



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

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

Absent: Councilor Bixby

Also Present: Councilors Farrell and Kalis

City Staff: Captain Daniel Devine, Newton Police Department; Chief Greg Gentile, Newton Fire Department; David Koses, Transportation Coordinator, Ned Codd, Director of Transportation and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Others Present: NewTV

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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ISDM7fgRIg&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjVWX8R9k00x5M_0URb-jS39&t=779s

#303-24

Requesting discussion regarding Dudley Road safety

COUNCILORS FARRELL, KALIS, LIPOF, HUMPHREY, LUCAS, GETZ, LAREDO AND LOBOVITS requesting a discussion on Dudley Road safety due to concerns surrounding speeding, accidents, and safety of pedestrians and bikers. Included in the discussion is a review of past findings, steps taken to improve safety, and assessment of current situations by Traffic Council, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and other relevant bodies, potential solutions to make the road safer, and next steps.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 5-1-1, Councilor Lucas opposed, Councilor Block abstaining**

Note: Captain Devine, Chief Gentile, Mr. Codd, Mr. Yeo, Mr. Koses, Councilors Farrell and Kalis joined the Committee.

Councilor Farrell introduced the item and stated that Dudley Road is a curvy scenic road. Both state and local law makes it severely restricted to what can happen in terms of width, stone walls, sidewalks, tree trimming and widening the road. We're concerned with safety, speed, and brush. It is used as a cut through road. Landscape vehicles should not be parking on the road. The speed limit reduction from 25mph to 20mph has not helped. There are schools in the area bringing high traffic volumes. He asked what are the rules for a scenic road in terms of maintenance? Can sidewalks or grass paths be installed? What efforts has the City made to make this road safer and what are the results? There is conversation about stop signs, speed bumps, redirecting traffic and prohibiting traffic during certain hours.

Councilor Lipof stated there are many turns which can potentially cause a head-on collision. NPD has enforced speeding with ticketing; the speed limit trailers have helped. We would like to see a permanent speed sign installed. Recently the City trimmed the brush, but it is necessary to ask neighbors to trim their shrubs regularly. We've discussed speed tables.

Mr. Yeo stated that Dudley Road is challenging which the City understands and are trying to address. The City doesn't own much land along this road, we don't have the ability to cut people's brush, install sidewalks or grass. He then suggested if people see locations of overgrown brush, they should enter it into the City's 311 website, there is a process to issue warnings. The mitigation plan was approved by the ZBA for the development including speed feedback signs and \$500,000 for offsite improvements to transportation, pedestrian, bicycling, safety, open space or recreational improvements in the area assuming the development moves forward. The City would receive half the money at the time of building permit and the remaining half when they have an occupancy permit.

Mr. Codd stated that the Transportation Division has been producing the traffic calming report from approximately 2017. The first report included 30 roadway segments, it has increased to approximately 220 segments. Dudley Road has been in the program since 2018 moving up and down in the rankings. In 2024, we evaluated two segments of Dudley Road. First, between Boylston and Greenwood, the second between Greenwood and Brookline. The Boylston to Greenwood segment is ranked number 19 out of 220, highly ranked largely as a result of the high speeds. The Greenwood to Brookline segment is ranked number 42. We prioritize roadways for traffic calming based on speeds, street segments, record of crashes focusing on injuries, pedestrian and bicycle crashes in proximity to pedestrian generators, such as schools, businesses and village centers. Dudley Road has measured 85th percentile speeds at which 85% of speeds are at the speed or lower. The road has had speeds in the mid-30s which is high for the narrow windy road. The Traffic Calming report is highly utilized with a limited budget.

Captain Devine stated that beginning in June, NPD began directed patrols on Dudley Road. In three months, we issued more than 200 tickets for vehicles coming off Route 9, heading towards Greenwood Street. When we began, speeds were in the mid-40s, by late summer, we saw an improvement with speeds in the low to the mid-30s. There appears to be an error in the GPS system informing drivers of a 30mph speed limit, not 20mph. The speed trailer was up

from June 21 to July 10, during that time a total of 19,471 vehicles with an average speed of 21.25mph, in the 85% of vehicle speeds were 24.98mph. The highest speed observed was 52 mph and some were in the 40s. Statistics show that there have been 11 crashes from 2022 to today. Of the 11 crashes, 3 were due to icy road conditions, 1 was due to low hanging wires, 1 was due to an animal, 3 unexplained and 3 due to the bend and 6 were possibly due to speed.

Chief Gentile stated that the department is frequently asked about projects. We review safety trying to balance with response time and traffic flow. There are certain roads that we use to access different areas of the City that become a little challenging. We review speed bumps, speed humps and speed tables, because they can have a long term effect on the trucks. We provide our opinion on whether the traffic calming measure proposed makes sense for the department. Officers informed me that Dudley Road is narrow, lighting issues, and traffic. We do not typically use this road to access different areas.

Questions, answers and comments:

What was this year's budget allocation for traffic calming? Mr. Yeo answered he recalls between \$300,000 to \$400,000. At times we are able to use free cash or development mitigation. We try to use different funding sources to move projects forward. Unfortunately, something like a speed table can cost in the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range per piece. It is a challenge to complete and fund speed tables. Mr. Yeo added that we are able to fund 5 or 8 projects in design, construction and putting them out to bid. Mr. Codd added that ARPA funding is depleting.

A Councilor stated that there was additional money for traffic calming in the override proposal that did not pass. Mr. Yeo answered yes, that is correct.

What is the approach to speed enforcement in the City? Captain Devine answered that we receive many requests for speed enforcement from Dudley Road to Mill Street to Cabot Street. There are many streets to focus on. NPD conducts directed patrols on a daily basis, a priority in the department.

A Dudley Road home is being used as an Airbnb. Cars are parking up the driveway and protruding into the road making a driver cross the center line. Is the first 8' from the street City owned? Should I call the police? Does NPD talk to the home owner? Captain Devine answered that he would look into it. If a car protrudes into a street, certainly call. Mr. Yeo suggested talking with ISD, the enforcer of the short-term rental ordinance.

Because the NFD doesn't usually travel on Dudley Road, does this mean the department would favor a table to help reduce speeds? Chief Gentile answered that we would look at a table more positively than speed bumps. It would be best to see a proposal and provide an opinion.

Is painting the 20mph speed limit on Dudley Road an option? Mr. Codd answered that it could be considered but road painting wears off quickly.

It is necessary to brainstorm ideas to make Dudley Road safer.

Some neighbors suggested making Dudley Road a one-way road. It would be helpful to know the scenic road restrictions and our policies about enforcing. What is in the toolkit used for traffic calming and how effective are they? Mr. Codd answered that a one-way circulation is not an effective speed control measure. It would reduce conflicts, traffic volumes, head on collisions and potentially create space to provide a protected walkway. A one-way road would have impacts on access, traffic and be used as a potential cut through.

I didn't see a suggestion of making Dudley Road a permanent one-way, the suggestion was for a one-way or turns at certain times. What are strategies for sidewalks or bicycles if it were converted to a one-way? Captain Devine answered that the fear of making a one-way circulation is if you don't have cars coming in the opposite direction it encourages speeders and turns side streets into heavily trafficked areas. 90.7% of cars slow after seeing a speed sign.

If the road is made a one-way, with a bike lane it reduces the width of the road making it beneficial. Mr. Yeo explained the Traffic Council process to make Dudley Road a one-way road.

Do our City Ordinances address large vehicles, such as landscaping trucks, parking on a road and taking up much of the driveable space? Mr. Codd and Koses answered that they are not aware of such an ordinance. Councilor Downs answered that it states all four wheels must be on the pavement, not the sidewalk, curb, ½ on or ½ off the street and not blocking sidewalks.

Chair Grossman opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Public Comment:

Carolyn Kraft, 295 Dudley Road, stated that some people do not want Dudley Road made a one-way. Could we review a temporary proposal of a one-way? The road does not feel safe. Install stop signs, speed bumps and a signal. Is there mitigation money for each ward, how do we find what monies exist? Mr. Yeo answered that there are no pockets by wards, but there is mitigation money associated with each project. Mr. Codd added that research indicates stop signs are not effective at regulating traffic. Drivers often speed up before and after a stop sign making up for lost time.

Rob Sellers, 16 Olde Field Road, stated that traffic volume is significant. The project will add approximately 700 cars per day. The American Community Survey (ACS) found that 70% of the neighborhood was commuting to work during Covid and expect that to be higher now meaning 140 cars during rush hour.

Jacob Silber, 47 Dudley Road, stated that cars coming from Route 9 are speeding. The State has said that there's no way to slow traffic on Route 9. Is there anything the City can do to lower the speed limit on Route 9? Perhaps the City could increase the signage on the road indicating it

is a traffic calming area. If this development happens, it is extremely improbable students will use the cutaway proposed because there is not enough room to install a sidewalk.

Peter Younger, 57 Dudley Road, stated that the project has allocated money to install speed cameras, perhaps negotiations with the developer is necessary for pre-funding. Restrict entering traffic northbound in the morning and southbound in the evening to reduce traffic. There are several signs of the new law keeping 4' clearance from pedestrians. Mr. Codd answered that the state law for 4' clearance is for all road users including bicyclists. Mr. Yeo added that we can discuss the concept of pre-funding the sign. Mr. Koses explained the Traffic Council process to implement turning restrictions.

Andrew Krassin, 16 Brandeis Circle, stated that he has had near accidents. Sensible development would dictate not over developing the area, it is not fair. The developer should not be building this site. The City should spend money more sensibly. Councilor Lipof answered that City Council did not vote on the project. It's a 40B project, State law is allowing it to be built. The Ward 8 Councilors worked with the neighbors trying it make it the best it could be.

Councilor Kalis requested the City follow-up with recommendations. Mr. Codd answered that he will follow up with the Ward 8 Councilors on items raised, what can be done and potential time frames.

Councilor Downs made a motion for No Action Necessary. Council members agreed 5-1-1, Councilor Lucas opposed, Councilor Block abstaining.

#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

Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0 on 06/05/24, Councilor Greenberg not voting

Public Safety & Transportation Held 6-0 on 08/07/24

Action: Public Safety & Transportation Held 6-0, Councilor Lipof not voting

Note: Chair Grossman stated that at the August meeting, Mr. Koses presented the several different parking district programs in the City. Committee members signed up for different research projects. She asked if members would like to provide an update on any research conducted?

Councilor Downs stated that other communities charge fines for various street and parking infractions. Newton is a bargain for parking scofflaws. Perhaps we want to docket items to

proceed with our inexpensive permit costs and fines to bring them in line with surrounding communities. She offered to docket these items if there is interest.

Councilor Block stated that he previously suggested two data collection projects. First, collect data from surrounding communities on how they manage their overnight parking bans. Perhaps members would like to add or modify data questions and contact several communities requesting this information. Second, find out the number of residents without off street parking. Collecting this information won't be easy, and won't be 100% accurate. We may have to craft individual solutions which may involve considering a parking permit system for those without off street parking.

Committee members reviewed the list of data questions and suggested adding the following:

Does the community offer non-resident parking or only resident parking?

What are the fines for a parking ticket meter, permit space or in a municipal parking lot?

Are there enough parking spaces for the number of permits issued?

Is your plan successful?

Are you considering changes to your parking plan?

Perform research beyond Massachusetts and review the research that's been done nationally.

Questions, answers, and comments:

How do we estimate the number of homes without driveways? Councilor Block answered that he contacted City departments; this piece of information is not collected in any database. We could develop a filter using the Assessors Database for residents with a small street frontage. Both the parcel size and frontage will provide the likeliest locations that don't have off street parking.

A Councilor stated that she contacted the Law Department asking questions regarding parking on what we can and cannot do. They have not responded. Having less parking makes it more attainable for other people, not everyone needs a lot of parking.

Should we consider communities that have more parking permits than the number of available spaces? Councilor Downs answered that Boston and Cambridge issue more permits than they have spaces. In Newton, we've implemented parking permit programs based on demand or when there becomes a neighborhood issue. Councilor Block added that Boston was not included in the list of data questions because it is too complex. If Boston, should be added to our data, perhaps it should be a separate data collection effort.

It would be easier if we knew if there was a goal to work toward. Are we ultimately going to come up with a permit parking plan for the City? Chair Grossman answered that the goal is to have a discussion around the challenging parking issues the City faces, and make an effort to determine if there's an alternative to our current ordinances that the Council wants to consider, particularly in light of the ballot question scheduled for next fall. I can't say that the goal is or

isn't to implement a permit system citywide. City Council expressed that they wanted this Committee to work on this project.

A Councilor stated we've discussed parking permit plans and the winter overnight parking ban. Some would like to keep the ban and adopt a parking permit plan, but the Administration is not up to that. We will have the referendum. Assuming the referendum passes, and the overnight parking ban is repealed, our anticipated work will be useless. How will we use data collection moving forward? Councilor Block answered that we can't assume what is going to happen with the referendum vote. If the winter overnight parking ban is lifted, we would have this information. Chair Grossman added that we have two possible outcomes with the referendum; part of the goal of this docket item is to be prepared for whichever outcome it is.

Chair Grossman asked Councilor Downs her recommendation on how to understand the key points of parking research that has been conducted nationally. Councilor Downs answered that she could invite in a guest speaker to review it.

Chair Grossman asked what members thought about taking the list of data collection questions for other municipalities, plus the additions made tonight, for members to call several communities to collect data to share in a month or so, and then determine if there is interest to move forward or not with this docket item. Some Councilors volunteered to call several communities. Councilor Block will assign the communities with contact numbers.

Councilor Downs made a motion to hold. Council members agreed 6-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

The Committee adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Grossman, Chair

For the 29 cities with an O-N parking ban (seasonal or year-round):

TOWN: _____

1. Do you have a parking permit system that allows street parking during the o-n parking ban?
If yes,
 - a. What criteria do you have for issuing such a permit?
 - b. Is there a fee? What is it?
 - c. Is there a limit to the number of permits a household can receive?
 - d. Do you offer a parking permit for non-residents or just for residents?
 - e. Do you have a permit application form? (ask for a copy or a link to the form)
2. What is the most important benefit to your town of the o-n parking ban?
3. Do you have any residential parking permit systems? If yes, please describe
 - a. Is there a fee? What is it?
 - b. Is there a limit to the number of permits a household can receive?
 - c. Are the parking permits valid within a specific neighborhood or is there one parking permit city-wide?
 - d. Is there a limit on the number of parking permits that the town issues?
 - e. Are there enough parking spaces for the number of permits issued?
 - f. Do you have a permit application form? (ask for a copy or a link to the form)
 - g. What is the biggest problem you have with the current parking permit system?
4. What fines do you levy for a parking violation?
 - a. Meter violation
 - b. Municipal Lot violation
 - c. Permit space violation
 - d. Double parking
5. Are you considering any major changes to your parking system? If yes, please describe the issue.

#201-24
Assignments on o-n parking ban
10-02-24 Block

Assigned	Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Densit	tel #	Action Date	Action
AD	Billerica	41,619	25.9	1,606.9	978-671-0942		
AD	Burlington	26,527	11.7	2,261.5	781-270-1670		
AD	Canton	24,635	18.9	1,303.4	781-821-5000		
MG	Dracut	32,291	20.9	1,545.0	978-957-2123		
MG	Lexington	33,882	16.4	2,062.2	781-862-0500		
MG	Lynnfield	13,034	9.9	1,319.2	781-334-3131		
RG	Methuen	53,455	22.3	2,402.5	978-983-8500		
RG	Natick	36,518	15.1	2,418.4	508-647-6400		
RG	Newbury	6,766	23.4	289.1	978-465-0862		
	Newton	88,415	17.8	4,956.0			
TL	Norwood	31,230	10.5	2,974.3	781-762-1240		
TL	Reading	25,428	9.9	2,568.5	781-942-9001		
TL	Stoneham	22,854	6.0	3,796.3	781-438-1215		
RB	Watertown	35,256	4.0	8,836.1	617-972-6547	9/13/2024	MESSAGE FOR Sgt.
RB	Wenham	4,957	7.6	652.2	978-468-5520		
	West Newbury	4,598	13.4	343.1	978-363-1212		
	Westwood	16,244	28.4	572.0	781-326-6450		
RB	Woburn	41,647	12.6	3,297.5	781-897-5901	6/27/2024	Spoke with Chief Rufo 781-933-1212 x4819

#201-24
10-02-24 Block
Year round o-n parking ban

Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Density	
Brookline	62,962	6.8	9,327.7	617-730-2000
Arlington	46,111	5.2	8,953.6	781-316-3000
Melrose	29,357	4.7	6,272.9	781-979-4144
Belmont	26,886	4.7	5,781.9	617-993-2770
Winchester	22,837	6.0	3,787.2	781-729-1212
Wellesley	30,733	10.2	3,013.0	781-491-1019 x2264
Saugus	28,630	10.8	2,653.4	781-231-4101
Needham	32,157	12.3	2,616.5	781-455-7500
Milton	28,374	13.0	2,180.9	617-898-4814
Hingham	24,189	22.2	1,089.6	781-741-1400
Bedford	14,394	13.7	1,050.7	781-918-4000

#201-24
10-02-24 Block
no o-n parking ban

Town	Pop.	Land Area	Pop Densit	Tel #	
Somerville	80,407	4.1	19,611.5	617-666-3311	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	617-349-4700	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	617-944-0204	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	781-397-7171	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	781-586-6868	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	781-393-2495	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	617-376-1407	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	978-745-8120	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	781-314-3000	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Peabody	54,056	16.2	3,336.8	978-538-5900	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Framingha	71,875	25.0	2,875.0	508-532-5430	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	781-751-9245	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	781-246-6330	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Gloucester	29,959	26.2	1,143.5	978-281-9727	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency
Weston	11,645	17.0	685.0	781-786-5010	No O-N parking ban except during snow emergency