



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

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

Also Present: Councilor Kelley

City Staff: Captain Daniel Devine, Newton Police Department

All 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-safety-transportation-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: https://youtu.be/jLlK-lydtWU?list=PLqJiDbvfnjVWX8R9k00x5M_0URb-jS39

#227-24 Semi-annual public auto inspections

POLICE DEPARTMENT submitting reports of semi-annual public auto inspections for review.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Approved 7-0, Councilor Greenberg not voting**

Note: Captain Devine joined the Committee.

Captain Devine stated that all nine vehicles were inspected and passed inspection in March and May 2024, this was attached to the agenda.

Without discussion, Councilor Downs made a motion to approve. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Greenberg not voting.

#201-24 Requesting a policy discussion, review, and possible action related to parking on-street and in municipal lots

COUNCILORS GROSSMAN, DOWNS AND LAREDO requesting a discussion and review of parking policy related to on-street parking and parking in municipal lots, including possible action on related ordinances and permit programs.

Public Safety & Transportation Held 8-0 on 04/17/24

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0, Councilor Greenberg not voting**

Note: Captain Devine joined the Committee.

Chair Grossman stated that in our April meeting, we discussed how we wanted to proceed with ideas on parking policies. The conclusion was to keep it in committee now for a variety of reasons. The goal is to brainstorm, gather ideas, key issues and concerns. We will not be taking public comment tonight.

Councilor Block stated that different cities and towns have diverse overnight parking requirements. Denser communities have Newton's type of problems. Places we study should include modest size cities or suburban areas. Councilor Block provided the attached back-up material with data from different communities.

Councilor Downs stated that DPW indicated they can clear the streets without the winter overnight parking ban in place. Some residents see the winter overnight parking ban as inconvenient and inequitable. Opponents of the current winter overnight parking ban have noted reasons including inconvenience, inequity, people with disabilities, people who can't get down their driveways, etc. They have also noted it encourages more driveways being built and the installation of curb cuts which means that either lawns or trees get removed, and we have more impervious surface, when we're trying to reduce that. This discussion allows us to think of ways to regulate parking or define various programs.

Councilor Downs provided a working document on options, obstacles, opportunities and comments on permits, time limits, street sweeping schedule, meters, and the winter overnight parking ban, attached. She asked what other program could be added to this chart allowing us to look at different permits or time limits.

Questions, answers, comments and concerns:

In some communities, residents park on the odd side of the street, on odd days. On even days, they park on the even side. The streets don't become a parking lot, and offenders are either towed or ticketed. This would help the many narrow streets in Newton.

How many residences don't have off street parking? Chair Grossman answered that perhaps the Planning Department has this data. A Councilor answered that it may be impossible to get this information. We have close to 30,000 residential units in the City. We heard from some residents last term that they did not have off-street parking. We are looking at different solutions, including a parking permit system. One of the cons we've heard from the administration is how much work it would be to enforce.

Perhaps the Assessing Department might have the data on the number of residences without driveways.

If you have one off-street space, is that sufficient? Councilor Downs answered that we had a number of examples including people with sloping driveways where parking in front is better because of mobility issues and ice.

There are many homes without driveways. City Council approved many multi-dwellings with less than an infinite number of parking spaces per unit, but are charging per space separate from the rent.

Some Councilors expressed support for a permitting system during the winter. One possibility is that a permit sticker could be placed on a vehicle allowing residents to park overnight including 2:00 am to 6:00 a.m., December through March. Would it be difficult to enforce? Councilor Downs answered an obstacle has been how to enforce it, particularly at night.

Some Councilors don't think it would be difficult or costly to enforce a permit program. Parking Control officers work during the day. We're looking at approximately 480 hours of nighttime enforcement for the hours of 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. for 120 days. Could NPD hire additional Parking Control officers who could work as Crossing Guards, too? Captain Devine answered that there's a lot of contractual issues. NPD is also dealing with a shortage of workers in all capacities. It may be difficult to find people to work late hours and it may be difficult for the Parking Control officers to work extremely long hours.

Is there a purchasable solution that would make it easier to check permits? Councilor Downs answered that we could do a permit-by-plate program. License plate readers help with hourly parking and who has/doesn't have a permit. Some Councilors want to explore permit options, including exploring whether a permit would only apply in one's own neighborhood or street, or whether a permit holder would be permitted to park anywhere in the City.

What is the cost of a license plate reader? Captain Devine answered that ten years ago, the cost was approximately \$16,000. There are many issues from the union regarding privacy policies.

How many permits should a resident be allowed to purchase?

We have been very concerned about a lack of crossing guards. In Brookline, crossing guards cross students twice per day and in between they perform enforcement and ticketing. The City should speak with Brookline to learn more about their crossing guard job description. Captain Devine answered that he is not aware of what Brookline does. Newton employs 10 parking control officers who begin their day as a crossing guard, and then transition to parking control throughout the day until they again become a crossing guard in the afternoon.

Residents should determine the winter overnight parking ban. There are areas that desperately need relief of the winter overnight parking ban and there are areas that it's not a concern. Perhaps if we used a reverse 911 call reminding residents to remove their cars off the street it would work. There was no reason to have the winter overnight parking ban the past two years. Councilor Downs answered that the administration was very clear that they don't want a

complicated system. We could consider an opt-in system where a neighborhood opts into a permit program.

We should wait to see what happens with the vote because we may come up with a solution that doesn't satisfy the vote.

Chair Grossman stated that there is a desire from leaders across the City to engage in this discussion and see whether we're able to arrive at something that could satisfy our residents and perhaps render the vote not needed. The winter overnight parking ban will be on the Ballot in 2025, and shapes the energy and desire of those who want the current ordinance rescinded. If it's clear that the conversation in Committee isn't going anywhere, we can vote No Action Necessary on this item.

Councilor Downs stated that she assumes the vote will go forward, and the winter overnight parking ban will be rescinded. We could the very next day as a Council vote it back in. It's worth our time to spend time thinking creatively about what might solve some or all of the issues identified by supporters of the winter overnight parking ban, without it staying a winter overnight parking ban.

Councilor Downs has requested a list of City's current parking fines and fines from surrounding communities. Our maximum fine except for parking a commercial vehicle overnight, blocking a curb cut or parking in an accessible space without a placard is \$20. The fine has not changed in many years. Perhaps fines should be reviewed.

Existing parking permits cost \$25.00 per year.

Chair Grossman asked if it would be helpful to invite the Administration to review the existing permit program we have in the City? Councilor Downs suggested inviting Mr. Koses, Traffic Council Chair to a meeting.

What permit system could we develop to assist residents without off-street parking and how do we address some of the concerns raised that are motivating them to want to rescind the winter overnight parking ban?

We should explore what our overnight parking system should look like if there's no winter overnight parking ban.

Those who have off-street parking at their residences have paid for that in the value of their home. Residents should have to pay for a permit.

Is it true that if a car blocks an area they cannot be towed, only ticketed? Captain Devine answered we can tow cars, but can't tow for everything unless there's a safety issue. If there's a safety issue, the officer responds, calls a Sergeant and informs them why a car should be

towed. It is the officer's discretion if a car is parked too close to the corner causing a problem, we'll ticket it. If it's a safety issue, we tow it. On private property vehicles can be towed. NPD uses tow and hold. We can tow when a driver has a minimum of 10 tickets and a minimum of \$200 in fines. We don't tow on Fridays, and we don't tow after 3:00 p.m. Anytime an officer has a tow and hold they call Traffic Bureau who then call the Treasury Department to verify the information because machines make mistakes. We try to avoid this once it's verified, which is why there's a time restriction.

The Parking Control officers have handheld machines. Overnight, officers hand write paper tickets. Often times, the same people are being ticketed \$25.00 per night because they don't have off-street parking. A commercial motor vehicle is prohibited from on-street parking all year.

How many handheld machines would be necessary? Captain Devine answered that there's nine different divisions at night, at least nine handheld machines would be necessary.

If the winter overnight parking ban is rescinded, it will not change the Newton North High School, the employee and Newton Centre permit systems.

If we adopt a permit plan, and the winter overnight parking ban is rescinded as a result of the vote, then the permit plan we created would be moot.

Chair Grossman stated that it would be great if Committee members and colleagues volunteer to lead up research into different possibilities.

Councilor Block offered to gather members' questions to get organized for contacting neighboring cities and towns on their parking requirements and fees.

Councilor Lucas offered to contact Inspectional Services to learn what landscaping stickers cost. He would develop a cost table to see what a permitting program would cost the City.

Chair Grossman offered to reach out to Mr. Koses to check his availability to review the current parking permit programs existence and cost.

Councilor Downs offered to review the cost of meters and tickets in neighboring communities.

Without further discussion, Councilor Block made a motion to hold. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Greenberg not voting.

The Committee adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Grossman, Chair

Winter O-N Parking Ban

#201-24

Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Density
Watertown	35,256	4.0	8,836.1
Newton	88,415	17.8	4,956.0
Stoneham	22,854	6.0	3,796.3
Woburn	41,647	12.6	3,297.5
Norwood	31,230	10.5	2,974.3
Reading	25,428	9.9	2,568.5
Natick	36,518	15.1	2,418.4
Methuen	53,455	22.3	2,402.5
Burlington	26,527	11.7	2,261.5
Lexington	33,882	16.4	2,062.2
Billerica	41,619	25.9	1,606.9
Dracut	32,291	20.9	1,545.0
Lynnfield	13,034	9.9	1,319.2
Canton	24,635	18.9	1,303.4
Wenham	4,957	7.6	652.2
Westwood	16,244	28.4	572.0
West Newbury	4,598	13.4	343.1
Newbury	6,766	23.4	289.1

Year Round O-N Parking Ban

#201-24

Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Density
Brookline	62,962	6.8	9,327.7
Arlington	46,111	5.2	8,953.6
Melrose	29,357	4.7	6,272.9
Belmont	26,886	4.7	5,781.9
Winchester	22,837	6.0	3,787.2
Wellesley	30,733	10.2	3,013.0
Saugus	28,630	10.8	2,653.4
Needham	32,157	12.3	2,616.5
Milton	28,374	13.0	2,180.9
Hingham	24,189	22.2	1,089.6
Bedford	14,394	13.7	1,050.7

No O-N Parking Ban

#201-24

Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Density	
Somerville	80,407	4.1	19,611.5	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. On-street parking permit required for all cars. Permit is \$40.
Cambridge	118,214	6.4	18,470.9	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. On-street parking permit required for all cars.
Everett	50,318	3.4	14,799.4	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. Parking allowed on odd/even annual alternation. Parking on posted arterial streets prohibited during snow emergency
Malden	65,133	5.0	13,026.6	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. Parking allowed on odd/even annual alternation. Parking on posted arterial streets prohibited during snow emergency
Lynn	101,241	10.7	9,461.8	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. On-street parking permit required for all cars. Permit is free.
Medford	58,744	8.1	7,252.3	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. On-street residential parking permit required for all cars. Permit is \$10. Free for seniors over 65.
Quincy	101,597	16.6	6,120.3	No O-N parking ban. However, a resident parking permit is required to park O-N any time of the year. Permit is free. O-N parking prohibited on specified arterial streets
Salem	44,744	8.3	5,390.8	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. Resident O-N parking sticker available for specified streets. Cost \$5
Waltham	64,477	12.7	5,061.0	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Peabody	54,056	16.2	3,336.8	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Framingham	71,875	25.0	2,875.0	No O-N parking ban. Parking allowed on odd/even annual alternation. Parking on posted arterial streets prohibited during snow emergency
Dedham	24,968	10.5	2,377.9	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency. DPW can also prohibit O-N parking on specified arterial streets during prolonged snow emergency.
Wakefield	27,810	19.3	1,440.9	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Gloucester	29,959	26.2	1,143.5	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Weston	11,645	17.0	685.0	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency

Data Questions for Towns

#201-24

1	Do you have a parking permit that allows street parking during the o-n parking ban?
1a	If yes, is there a fee? What is it?
1b	If yes, is there a limit to the number of permits a household can receive?
1c	If yes, do you have a permit application form? (ask for a copy or a link to the form)
2	Do you have a parking permit system?
2a	If yes, is there a fee? What is it?
2b	If yes, is there a limit to the number of permits a household can receive?
2c	If yes, are the parking permits valid within a specific neighborhood or is there one parking permit city-wide?
2d	If yes, do you have a permit application form? (ask for a copy or a link to the form)
3	Are you considering any major changes to your parking system? If yes, please describe the issue.

Program	Options	Obstacles	Opportunities	Comments
Permits	Residential Employee Student Temporary Overnight Multi- vs. single family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement • Cost to implement • Administration • Weather • Equity • How much would each permit cost? • Number per household • Is there enough on-street space (Nonantum)? • By neighborhood or street or universal • Need to continue to promote car-light living 	Funds for street or neighborhood improvements	Lucas preferred—winter o/n Hire more PCOs Grossman
Time limits	2-hour 12-hour/ commuter Anti-Commuter (ie no parking 7-9 am)	Enforcement Need to share with commuters Need for neighborhood parking	Greater turnover, esp for businesses	
Street Sweeping Schedule	Weekly Monthly Alternate side	Administration Enforcement May not solve free car storage issues	Clears streets regularly	

Odd/Even parking days				
Meters	Kiosks Individual/paired Signs only	Cost/aesthetic of meters Overnight enforcement?	Funds for street improvements	
Removing Parking	Fewer spaces	Ongoing already—do we need a new effort? Can increase speeds	Allow bike lanes or parklets for traffic calming Safe bus/fire/trash truck passage	
Overnight parking ban--	All year (Brookline, Needham) Winter Partial-create a waiver system for one car if needed (Norwood)	Inconvenient Inequitable Encourages more driveway /curb cuts (impervious surface/safety of pedestrians, tree removal) Removes natural traffic calming of on-street parked cars	Solves many issues now	Lipof—let citizens decide Doesn't favor permits Wright—wait for vote

Possible data to collect: How many units of housing have no parking?

What does a parking violation cost?

Current parking permit programs (have David Koses in)

Divide tasks: 1 to address o/n winter parking ban hardships (any changes would be overturned with the ballot measure); 2 create a system that would replace the ban if it is overturned.

Tow & hold: if have over \$200 in tickets and over 10 unpaid tickets. But if you pay timely, you can't be towed.

Issue the Winter Parking Ban solves	
Long term car storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandoned cars • Street sweeping • Students • Commuters • New apartments/condos • Other street uses (dining, bike lanes, parklets, on-street play, etc) • Undermines car-light policies
Creates incentives to live car-light/free	

Block: will research other communities' overnight parking bans and waivers

Lucas: permit program costs