



# Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

## City of Newton In City Council

**Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

Present: Councilors Grossman (Chair), Downs, Greenberg, Lucas, Wright, Block, Bixby and Lipof

City Staff: Mr. Koses, Transportation Coordinator and Isaac Prizant, Traffic Engineer

Others Present: NewTV, Dimitry Pechyoni and Jesse Corey

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link:[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnRUiyLCL\\_8&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjVWX8R9k0Ox5M\\_0URb-jS39](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnRUiyLCL_8&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjVWX8R9k0Ox5M_0URb-jS39)

### **#30-24      Appeal of Traffic Council Decision TC35-23**

DIMITRY PECHYONI, 99 North Street, appealing the approval of Traffic Council petition TC35-23 on October 26, 2023 for prohibiting parking at all times along the following areas of Farwell Street: south and west side from a point 170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street (southerly intersection). This appeal relates to the block of Farwell Street between Joseph Road and North Street. (Ward 3)

**Action:**            **Public Safety & Transportation Denied 8-0**

**Note:**                Mr. Koses and Mr. Pechyoni joined the Committee.

Mr. Koses provided a PowerPoint, attached.

Mr. Koses explained that Farwell Street is a 20-foot wide road, with parking on both sides except within a section of the street that is 22-feet with parking allowed on both sides. There is a section of the middle of Farwell Street where parking is not allowed on the west side. The only existing parking regulation on Farwell Street is that it is prohibited, all days, northwest side from a point 440 feet northeast of North Street northeasterly 415 feet. Besides that section, vehicles can park on either side of the street.

The original petition was docketed after the Transportation Division received an anonymous request to restrict parking on a portion of Farwell Street. The video received shows a school bus unable to pass through. Currently, parking is not restricted around the curve, either side. On July 13, 2023, Traffic Council voted to prohibit parking, all times, along the following areas of Farwell Street: south and west side from a point 170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street

(southerly intersection). This decision was appealed and discussed by this Committee on September 20, 2023, remanding it back to Traffic Council for further review. On October 26, 2023, Traffic Council reheard the item with additional analysis and voted again on their original action. Again, this decision was appealed and is before this Committee tonight relating to the first short block of Farwell Street between Joseph Road and North Street.

Input received from Newton Public School Transportation Director is that the bus picks up on North Street (NB) just before Farwell Street. The bus needs to turn around and supports restricting parking on one side.

Input received from the Newton Fire Department is that the video shows that the area is already extremely tight in ideal conditions and recommends parking on one side.

Mr. Koses concluded by stating it is necessary to restrict parking on the west side in order to use existing utility poles which improves aesthetics and due to the lack of sidewalks. Some residents prefer to park on the frontage but parking off road is not legal and vehicles could receive a \$15 citation. Vehicles are required to have all four tires on the road. It would be inconsistent to switch the no parking restriction to the east side on the short block.

Public Comment:

Mr. Pechyoni stated that he appealed this item because the apartment tenants choose to park on the frontage and have been for many years. People usually park on the west side of Farwell Street. He stated that the presentation shows a car parking completely on the frontage, we usually see about half the car on the street. A car takes more space parking on the east side due to the curb and he wants to create as much space as possible. It will be more efficient to prohibit parking on the west side. If a school bus travels from North Street it will be more convenient for the driver when cars don't park on the east side.

Chair Grossman asked Mr. Pechyoni if he is concerned with the small stretch or whole stretch of Farwell Street? Mr. Pechyoni answered that he is concerned with the small stretch from #97 to #99 Farwell Street and cannot support prohibiting parking on neither side. If parking is prohibited on the west side then there is no choice.

A resident stated that Farwell Street is too narrow and agrees that a parking restriction is necessary for safety reasons. It is difficult for buses to travel with parking on the east side, buses will travel into oncoming traffic and prefers parking be allowed on the west side or neither side.

A resident stated that residents choose to park on the frontage because of the availability and supports the west side, small section be exempt from a parking prohibition understanding that it is illegal to park on the frontage.

A resident stated that if trucks park on east side it makes difficult to exit driveways and supports a parking prohibition on the east side.

Committee members questions, answers, comments and concerns:

What is the minimum width necessary for fire truck access? Mr. Koses answered a smaller fire truck barely fits through the 22-foot section. The truck did not fit through the 20-foot section with small vehicles parked on both sides.

What is the reason for this appeal in this section of Farwell Street? Mr. Koses answered to be able to park on the frontage.

Are there parking prohibitions on Anthony Road, Farwell Circle and Joseph Road? Mr. Koses answered parking is allowed on Joseph Road, a narrow road, both sides. He did not review neighboring parking prohibitions. A resident answered that Anthony Road and Farwell Circle have no parking prohibitions and parking is allowed on both sides of Farwell Street.

We should limit parking on the west side because when people park on the frontage they block the sidewalk making people walk in the street. With parking near the corner, it is difficult to make a left turn. It would be safer to maintain parking on the east side.

It is necessary to make safe travel for buses and fire trucks. Traffic Council members voted twice unanimously that the street is too narrow to allow parking on both sides.

Chair Grossman asked Mr. Koses to address concerns regarding parking on the east side versus the west side. Mr. Koses answered that currently parking is allowed on both sides. Administratively, DPW can restrict parking up to 50 feet based on engineering judgment. If Farwell Street remains a concern, a new item could be docketed for Traffic Council's consideration.

Without further discussion, Councilor Downs made a motion to deny the appeal, upholding Traffic Council's decision. Committee members agreed 8-0.

**#29-24      Appeal of Traffic Council Decision TC57-23**

JESSE COREY, 64 Oak Cliff Road, appealing the denial of Traffic Council petition TC57-23 on November 16, 2023 for requesting a trial that would restrict access to Centre Street, southerly from Walnut Street, to all vehicles except bicycles. (Ward 6)

**Action:**      **Public Safety & Transportation Denied 8-0**

**Note:**      Mr. Koses, Mr. Prizant and Mr. Corey joined the Committee.

Mr. Koses provided a PowerPoint, attached.

Mr. Koses stated that the request is to close a portion of Centre Street to all vehicles except bicycles. On November 16, 2023, Traffic Council denied this item as it would be extremely impactful. Perhaps the original item was docketed because of the ongoing reconstruction project on Centre, Winchester and Needham Streets and signals at the Route 9 ramps. MassDOT is continuing to adjust and complete the reconstruction of the Centre, Needham Streets and Highland Avenue corridor, including signalization and circulation of the Centre Street and Route 9 intersection.

Public Comment:

Mr. Corey spoke on the reasons for his appeal, his statement is attached.

A resident stated that traffic on side streets is increasing and is a problem. People are driving in frustration due to traffic. It is concerning about the way people drive because of their frustration.

Mr. Corey asked if anyone would be in favor of having traffic control officers stationed to address the issues? Mr. Prizant answered that from DPW's perspective, we cannot commit the police's funding. Police details are very costly and there ongoing needs with construction projects and at times police details cannot be filled. The NPD would have to make the decision.

Committee members questions, answers, comments and concerns:

Some suggestions Mr. Corey recommended drivers already are doing. Drivers are taking a left before the light to avoid the backup. This proposal, if enacted, would be very disruptive. Perhaps the signals should be retimed.

This request would make traffic heavier.

Traffic signals at Route 9 have new traffic challenges.

Mr. Prizant stated that he communicated with MassDOT since the traffic signals were installed and is pleased with the plan revisions. There is no anticipated time frame at this time but he will continue to encourage MassDOT to move forward with the proposed changes.

Without further discussion, Councilor Downs made a motion to deny the appeal, upholding Traffic Councils decision. Committee members agreed 8-0.

**#50-24**      **Providing the Annual Report of the work of Traffic Council for 2023**  
DAVID KOSES, TRAFFIC COUNCIL CHAIR providing the Annual report of the work of the Traffic Council for 2023.

**Action:**      **Public Safety & Transportation voted No Action Necessary 8-0**

**Note:**      Mr. Koses joined the Committee.

Mr. Koses reviewed with Committee members the work of Traffic Council in 2023; this material was attached to the agenda. A summary of 2023 Traffic Council actions is attached. Mr. Koses said that during 2023, Traffic Council held 10 evening meetings. Traffic Council heard 76 items and took final action on 72 items, 4 of which are still being held.

Two docket items were denied in 2023. Four items were appealed to City Council. City Council upheld Traffic Council's decision by denying the items. Two appeal items were heard tonight denying the items, upholding Traffic Council's decision.

The maximum backlog during 2023 consisted of 19 items, the first time in 20 years there has been a short backlog. In the past, there were times we had five to six months of waiting. Traffic Council's meeting next week has three items on the agenda. Perhaps we are in a lull.

Committee members questions, answers and comments:

Because there are three items on the agenda, is that the total number of Traffic Council items unheard? Mr. Koses answered that many items are being held as trials and are not ready for discussion.

Council members thanked Mr. Koses and Traffic Division staff for their diligence. Chair Grossman thanked Councilor Downs for acting as the City Council representative on Traffic Council.

Without further discussion, Councilor Lipof made a motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 8-0.

The Committee adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Becky Grossman, Chair**

# Public Safety & Transportation

City of Newton

February 7, 2024

## Presentations for the 2.7.24 PS&T Meeting

- ❖ **#30-24 Appeal of Traffic Council Decision TC35-23**  
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- ❖ **#50-24 DAVID KOSES, TRAFFIC COUNCIL CHAIR** providing the Annual Report of the work of the Traffic Council for 2023

# 30-24



Appeal of Traffic Council Decision TC35-23 (Farwell Street)

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## Location Map: Farwell

30-24



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**View of Farwell Street**  
**Looking South toward North Street**

30-24



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**View of Farwell Street**  
**Looking South toward Joseph Rd & North St**

30-24



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**View of Farwell Street  
Looking North from Joseph Road**

30-24



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**View of Farwell Street Looking East  
Around the Curve and Toward Farwell Circle**

30-24



2.07.24

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- **Existing Parking Regulations on Farwell Street:** Prohibited, all days, northwest side from a point 440 feet northeast of North Street northeasterly 415 feet.
- **Transportation Division received anonymous request** to restrict parking on a portion of Farwell Street.
- **Video received showing bus unable to pass through.**
- **Currently not restricted around the curve, either side.**



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## Recommendation: Begin “No Parking” zone before hydrant, continue to North Street

# 30-24



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# Traffic Council Recommendation

## And Recommended TPR language

30-24

**Extend parking prohibition easterly, around the curve, and southerly and southerly to North Street.**

By REMOVING from the provisions of Sec. TPR-176. Parking regulations pertaining to particular streets., the following:

### *Farwell Street*

(1) Prohibited, all days, northwest side from a point 440 feet northeast of North Street northeasterly 415 feet.

By INSERTING into the provisions of Sec. TPR-176. Parking regulations pertaining to particular streets., the following:

### *Farwell Street*

(1) Prohibited, all days, south and west side from a point 170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street (southerly intersection).

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**Traffic Council Voted to Approve This Option on 7/13/2023.**



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# Video Taken 9.14.23

(Taken for 9.20.23 PS&T Meeting)

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## Item first heard by Traffic Council on 7/13/23:

- Bus picks up on North Street (NB) just before Farwell Street.
- Bus needs to turn around – so R onto Farwell; R onto Joseph; R onto Albemarle.
- Transportation Director supports restricting parking on one side.
- Traffic Council Voted, 5-0, to prohibit parking at all times along the following areas of Farwell Street: south and west side from a point 170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street (southerly intersection).

Appeal was filed. On 9/20/23 PS&T voted 8-0 to remand the item back to Traffic Council for further review.

## Traffic Council reheard the item on 10/26/23, with additional information presented:

- *(Additional Information is Presented on the next 3 slides.)*
- Traffic Council Voted again, 5-0, to prohibit parking at all times along the following areas of Farwell Street: south and west side from a point 170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street (southerly intersection).

Appeal was filed for the second time. Focus of appeal: short block of Farwell Street (North Street to Joseph Road)

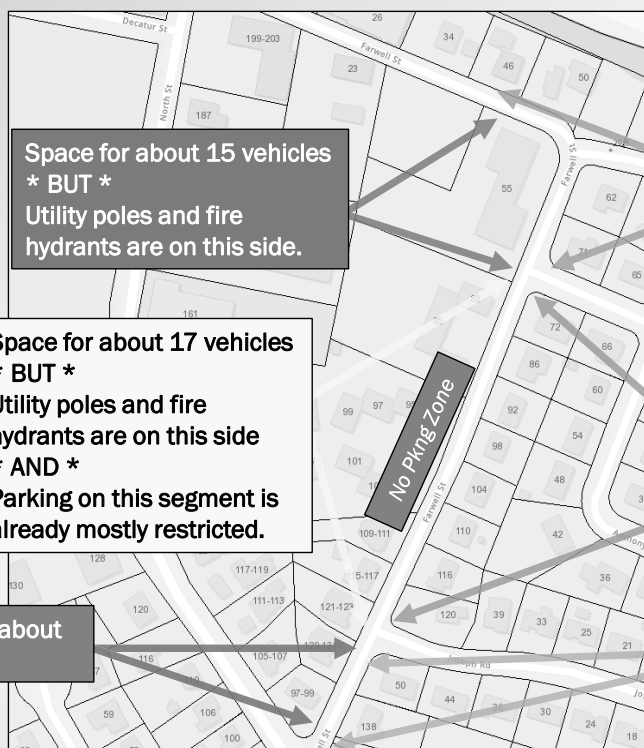
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# Additional Analysis Prepared

# For 10.26.23 Traffic Council Meeting



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# Input from Newton Public Schools For 10.26.23 Traffic Council Meeting

30-24

## Input from NPD Transportation Director:

- Bus picks up on North Street (NB) Just before Farwell Street.
- Bus needs to turn around
  - Turns R on Farwell;
  - Then Turns R on Joseph;
  - Then Turns R on Albemarle.
- Supports restricting parking on one side.

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# Input from Newton Fire Department For 10.26.23 Traffic Council Meeting

30-24

## Input from Newton Fire Department

- Engine used in the test is the thinnest.
- In the event of a fire, outriggers stick out an additional 6 feet when deployed.
- Parking on both sides would make deploying outrigger challenging.
- Already extremely tight with parking on both sides.
- Will become even narrower with snow
- Concern about accidental damage
- Recommend parking on one side.

Video Showing NFD Access  
(Farwell NB, between Crafts St & Joseph Rd):



Fire Engine Cannot Get Through

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# Fire Department Input (Continued) For 10.26.23 Traffic Council Meeting

30-24

Video Showing NFD Access  
(Farwell NB, north of Joseph Road):



Fire Engine Must Slow Down Significantly to Get Through

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## Traffic Council's Preferred Option With the TPR language

30-24

***Need to restrict parking on one side \*for safety\*  
More parking available on the west side... but  
Recommend restricting parking on the west side in  
order to use existing u-poles (for aesthetics)***

By REMOVING from the provisions of Sec. TPR-176.  
Parking regulations pertaining to particular streets., the  
following:

### *Farwell Street*

(1) Prohibited, all days, northwest side from a point 440  
feet northeast of North Street northeasterly 415 feet.

By INSERTING into the provisions of Sec. TPR-176.  
Parking regulations pertaining to particular streets., the  
following:

### *Farwell Street*

(1) Prohibited, all days, south and west side from a point  
170 feet west of Farwell Circle to North Street (southerly  
intersection).

***Traffic Council Voted to Approve  
This Option again on 10/26/2023.***



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# Our Understanding of the Second Appeal (Looking South toward North Street)

TC35-23

Appeal is focused on the restriction on one block of Farwell Street (Joseph Rd to North St)



Along this short block, we think that some residents want to switch the restriction (to restrict parking on the east side and to allow parking on the west side).

Traffic Council voted to restrict parking on the entire west side of the street (and to allow parking on the east side).

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# Reasons for voting to restrict parking on the west side (and to allow parking on the east)

TC35-23

2) We think that some residents prefer to park in this area, but parking off-the-road is not legal and vehicles could receive a citation. \$15 violation per Sec. 19-166(e).

3) Use of existing utility poles to post new "no parking" signs improves aesthetics by avoiding the need to install new poles.



1) Lack of sidewalks on a portion of the west side of this block.

4) It would be consistent to allow parking on the entire east side of the street. It would be inconsistent to switch the "no parking" restriction to the east side for this short block.

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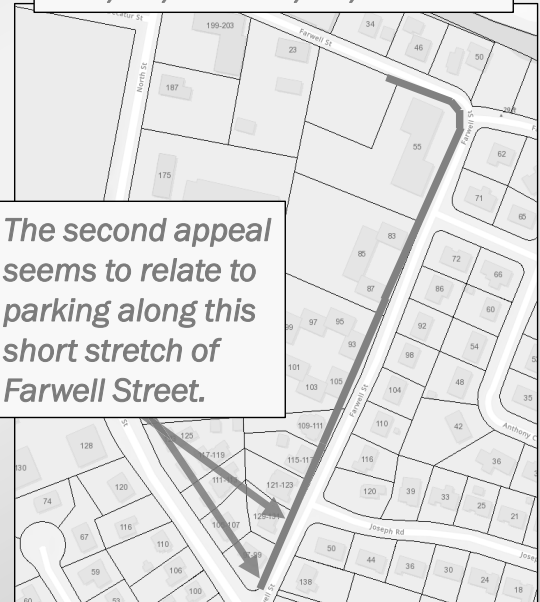
# Traffic Council Vote on 7.13.23 & 10.26.23 and Continued Staff Recommendation

30-24

*Need to restrict parking on one side \*for safety\*  
More parking available on the west side... but  
Recommend restricting parking on the west side for  
consistency and in order to use existing u-poles  
(for aesthetics)*



*Traffic Council Voted to Approve  
This "No Parking" Restriction  
on 7/13/23 & 10/26/23.*



*The second appeal  
seems to relate to  
parking along this  
short stretch of  
Farwell Street.*

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# 29-24



Request for a trial that would restrict access to Centre Street, southerly from Walnut Street, to all vehicles except bicycles



# View of Proposed Trial of Centre Street at Walnut Street

29-24



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# Background and Traffic Council Recommendation

29-24

This change is inappropriate and would be extremely impactful.

Traffic Council voted to Deny this Docketed Item (5-0) on 11/16/23.

All requirements for submitting an appeal to a TC vote, as described in Sec. 19-34, were met.

**Note:**

*MassDOT is continuing to adjust & complete the reconstruction of the Centre St/ Needham St/ Highland Avenue corridor, including signalization and circulation of the Centre Street & Route 9 intersection.*

Good evening,

My name is Jesse Corey. I live at 64 Oak Cliff Road in Newton. I am the original petitioner for this request, as well as the appellant. I want to say thank you to the Public Safety & Transportation Committee for addressing this issue tonight. I do not live in the neighborhood, but I commonly commute through there because I have a job at a business on Needham Street.

As you all know, this is a request to restrict access to Centre Street, southbound (technically southwesterly) from Walnut Street, for all vehicles except for bicycles. In case there is any confusion, I am not suggesting the block of Centre Street between Boylston Street and Walnut Street be changed to a one-way street, nor am I suggesting changing this block of Centre Street to a bicycle-only street. Northeasterly traffic on this block of Centre Street would not be affected at all by this change. In addition, northeasterly traffic has no legal alternative route because the alternative routes for southwesterly traffic include one-way streets. Despite having a "Do Not Enter" sign to restrict vehicles entering this block of Centre Street going southwesterly, this block of Centre Street would remain a two-way street. This means that every time any resident who lives on this block of Centre Street is returning to their home, they will only have access to their driveways coming from the Route 9 side. However, whenever residents leave their home, they would be permitted to turn either direction when exiting their driveway. Vehicles approaching southbound down Walnut Street would no longer be allowed to turn right onto Centre Street; vehicles approaching northbound up Walnut Street would no longer be allowed to turn left; and vehicles approaching southwest on Centre Street would no longer be allowed to go straight.

In October 2023, I filed the original petition for Traffic Council's consideration because I am disappointed about the fact that the newly installed traffic signal at Centre Street & Route 9 Ramps intersections are causing traffic going southwest on Centre Street to back up beyond Walnut Street. It is not a good thing when queues for one specific traffic light controlled intersection commonly back up beyond the previous traffic light. The Traffic Council discussed this request during their meeting on November 16, 2023, and voted unanimously to deny my request because of the large amounts of traffic this change would impact. I specifically requested a trial when I filed the original request for Traffic Council's consideration because I knew how impactful this change would be. I filed the appeal the week following the November 16, 2023 denial because I am unhappy about my request being denied. I am unhappy about this vote because of traffic congestion issues.

I have been communicating via email with the City's Transportation Engineer regarding this traffic issue over the past many months. I have been informed many times that MassDOT is continuing to make adjustments to signal timings and sequencing at the new Centre Street & Route 9 Ramps traffic signals. However, I do not think that will solve the issue I am trying to help solve, which is because the Centre Street at Walnut Street signal is outside of the MassDOT project limits, and because that signal does not operate on the same controller as the new Route 9 Ramps signal.

I also want to discuss that these traffic congestion issues commonly come up on the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Group on Facebook. Some residents have suggested through comments on posts about painting "Do Not Block Intersection" pavement markings within the Centre Street at Walnut Street intersection. I wish I could support that suggestion, but I am unwilling to support that suggestion because drivers would end up blocking the intersection both accidentally and on purpose. Drivers could block the intersection by accident because they do not notice until it is already too late that they won't get fully across the intersection. Drivers could also block the intersection on purpose because of not wanting to wait through more light cycles than necessary. There were also comments regarding congestion on Centre Street up to Allerton Road around 3:00 PM, as well as comments regarding vehicles not getting through the green right turn arrow from Walnut Street southbound onto Centre Street southwestbound.

During the Traffic Council hearing on November 16, 2023, I was the only member of the public who spoke during public comment, and I wish there were more members from the neighborhood who spoke. In addition, the recommendation presented at that Traffic Council hearing was to deny the request because the change would be extremely impactful. However, there was no data collected to suggest the change would be extremely impactful. Also, one of the slides shown as part of the presentation during that Traffic Council hearing shows what the proposed change would look like with signs. In real field conditions, I would suggest placing cones or barriers to block the lane because many cars would regularly ignore the "Do Not Enter" signs if no physical obstruction were in place. However, it would be necessary to leave enough space to allow bicycles to pass through, while also trying to guarantee the barricades will prevent cars, buses, and trucks from getting through.

I know this change would require the MBTA 59 outbound buses to reroute, but this would not cause any stops to be eliminated or relocated because the last bus stop prior to where buses would need to

reroute is at the corner of Walnut Street and Lincoln Street, and then the next stop on that bus line is on Winchester Street, just south of the new MassDOT traffic signals.

I am urging the committee to vote to remand this request to the Traffic Council to be able to conduct turning vehicle counts. I suggest the Traffic Council schedule to hear this request again in March 2024, and vote to hold for a trial. I do not have any recommendations regarding the amount of time the trial should take place. When the trial begins, I suggest placing an electronic message board on the Walnut Street bridge over the MBTA Green Line, informing drivers that right turns are no longer allowed onto Centre Street and instead to make the next right turn onto Floral Street. I am also suggesting putting out another electronic message board on Centre Street, facing southwestbound traffic, near Hyde Street, informing drivers that it is no longer legal to go straight at Walnut Street.

I respect any resident who lives on a quiet residential street very close to the location in which this change would occur, who is strongly opposed to this change because it would suddenly and dramatically increase the amount of traffic on their street than they are used to. I feel very strongly that I want this change to occur because of the traffic congestion issues.

Thank you.

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NEWTON, MA. 02459

# 50-24



DAVID KOSES, TRAFFIC COUNCIL CHAIR providing the Annual Report  
of the work of the Traffic Council for 2023

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## Summary of 2023 Traffic Council Actions

50-24

Traffic Council Meetings		Number: 10	
<b>Distribution by Vote</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct</b>
No Action Necessary		6	8%
Approved		64	84%
Approved as Amended		0	0%
Denied		2	3%
Heard in 2023, Held, and still being held at end of 2023		4	5%
Total Number of Items Heard:		76	100%
Trials Undertaken in 2023		7	9%
<b>Distribution of Items by Ward</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct</b>
1		17	22%
2		11	14%
3		11	14%
4		5	7%
5		4	5%
6		10	13%
7		3	4%
8		5	7%
Multiple Wards		10	13%
Total Number of Items Heard:		76	100%
Appeals of Traffic Council Decisions		4	5%
<b>Backlog during 2023</b>		<b># of Items</b>	<b>Date</b>
Average		17	
Minimum Backlog		14	11/16/23
Maximum Backlog		19	6/15/23

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