

City of Newton

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS****OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

Ruthanne Fuller

1000 Commonwealth Avenue

Mayor

Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449

Date: October 5, 2022  
To: Public Facilities Committee  
From: James McGonagle, Commissioner  
Subject: Request Mitigation Funds for Safety Improvements at two Lowell Avenue Intersections

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Dear Councilors,

Please see the below information pertaining to Docket Item #407-22 requesting approval of \$50,000 from a special permit mitigation fund to improve safety at the Lowell Avenue and Austin Street intersection and the Hull Street, Highland Street, and Lowell Avenue intersection.

The section of Lowell Avenue between Austin Street and Hull Street was identified in the 2017 traffic calming prioritization memo as the number one priority for traffic calming and has continued to remain a top priority in each of the following years' memos. This area of Lowell Avenue is a walking and biking route to school. DPW provided an update to City Council regarding our Traffic Calming evaluation and prioritization process at a joint meeting of the Public Facilities Committee and Public Safety & Transportation Committee on June 8, 2022 (Item #70-22). Traffic Calming at both Lowell Avenue intersections were discussed at the June 8, 2022, meeting.

The intersection of Lowell Avenue and Austin Street sees multiple vehicular accidents a year and is not pedestrian friendly. Adding bump outs and pedestrian medians will greatly improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists by reducing crossing lengths, reducing speeds, and improving sight lines.

The intersection of Lowell Avenue, Highland Street, and Hull Street is a high pedestrian crossing for students going to Newton North High School and is located very close to a pick-up and drop-off area for the school. The addition of bump-outs to this intersection will narrow the roadway, which will shorten pedestrian crossings and reduce vehicle speeds. It is important to note that DPW will be addressing a drainage issue that is causing roadway deterioration at the intersection of Highland Street and Lowell Avenue this spring or summer. The repair will require us to excavate at the intersection and this will give us the opportunity to efficiently address the drainage issue and improve safety at the same time.

Regarding the request for additional information about Traffic Calming spending from the already approved DPW operating budget, in FY22 a total of \$397,580.11 was expended from the Traffic Calming budget. As discussed at the September 21, 2022, meeting, we were fortunate that DPW was able to transfer-bill \$215,401.82 to the Buildings Department Zervas School project, as that project specifically allocated money for "off-site improvements" that were utilized for Traffic Calming on Beethoven Avenue and Allen Avenue. As a result, DPW was able to carry-over significant funds from FY22 into FY23, and DPW is not asking for the approval of any additional funds beyond the \$50,000 from a special permit mitigation fund.

James McGonagle  
Commissioner

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