associated with this docket request. The CPA is providing \$390,000 for final design funding. MassDOT has fully funded construction, which is estimated at \$5.5 million, for funding year FY23.

Please see the attached memo from Transportation Planning Director Nicole Freedman.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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Barney S. Heath
Director

March 16, 2022

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 20459

RE: Request to docket Council review and vote on design of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign Project, also known as MassDOT Project #610674.

Dear Mayor,

I respectfully request to docket a meeting with Council to:

1. Review the 25% design of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign project
2. Select one of the two alternatives for Ash Street, and
3. Vote to approve the design with the selected alternative

COUNCIL VOTE

As you know, Council must vote to approve changes to traffic operations. As we have done with similar large capital projects like the West Newton and Newtonville Village Enhancement Projects, we request a vote to approve the design at the 25% design level so we have confidence that further design money will be spent on a project that goes to completion. While the vote will be a final vote by Council on the project, the City will continue to consult with Council through completion of the project.

TIMELINE

The timeline and design for this project is closely coordinated with MassDOT's \$23.8M Project 110980 Newton-Weston-Bridge Rehabilitation South Avenue (Rt. 30) over the Charles River, which shares a project limit at the Marriott Driveway on Commonwealth Avenue. To stay on a coordinated schedule, which is required to maintain our funding with MassDOT, our timeline must remain as follows:

- Public Facilities and Full Council Votes – April, 2022
- 75% design submittal – Spring 2022
- 100% design submittal – Summer 2022
- Construction start – Spring 2023
- Construction complete summer 2024

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign Project will reconstruct a critical compromised segment of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway from Lyons Field to the Marriott Driveway. The project will: a) improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connectivity and ADA compliance b) increase green space and access to the Charles River by linking to myriad path and trail networks c) improve intersection safety at Ash St (in alternative 1) and all crossings and d) improve transit access in the area by upgrading and consolidating bus stops

Specifically, the design will:

- Convert the carriage road to pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Improve the sidewalk on the south side and reconstruct sidewalks
- Provide new pavement markings and signage
- Add pedestrian activated RRFB crossings
- Add raised crossings at side streets
- Reconstruct Ash Street (alternative 1 only)
- Maintain parking at Lyons Field

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Two design alternatives exist for the segment of the project at Ash Street. MassDOT's preferred alternative reconstructs Ash Street to be fully accessible.

- There will be an accessible pedestrian crossing with an RRFB at Ash Street across Commonwealth Avenue. The existing signal will be removed.
- Traffic calming is provided on Commonwealth Avenue to slow speeds at Ash Street
- More green space is added by closing the no-longer-needed exist onto Commonwealth Avenue from the Carriageway.
- South side crosswalks are reconstructed
- The Ash Street intersection is tightened/squared to slow speeds and an accessible crossing is added across Ash where it currently doesn't exist.

The alternative design reduces the limits of the project to leave Ash Street untouched. This maintains the existing signal at Ash Street, at the cost of not implementing the above improvements. Many of the residents of the Islington Peninsula prefer this option since they exit left out of Islington onto the Carriageway to use the existing Ash Street signal head eastbound on Commonwealth Avenue.

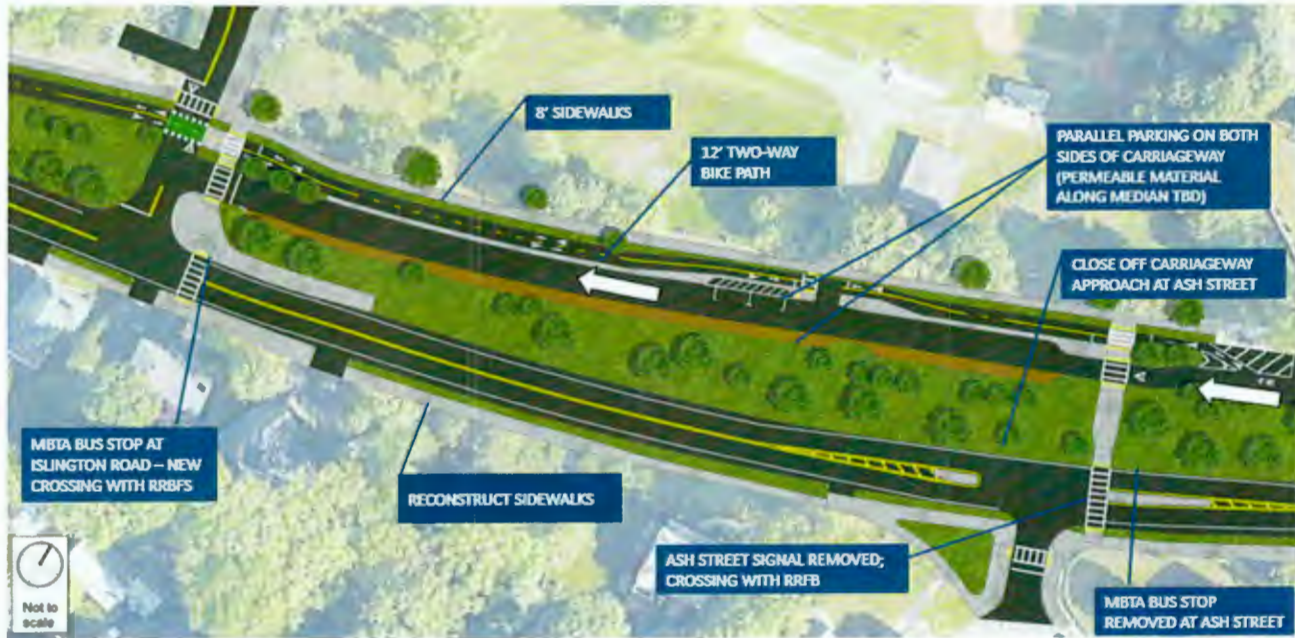
PROJECT FUNDING

There is no funding request associated with this docket request. The CPA is providing \$390,000 for final design funding. MassDOT has fully funded construction, which is estimated at \$5.5M, for funding year FY23.

For more information on the project, please go to:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/transportation-planning/projects/commonwealth-avenue-carriageway-redesign/-fsiteid-1#!/>

Islington Road to Ash Street – Preferred Design (with Ash)



Islington Road to Ash Street – Alt Design (without Ash)

