



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Present: Councilors Ciccone (Chair), Downs, Noel, Auchincloss and Grossman

Absent: Councilors Lipof, Cote and Markiewicz

Also Present: Councilor Leary

City Staff: Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation Services, DPW; Captain Paul Anastasia, NPD and Commissioner James McGonagle, DPW

#330-19 **Request for a discussion regarding the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition**
COUNCILORS NORTON, AUCHINCLOSS AND CICCONE, requesting a discussion regarding the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition and the City of Newton's participation goals.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation HELD 4-0, Councilor Noel not voting**

Note: Chair Ciccone stated that he will entertain a motion to hold this item this evening until Ms. Freedman, Director Transportation Planning Department can join the Committee.

A Committee member stated that the MBTA Control Board voted three days ago to support option 6 of the Commuter Rail Transportation Division. This means fifteen-minute headways for Newton, all electric commuter rail and a bus transformation office that will be put into place hoping to make express buses work better. Committee members were pleased to hear about the fifteen-minute headways as the express bus is an important tool in the City.

Without discussion, Councilor Auchincloss made the motion to hold this item until Ms. Freedman, Director Transportation Planning Department can join the Committee. Committee members agreed 4-0, Councilor Noel not voting.

#193-19 **Request to allow for legal two-way bicycle travel on Comm. Ave. Carriage Lane**
COUNCILORS DOWNS, ALBRIGHT, NORTON, BROUSAL-GLASER, KRINTZMAN, GROSSMAN, MARKIEWICZ, LAREDO, LIPOF, SCHWARTZ, NOEL, KELLEY, LEARY AND DANBERG, requesting a discussion of possible changes to allow for legal two-way bicycle travel on the Commonwealth Avenue Carriage Lane. (Wards 2, 3, 4 & 7)

Revised on 06/27/19

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

Note: Councilor Leary, Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation Services, DPW; Captain Paul Anastasia, NPD and Commissioner James McGonagle, DPW joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Sobel provided Committee members with a PowerPoint presentation, attached to this report.

Mr. Sobel stated that the goal is to improve safety for bicyclists. Legal two-way bicycle travel on the Carriage Lane has been discussed in the past, most recently by Traffic Council in December 2014. Commonwealth Avenue is a residential roadway, with many drivers on Carriage Lane. The Carriage Lane is also heavily used by pedestrians, runners, dog walkers, etc. On-street parking will be maintained. Legally allowing two-way bicycle travel could guide future design work. Tonight's discussion will make immediate steps and long-term options.

There are many types of intersections and crossings including unsignalized intersections (33 intersections have breaks in the median), signalized intersections, gaps in the Carriage Lane and other intersecting intersections including the following:

Unsignalized Intersections:

Goal is to have safe passage & consistent treatment along the Carriage Lane

- Typical signage and pavement markings
- STOP signs, YIELD signs, or no regulatory signage, as appropriate
- Guidance from the MUTCD includes:
- "When priority is assigned, the least restrictive control that is appropriate should be placed on the lower priority approaches. STOP signs should not be used where YIELD signs would be acceptable."

Signalized Intersections:

Goal is to have safe passage & consistent treatment along the Carriage Lane

- Additional crossing pavement markings
- STOP signs for bicycles
- Bicycle signals are more efficient and a long-term option
- Short-term solution

Gaps in the Carriage Lane

- As a "gap" in the Carriage Lane, no immediate proposed changes
- These sections would be excluded from any TPR changes, until infrastructure is redesigned and constructed

Washington Street intersection is difficult.

Other Interesting Intersections

- "Typical" signage and pavement markings not sufficient
- Contraflow bike lane
- STOP signs or YIELD signs, as appropriate

Committee members questions and concerns:

Questions:

- Does angled parking work? Mr. Sobel answered that he would prefer bike lanes as far away as possible from angled parking.

- Is backed in angled parking better than pulled in angled parking? Mr. Sobel answered yes; in general, backed in angled parking is safer than pulled in angled parking.
- Is there funding in the DPW operating budget to paint and stripe? Commissioner McGonagle answered yes.
- How will residents be notified of road striping? Mr. Sobel answered that it will be important to notify residents prior to a Traffic Council meeting on proposed changes. A neighborhood meeting will be held to receive input and to provide feedback. The City would not implement signage and paint without residents being aware. Mr. Sobel added that only the intersections would be striped.
- A Council member requested visuals be provided on road painting proposals.
- A Council member asked the process of residents being notified and how will they be notified of a neighborhood meeting? Mr. Sobel explained that abutting residents would be notified prior to a Traffic Council meeting being held on proposed changes. Councilors will notify residents of a neighborhood meeting.
- A Council member stated that west bound drivers won't anticipate a change to the Carriage Lane.
- It was stated that it may be difficult for residents to back out of their driveway, especially in the area of Boston College.
- Should a trial be implemented on a small section of the Carriage Lane?

Concerns:

- Bicyclists are traveling in both directions at this time on the Carriage Lane.

Chair Ciccone stated that Councilors received correspondence, on file. Correspondence received supports allowing two-way bicycle travel on the Carriage Lane. He then opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Residents comments, concerns and suggestions:

Comments:

- A resident stated that Boston is reworking Commonwealth Avenue and are thinking of road diets and bike lanes. Newton is the 'missing link' in regards to bike lanes from Natick to Boston.
- Bicyclists reduce traffic congestion.
- The Carriage Lane would allow for bicyclists to ride safely and independently.
- It would be an asset to have a legal two-way bicycle travel on the Commonwealth Avenue Carriage Lane. Two-way travel will benefit many including bicyclists, marathoners training and pedestrians.
- Most parked vehicles parallel park which makes it easier for bicyclists to pass.
- Pedestrians and runners make it difficult for bicyclists to pass.

Concerns:

- Bicyclists are traveling in both directions at this time on the Carriage Lane.
- It will be necessary to address the safety needs and concerns on lighting in order to assist with bicyclists being visible.
- Safety is necessary, especially near intersections.

Suggestions:

- Perhaps implement a trial in areas where there are less residential homes.
- Please install road signs and painting treatments to deter speeders.

- Repave City streets as much as the budget allows.
- Perhaps reconfigure parking near businesses.

Residents present agreed and stated that they support the proposal of two-way bicycle travel on the Commonwealth Avenue Carriage Lane as it will benefit many and they look forward to the next steps the City will take.

Captain Anastasia suggested that Mr. Sobel speak with the City's Law Department prior to moving forward on the next steps because State Law does not allow bicycles to travel opposite the one-way direction and is not sure the City has the ability to make an exception for bicyclists. Mr. Sobel thanked Captain Anastasia for his suggestion. He then said that he is aware that bike lanes are permitted in other Cities. A resident suggested installing a "Do not enter, except bikes". Mr. Sobel said that a concern with installing "Do not enter, except bikes" is that there are many driveways in each block on the Carriage Lane.

A Councilor stated that an item would be docketed to begin a discussion in Traffic Council.

Mr. Sobel stated that as the City moves forward, he would provide specific examples with the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) and the public before moving forward.

Without further discussion, Councilor Downs made a motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 5-0.

At approximately 7:55 p.m., Councilor Downs made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chair

#193-19

COUNCILORS DOWNS, ALBRIGHT, NORTON, BROUSAL-GLASER, KRINTZMAN, GROSSMAN, MARKIEWICZ, LAREDO, LIPOF, SCHWARTZ, NOEL, KELLEY, LEARY AND DANBERG, requesting a discussion of possible changes to allow for legal two-way bicycle travel on the Commonwealth Avenue Carriage Lane.



Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Goal – Improve safety for bicyclists

- Legal two-way bicycle travel on the Carriage Lane has been discussed in the past, most recently by Traffic Council in December 2014
- Residential roadway, with many drivers on Carriage Lane
- Carriage Lane is also heavily used by pedestrians, runners, dog walkers, etc.
- On-Street parking maintained
- Legally allowing two-way bicycle travel could guide future design work
- Tonight's discussion:
 - Immediate Steps
 - Long term options

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Many types of intersections & crossings

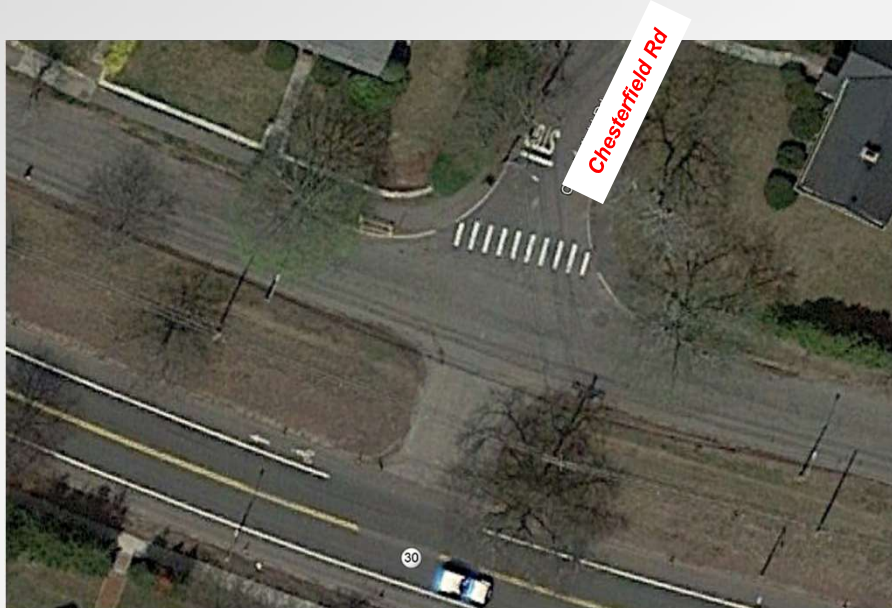
- **Unsignalized Intersections** – 33 intersections with breaks in the median
- **Signalized intersections**
 - Carriage Lane not part of the traffic signal
 - Commonwealth Ave / Ash Street
 - Commonwealth Ave / Melrose Street
 - Commonwealth Ave / Chestnut St (but Chestnut St SB stops north of the Carriage Ln)
 - Commonwealth Ave / Lowell Ave
 - Carriage Lane part of the traffic signal
 - Commonwealth Ave / Auburn Street (east intersection)
 - Commonwealth Ave / Grant Ave
 - Commonwealth Ave / Hammond Street
- **Gaps in the Carriage Lane**
 - Weston Town Line to Woodbine Street
 - Auburndale Square
 - At Washington Street intersection
 - Beaumont Ave to Bullough Park
 - At Centre Street intersection
 - Within 300 ft of the Boston City Line
- **Other interesting intersections**

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

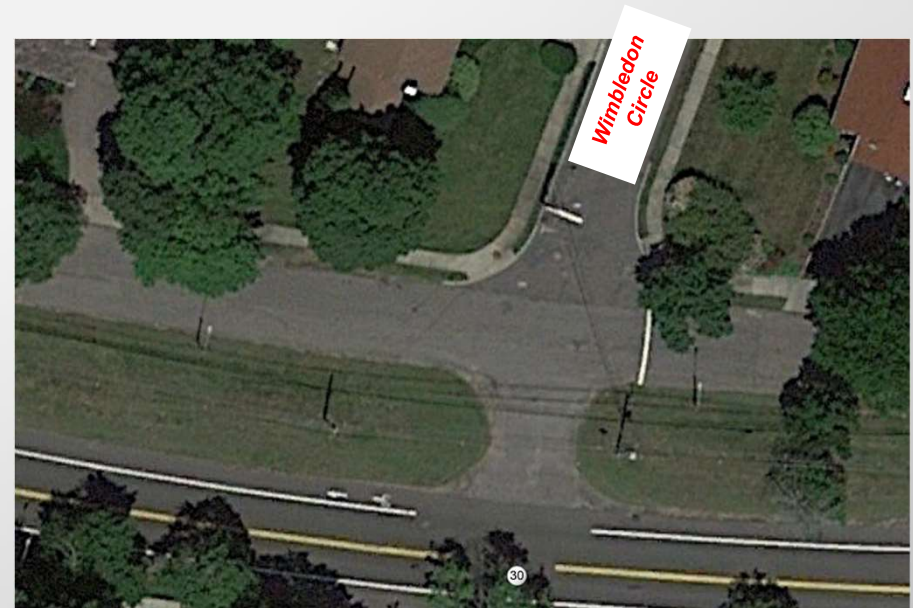
#193-19

Unsignalized Intersections

- Goal is to have safe passage & consistent treatment along the Carriage Lane
- Typical signage and pavement markings
- STOP signs, YIELD signs, or no regulatory signage, as appropriate
- Guidance from the MUTCD includes:
 - *“When priority is assigned, the least restrictive control that is appropriate should be placed on the lower priority approaches. STOP signs should not be used where YIELD signs would be acceptable.”*



November 6, 2019



Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Signalized Intersections – Carriage Lane not part of the traffic signal

- Goal is to have safe passage & consistent treatment along the Carriage Lane
- Additional crossing pavement markings
- STOP signs for bicycles



November 6, 2019

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

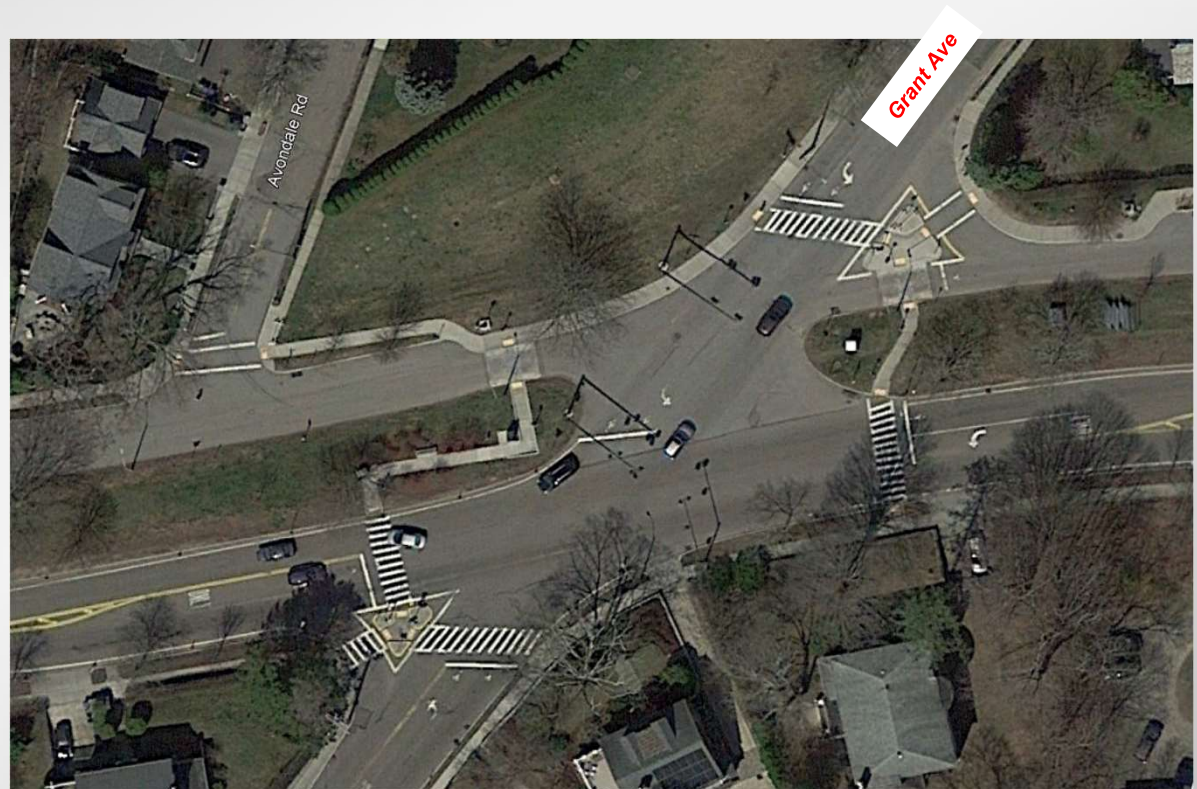
#193-19

Signalized Intersections – Carriage Lane part of the traffic signal

- Goal is to have safe passage & consistent treatment along the Carriage Lane
- Additional crossing pavement markings
- STOP signs not appropriate.
- Bicycle signals are more efficient and a long-term option
- Short-term solution



R9-5



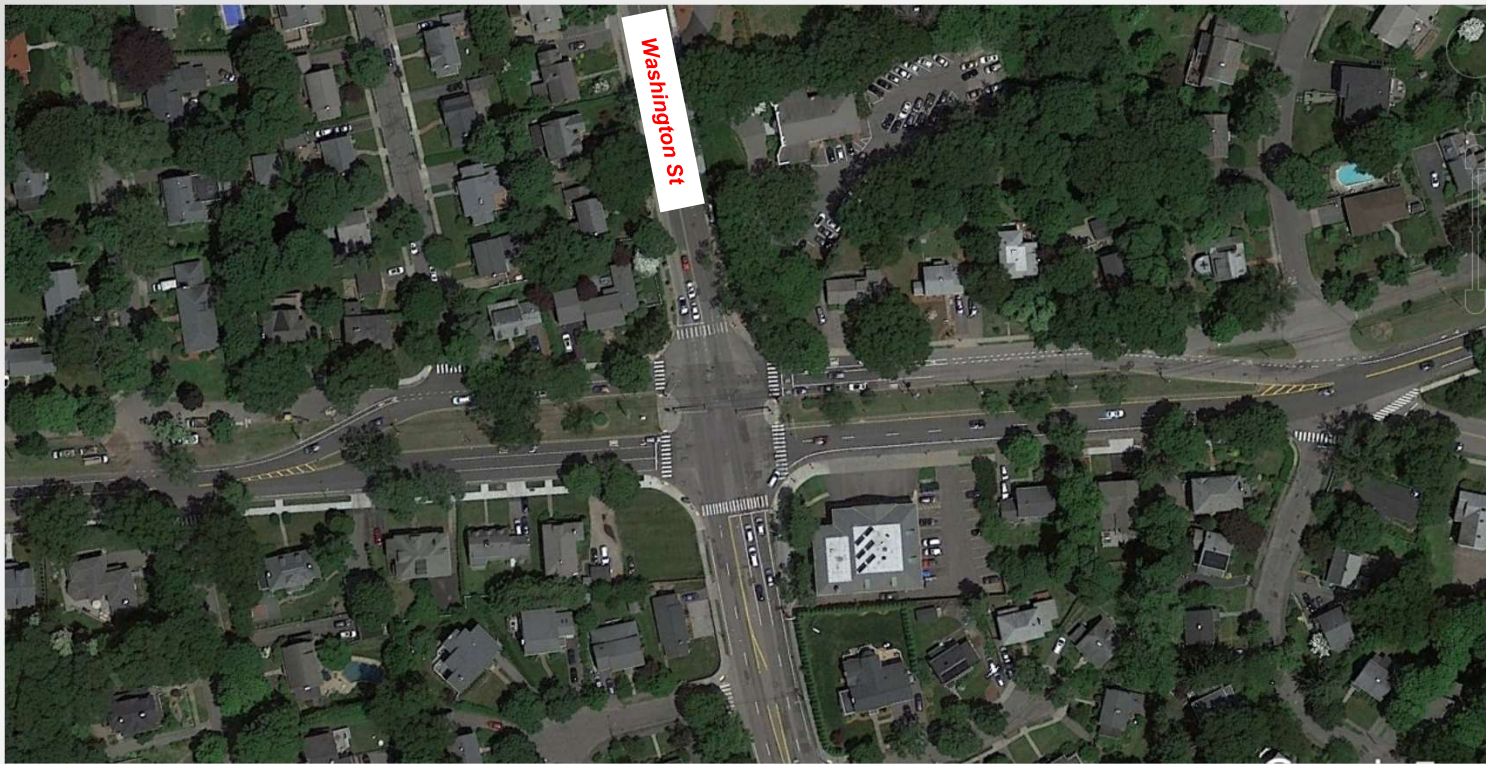
November 6, 2019

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Gaps in the Carriage Lane

- As a “gap” in the Carriage Lane, no immediate proposed changes
- These sections would be excluded from any TPR changes, until infrastructure is redesigned and constructed



November 6, 2019

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Other Interesting Intersections

- “Typical” signage and pavement markings not sufficient
- Contraflow bike lane
- STOP signs or YIELD signs, as appropriate



November 6, 2019

Two-Way Bicycle Travel on the Comm Ave Carriage Lane

#193-19

Next Steps

- Will need input from:
 - Stakeholders
 - Neighbors
 - TAG
 - Traffic Council