



Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Present: Councilors Albright (Chair), Getz, Laredo, Kalis, Kelley, Leary, Gentile, and Danberg

Also Present: Councilors Baker, Wright, Block, Lucas and Oliver

City Staff: Commissioner of Public Works James McGonagle, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Director of Transportation Planning Jenn Martin, Director of Transportation for DPW Ned Codd, Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Jenn Ciara, Traffic Engineer Issac Prizant, Associate Engineer John Daghljan and Director of Parks & Open Space Luis Perez Demorizi

All Public Facilities agendas and reports, both past and present, can be found at the following link: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/city-clerk/city-council/council-standing-committees/public-facilities-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Public Facilities Committee- May 15, 2024](#)

- #210-24 Eversource petition for Grant of Location for 160 Charlemont Street**
EVERSOURCE ENERGY petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain approximately 1174 feet of conduit in an easterly direction from manhole MH31725, at the intersection of Needham Street and Charlemont Street and to install and maintain two new manholes: MH31903 and MH31904 (Ward 8)
- Action: Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Councilors Kalis and Gentile not voting)**

Note: Joanne Callender, Eversource Representative presented the above request for a grant of location for 160 Charlemont Street. Ms. Callender stated that all four requests tonight are for the Northland Development.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak the public hearing was closed.

With no questions or comments from the committee, Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed 6-0 with Councilor Kalis and Gentile not voting.

#211-24 Eversource petition for Grant of Location for 50 Tower Road

EVERSOURCE ENERGY petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain approximately 1170 feet of conduit in an easterly direction from manhole MH31754 and install and maintain three new manholes: MH31754, MH31902, MH31755. (Ward 5)

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 7-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)**

Note: Joanne Callender, Eversource Representative presented the above request for a grant of location for 50 Tower Road.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak the public hearing was closed.

With no questions or comments from the committee, Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed 7-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

#213-24 Eversource petition for Grant of Location for 156 Oak Street

EVERSOURCE ENERGY petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain approximately 2644 feet of conduit in a southeasterly thence easterly direction from pole 322/11, approximately 240 feet northwest of Sweet Street and install and maintain three new manholes; MH31744, MH31901 and MH31743 (Ward 5)

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 7-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)**

Note: Joanne Callender, Eversource Representative presented the above request for a grant of location for 156 Oak Street.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak the public hearing was closed.

With no questions or comments from the committee, Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed 7-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

#212-24 Eversource petition for Grant of Location for 90 Christina Street

EVERSOURCE ENERGY petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain approximately 1164 feet of conduit in a southeasterly direction from manhole MH31722 at the intersection of Needham Street and Christina Street and install and maintain two new manholes: MH31742 and MH31756 (Ward 8)

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 7-0 (Councilor Gentile not voting)**

Note: Joanne Callender, Eversource Representative presented the above request for a grant of location for 90 Christina Street.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak the public hearing was closed.

With no questions or comments from the committee, Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed 7-0 with Councilor Gentile not voting.

#220-24 Approval of the installation of two raised intersections

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting approval of the installation of two raised intersection, in accordance with City Ordinance Section 26-51, at the intersections of Waverley Avenue at Franklin Street, and Brookline Street at Hartman Road.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 8-0**

Note: Jim McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works presented the request to install two raised intersections at the intersections of Waverly Avenue at Franklin Street and Brookline Street at Hartman Road. Commissioner McGonagle introduced Ned Codd, Director of Transportation for DPW and Traffic Engineer Issac Prizant.

Commissioner McGonagle explained that the intersections will be reconstructed to have a raised intersection, which is a proven traffic calming measure. This will help slow the speed of traffic, reduce traffic accidents and improve pedestrian safety. All four streets at each intersection will have a gradual 10 ft long transition ramp which elevates the vehicles 6 in. to go through the intersection. This will be at the same level as the sidewalks. Pedestrians will be protected by bollards at the corners. The design is similar to the raised intersection that was installed at Beethoven Ave and Puritan Street. The Fire Department is supportive of this plan. DPW and the Fire Department did test this raised intersection with a Fire Engine which helped them adjust the intersection so that the engine can easily travel through it. It was noted that these are an improvement to a traditional speed bump. These will be funded by ARPA funds and these projects were in the top 5 of the traffic calming evaluations.

Councilors expressed their support for the traffic calming measures at these intersections.

A councilor questioned if there would be a change to the location of the stop signs on Franklin. Mr. Codd explained that the stop sign will be moved back slightly from the intersection. There is an issue with the sight lines outbound from Waverly Ave and eastbound Franklin St traffic. But the raised intersections will slow both traffic streams. Commissioner McGonagle noted that they can move the stop sign at any time if problems arise.

Councilors raised concerns regarding the sight line at the Waverly and Franklin intersection.

There were also concerns raised by a councilor regarding the trees in this area and the abutting properties and to ensure they will not be damaged by traffic accidents or during construction.

A councilor asked the Commissioner to give consideration to winter weather with this raised intersection and asked what the design of the bollards would be. It was also noted that the Ward councilors would help with communicating with the neighbors as this project progresses.

Commissioner McGonagle explained that they are still working on the design and will stay in communication with the Ward councilors and the abutters.

A councilor questioned how bicyclists would be affected by the raised intersection. Commissioner McGonagle explained that the raised area will be the entire width of the intersection, but it is only a slight incline for bicyclist to ride over.

A councilor questioned what consideration was made for the intersection of Brookline and Harman since it is so close to a school and how was this intersection chosen.

Mr. Prizant explained that as stated previously this was a high priority for the department because of the crash and speed data that was collected. The school and the use of the roadway also raised it on the priority list.

Councilor Laredo motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#216-24 Transfer funds to for the City’s Accelerated Roads Program

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to transfer funds from several DPW Accounts resulting from FY24 savings in various DPW accounts to Acct# 01C40112-553100 as a part of the City’s Accelerated Roads Program

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|--|-------------|
| DPW Streets- Full Time Wages (0140120-511002)..... | \$500,000 |
| DPW Snow & Ice- Overtime (0140123-513010)..... | \$250,000 |
| DPW Snow & Ice- Contractors (0140123-529100)..... | \$200,000 |
| Comptroller’s- Snow/Ice Reserve (0110498-579400)..... | \$1,050,000 |

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 8-0**

Note: Jim McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works presented the request to transfer the above funds for the city’s Transportation Network Improvement Plan. Commissioner McGonagle explained that this will be a part of the \$9.5 million in the FY25 budget. He noted that having access to these funds now will help the city go out to bid on projects more efficiently.

It was asked that the Finance Committee look further into the funding sources for the Transportation Network Improvement Plan FY25 budget during their meeting.

Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#191-24 Authorization to appropriate and expend \$200,000 from the Stormwater Management Operating Reserve FY2024 Operating Budget

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend a total of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from the Stormwater Management Operating Reserve FY2024 Operating Budget to fund the design and installation of a subsurface system that will manage stormwater from Myrtle Street and McGrath Park.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 8-0**

Note: Jim McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works presented the request to transfer \$200,000 to fund the design and installation of a subsurface system that will manage stormwater from Myrtle Street and McGrath Park. Commissioner McGonagle explained that this work is being done along with the Parks and Rec improvement project for McGrath Park. The system will infiltrate stormwater run off and will reduce the city's phosphorus load into the Charles River.

Councilors expressed their support for the project and the reduction in phosphorus.

A councilor did ask to see schematics for the system to see if it could be used in other projects around the city.

Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#189-24 Approval of the 75% design of the Washington Street Pilot

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the approval of the 75% design for the Washington Street Pilot.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 7-0 (Councilor Danberg not voting)**

Note: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development, Jenn Ciara, Deputy Director of Planning and Development, Jenn Martin, Director of Transportation Planning and their consultants, Jessica Lizza, Manager of Traffic Engineering, Howard Stein Hudson, Bryan Jereb, Principal, Halvorson Tighe & Bond Studio presented the request to approve the 75% design of the Washington Street Pilot.

Ms. Ciara and the team went through the attached presentation. She went through the progress of this project so far that brought them to the meeting tonight. She noted that the plans being presented tonight were presented at a community meeting.

The limits of this project are from the interjection of Chestnut Street to Lowell Avenue on Washington Street. This pilot will help lay the groundwork for a potential larger reconstruction

project for Washington Street. The goal of this project is to make a safer and more attractive portion of Washington Street. To achieve these goals, the pilot will have two to three vehicle lanes, separated bicycle lanes, provide ample parking, increase greenery and landscaping. This project is in line with the Washington Street Vision Plan, which includes testing concepts before making permanent changes. The scope of this project will include temporary materials that can change and will not have major construction. There will be one travel lane in each direction with some left turning lanes. The project is aiming to reduce speeds, make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street and improve parking accessibility on the south side.

Ms. Ciara explained that they have been asked why a two-way shared use path was chosen instead of a one way on both sides. One reason is the impact on the crossings. The path on the southside has less conflicts with side streets and will make it safer for all travelling on the road. This plan will also help with the lack of sidewalks on the south side.

Ms. Lizza explained the attached map of the proposed changes. She explained that there will be a buffer for the bicycle lane, which will be a cement module with flex posts. There will be several left turn lanes onto the side streets that see the most traffic. It was noted that they can still look at the other side streets for left turn lanes. Commissioner McGonagle noted that they will have to come back to the Council for approval if they were to add or remove a left turn lane. Additionally, Ms. Lizza explained that they will have a refuge island at crossings which will improve pedestrian safety. There will also be bus stop improvements to help with accessibility. She noted that they will be looking to maintain parking on the southside where the new dog park will be.

Mr. Jereb noted that landscaping will be part of this project. This will include adding trees, shrubs and other plantings to help with screening along the highway and to beautify the area. He stated they will be mindful of only adding trees that will not interfere with the MBTA utility.

Ms. Martin explained that a major objective of this project is to reduce speeds in this area to improve safety for all. She went through the attached data regarding the speed and crash data that has been collected on Washington Street. She also provided example projects related to road diets. This includes the Summer St Hingham, MA project, Rte. 135 Wellesley, MA project, Nontanum Road project and the recently completed Tremont Street project.

Ms. Lizza went through the parking for the project which will be approximately 61 spaces. There is a construction project in the area right now and once that has been completed there will be additional 12 spaces.

The metrics for the project are a part of the attached presentation.

Councilors raised concerns regarding parking and how it could affect small businesses in the area. It was asked if they were reached out to.

Ms. Ciara explained that the department did reach out to all businesses in the area. There will be a four-space reduction near Parsons Street but they believe they still have ample parking. The pilot will help the team to continue to look at parking.

A councilor raised safety concerns with the bike lane when someone is turning onto Washington Street from a side street and asked that this to be continued to be examined.

A councilor suggested that there should be additional traffic data during different times of the year.

A councilor expressed the need to review the queuing data and was reluctant to approve the project without understanding the impact on queuing. Ms. Caira assured that the queuing data would be made available.

A councilor asked for clarification on the project budget – how much ARPA funds were reserved for the project as well as project costs. Ms. Caira assured that budget and cost data would be made available to the committee.

A councilor asked the team to continue to examine the kinds of plantings in that area due to its location near the highway to assure their longevity.

Councilors noted that this is just a pilot so there are more opportunities for data collection and improvements.

A councilor asked if the state would have the authority over the vegetation in the area. Ms. Lizza explained that they will plant to avoid encroachment near MassDOT equipment.

City Staff and the consultants noted that they will be willing to change throughout the project and will stay in communication with the City Council as the pilot progresses.

After the conclusion of the meeting the Planning Department provided the attached financials for the project at the request of councilors.

Councilor Kelley motioned to approve which passed 7-0 with Councilor Danberg not voting.

The Committee adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Albright, Chair



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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Barney Heath
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2024

TO: Marc Laredo, City Council President
City Council

FROM: Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Development
Jenn Martin, Director of Transportation Planning

RE: **#189-24 Approval of the 75% design of the Washington Street Pilot**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting approval of the 75% design of the Washington Street.

MEETING: May 20, 2024

CC: City Council
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer
James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works
Ned Codd, Director of Transportation Operations

At the May 15, 2024, Public Facilities meeting, Councilors requested additional information regarding the Washington Street Pilot project including budget details, queuing analysis, more information regarding when and how often data will be collected, and how changes will be made to the pilot, if necessary. The cost estimate and technical analysis (including intersection queuing) provided by consultant Howard Stein Hudson can be found on the Washington Street website here: www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet.

Budget and Cost Estimate

There are two funding sources for the Washington Street Pilot. The Pilot Design/Engineering Services contract with Howard Stein Hudson (HSH) has covered and will cover existing condition documentation and analysis, development of concept options, public and City Council engagement, development of 100% engineering plans and associated permitting, bid documents, pilot evaluation, on-call pilot revisions (as needed), and MassDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project

initiation technical assistance. The full design contract with HSH is \$490,540 and is funded through previously collected cannabis community impact fees.

The budget for the actual construction for the Pilot is currently set at \$2.7 million and will be funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. And while the current working 75% construction budget estimate is approximately \$1.5 million, the final construction costs will be determined when bids are accepted later this year. In addition to constructing the pilot as designed, we are planning to include a contingency amount into the construction contract that would allow for approved changes to be made post-implementation.

At the Public Facilities meeting, several City Councilors requested that pre-pilot baseline data as well as more frequent post- implementation data be gathered as part of the Pilot evaluation check-ins to be provided to the full City Council at regular intervals. Planning and Public Works are working with the consultant on a scope for these additional services which, if approved, would be also funded out of the \$2.7 million ARPA funds set-aside for the Pilot project.

Intersection Queuing

Howard Stein Hudson collected data at every intersection in the project boundaries, both signalized and unsignalized. This analysis includes the level of service, intersection delay, the volume to capacity ratio (a measurement of demand to intersection capacity – less than 0.92 is ideal), and the 50th and 95th percentile queuing lengths. The 50th percentile queuing length represents the average queue length during peak hours and the 95th percentile represents the queue length during the peak of the peak hours (only occurring a couple cycles during the peak hours).

The existing conditions intersection analysis can be found on page 18 of HSH's April 8, 2024 technical memoranda, found [here](#). Intersection queues will be measured and monitored at 1-, 2-, and 3-years post-implementation and compared to the existing data.

Pilot Modifications/Duration/Long-Term Plan

Questions have been raised by City Councilors about whether modifications to the Pilot design can be made and how the City Council will be made aware of changes. The short answer to the question of whether changes can be made is yes. The construction of the Pilot is deliberately structured to accommodate modifications to aspects of the Pilot shown through post-implementation data to be warranted. Proposed changes to the pilot design will be communicated in advance to the City Council and major changes, such as adding or removing turn lanes, will come to the City Council for review and approval.

The pilot is anticipated to be in place until the permanent improvements are made to Washington Street. Monitoring and data collection are anticipated to be done for three years post-implementation. Monitoring can also be extended beyond the three-year period as necessary.

The stated goal of the pilot is to improve this stretch of Washington Street from how it functions today. The pilot is designed to test and monitor before major investment is made. The current model is structured such that the City Council will review data and results from the pilot at the 1-, 2- and 3-year post-implementation dates. It is anticipated that the pilot experiment will provide demonstrable

evidence to pursue and gain State Transportation Improvement Program funding to make permanent long-term changes to the roadway.

From: Jenn Martin

Sent: Friday, May 17, 2024 2:16 PM

To: John Oliver <joliver@newtonma.gov>

Cc: Barney Heath <bheath@newtonma.gov>; Jennifer Caira <jcaira@newtonma.gov>; Carol Moore <cmoore@newtonma.gov>; Susan Albright <salbright@newtonma.gov>; Cassidy Flynn <cflynn@newtonma.gov>; Ned Codd <ncodd@newtonma.gov>; Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>

Subject: RE: Washington Street Pilot

Dear Councilor Oliver,

Thank you for reaching out for clarification and more information. We answer some of your questions in the memo in the Friday packet, which I attach. We have also added more supplementary materials to the project website: www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet.

- We have allocated \$500k for the pilot design out of the general operating fund, and have spent ~\$300k of this to date.
 - Yes, around \$300,000 has been spent as of the end of April 2024. The attached memo details additional items remaining in our contract with the design consultant, Howard Stein Hudson
- We have also allocated \$2.7MM of federal ARPA funds for this project, and right now we have an estimated project cost of around \$1.2MM (understanding there are some additional elements to add to the estimate)
 - The figure mentioned at the Public Facilities Committee meeting was \$1.5 million. This is the budget estimate from the 75% design; final construction costs will be determined when construction bids come in later this year. We also plan to include a contingency amount in the construction contract which will allow for changes to be made post-implementation. City Councilors also requested more frequent collection of post-implementation data; this would be an additional cost as well.
- Please confirm that the total pilot duration is 3 years? (there have been several discussions about this, but I'd like to ensure we have a shared understanding)
 - The Pilot is anticipated to be in place until permanent improvements are made to Washington St. The proposed level of monitoring and data collection outlined in the slides from the Public Facilities meeting will continue for the first three years post-implementation. Monitoring can additionally be extended beyond the three-year period as necessary.
- How frequently do we figure changes to the road configuration will (or can?) be made?
 - We anticipate that minor changes can be made quickly, especially when a safety concern is identified. For example, shifting the modular concrete curbing and flexposts to keep drivers out of the bike lanes, and adding more hatch marks in areas where parking is not allowed. For larger changes like

adding or removing turn lanes, we will come to City Council for review and approval.

- What is the extent of the changes we are considering within the pilot duration? (eg. adding / removing a parking spot, moving a lane change, changing signal timing)
 - Yes, all of these. We will also be working with projects like Newton Crossing/Dunstan East to fully incorporate that section of Washington St. into the Pilot once they have restored access to the sidewalk.
- How do these changes impact the budget and how many of these edits are in the \$1.2MM estimate already?
 - The \$1.5 million estimate mentioned at the meeting is a preliminary cost estimate from our project design team with the level of detail commensurate with the 75% design. It does not include changes and tweaks to the Pilot; we are planning to include a contingency amount in the construction contract to allow for changes to be made post-implementation. The project will go out to bid this fall; when bids come back we will then know the construction costs.
- Slide 27 shows traffic counts in both directions, do we have the same counts available for the side streets shown on slide 28? I ask as it might be very useful to know if traffic is, for example coming to Washington St FROM Cross St, or is coming OFF Washington St to Cross St.
 - The detailed traffic counts and turning movement counts are shown in the April 8, 2024 technical memo from Howard Stein Hudson on the project website. We collected both turning movement counts onto the side streets and turning movement counts off of the side streets for AM and PM Peak hours. The easiest way to view this is the map shown in Figure 4, page 13.
- Just so I can follow along, what does 'ATR' mean in the metric descriptions?
 - ATR is Automatic Traffic Recorder.
- On slide 28, why is Lowell Ave shown twice with different counts?
 - This is now clarified in the slide deck on the project website. One is north and the other south.
- In terms of methodology for measurement, several questions came up last night that are important. These include what will be measured (bi-directional traffic, traffic queues), which streets and for how long, at what intervals during the pilot. When will all of this be 100% clear in terms of design?
 - At the end of Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 we will be collecting Turning Movement Counts and Automatic Traffic Recorder Counts at the locations shown on the map on page 37 of the April 8, 2024 technical memo. We will work with our consultant to determine the appropriate duration of this data collection; some of the initial counts were up to 7-days, continuous. Intersection queues will also be measured and monitored at 1-, 2-, and 3-years post-implementation. The existing conditions intersection analysis can be found on Table 6, page 18 of the April 8, 2024 technical memo. City Councilors had asked for more frequently monitoring; we are

working with our consultant on a scope and costs for additional data collection.

Best regards,

Jenn

Jenn Martin

Director of Transportation Planning

City of Newton, MA

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