



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

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

Absent: Councilor Cote

City Staff: Nicole Freedman, Director Planning & Development and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

#80-18

Discussion on the ability to test and implement self-driving vehicles in Newton

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, COTE AND DOWNS requesting the Director of Transportation for Planning create the ability to test and implement self-driving vehicles in Newton by the following: The Transportation division is requested to lead the oversight of testing and implementation of autonomous vehicles in Newton by 1) publishing guidelines for testing autonomous vehicles in Newton which may limit, the time, place and manner of the testing giving greater latitude to potential partners as their performance justifies, 2) provide regular public reporting of autonomous vehicle testing, 3) create policy recommendations with respect to autonomous vehicle technology, business models, and effect on street regulation and design, if any, 4) create policies that ensure equitable access to opportunities for those least well served by existing transportation options, including seniors, youth and those with physical disabilities, 5) provide solutions to the "last mile" problems rampant in Newton by policy that support access by all to public transportation, 6) support open data standards and API's that allow easier coordination of schedules, trip planning, and payment across public and private transportation services, 7) create policies that reinforce and prioritize walking, biking, and mass transit and lead to reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

Public Safety & Transportation Held on 04/04/18 6-0, Councilor Lipof not voting

Action: Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0

Note:

Nicole Freedman joined the committee for discussion of this item. It was noted that much has been changed in a year and a half in Massachusetts. There is now a universal testing application that was approved. About a year ago, Governor Baker had been hearing from companies that potentially wanted to test in Massachusetts. Every city and town have their own rules. If a company wants to test in a specific town, they would have to go to every single city and town and get approval. The governor convened a group with Mass DOT, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and about a dozen cities and towns to work out a universal testing application. If a company wants to test autonomous vehicles, an application would be submitted through the states application process and theoretically be approved for all tests. The City of Newton is one that

signed on to say that it would be part of this universal testing application. There is now a universal testing application from approximately a dozen cities. The Mayor was able to do a test drive in one of the autonomous vehicles. In Massachusetts there are two companies that have interest in testing. At this point no applications have been received in Newton. The application is very comprehensive in terms of what kind of testing can be done. Testing would take place in good weather, during the day, and roads that do not have traffic signals. One of the protections included is when an application notes that there is interest in testing in Newton, there would be veto power even if the state says yes. It isn't expected that there would be a request in the next couple of years. Newton will be part of policy making and developing relationships with those in the industry that really have a deep understanding of the issues.

There was a question regarding when Optimus Ride might be implemented for everyday life. In response it could be ten plus years before reality sets in. A challenge is putting more and more controls in place to keep that human person awake as that is the worst possible scenario.

It was asked what Newton was doing to get policy tilted to electric, shared and autonomous vehicles. In response Newton is staying with the Mass DOT group. The right policies put in place would have impact. There was a question why proposals were not being made for Massachusetts to adopt. Nicole Freedman said that the way to get there for autonomous vehicles is to really focus on Uber and Lyft. Many would say that Uber and Lyft are just buying their time and willing to go negative until there are autonomous vehicles. At this point there are not many solid policies for autonomous vehicles. The Governor has talked about some strategies that can be employed.

Action: Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0

#504-18 **Discussion on implementing differential priced parking in Newton**
COUNCILORS DOWNS, AUCHINCLOSS, GROSSMAN, ALBRIGHT, CROSSLEY, DANBERG, KALIS, RICE, KELLEY, KRINTZMAN, LEARY AND NOEL requesting a preliminary discussion on implementing differential (dynamic or variable) priced parking in Newton.

Public Safety & Transportation Held 6-0 on 11/07/18, Councilors Lipof and Noel not voting

Action: Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0

Note: There were no updates on this item. A memo has been drafted and will be sent that answers the questions that have been requested. The first question is how would the language change? Meter rates would be set within a range of up to \$5.00 per hour. The second question asked was describe the experience in Boston or other cities. Boston did a nice study that employed two different methods of dynamic pricing; one in the Back Bay and one in the Seaport. The conclusion in the Back Bay was increased rate. In the Seaport, the rates could change throughout the day and block by block. It was realized that the Back Bay was more successful. All the operational issues were overwhelming in trying to deal with these parking spaces. They are now proceeding

with the goal of 85% occupancy throughout the city on all 8,000 meters. Ms. Freedman said her understanding is that all Newton meters would be upgraded to smart technology that allows meter rate changes to be done remotely. The Committee voted to hold until further clarification.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0**

#20-19 **Update on Shared Parking Program**

COUNCILORS DOWNS, AUCHINCLOSS, LIPOF, GREENBERG, KRINTZMAN, LAREDO, COTE, NORTON, MARKIEWICZ, GROSSMAN, LEARY, KELLEY, SCHWARTZ AND NOEL requesting an update from the Planning Department on the Shared Parking Program.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0**

Note: A great deal of time was spent getting approval to run a pilot of shared parking in village centers. There was list of property in West Newton and Newton Centre businesses that had property and extra space. Many, many calls were made and not one expressed interest. The list of ten included churches, parking garages, retail and non-profit. Calls were made from the Mayor's office with no positive responses. It was suggested that there be a small working group to strategize on how to make this more appealing. Theoretically if someone wanted to do shared parking, they could do it. It was noted that no one wants to give up their valuable real estate as they don't know what they will need in the future. Half of the spaces in Newton Centre are empty at peak period when you include the private spots. These spots do not include driveways. One of the factors that might contribute to how decisions were made involving organizations as they are not made by one decision maker who looks at the numbers and at volunteer type decision making. Liability could be a problem.

#283-19 **Requesting an update on the Lime Bike program**

COUNCILOR NOEL, requesting an update from the Director of Transportation Planning on the Lime Bike program in the City of Newton.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 7-0**

Note: Attached to report is a Power Point presentation by Nicole Freedman. To date there have been a little more than 33,714 trips taken. There are about 125 bikes in the system; the highest was about 299. There have been many bikes out of service. There was a question regarding bikes that were left out in winter months and it was noted that some are taken back. At reduced numbers in November and December there were .3 trips per bike with many fewer bikes. It was asked when the program was started. There was a big difference from this summer compared to last summer concerning the number of bikes out of service. On one day six bikes were not working. It was asked how much leverage we had. Another question asked whether the city could underwrite this. Currently Newton is partnered with 15 cities and all have the same system. It is important to work with the MAPC. When the last RFP was issued, there were nine companies that responded. There would be more leverage if the contract would be renewed. There was a question regarding the placement of bicycles in places with high

demand. In response if there was a better job of placement as well as keeping them operational, it would be helpful. There are now 125 bikes and for the most part they are placed in appropriate spots.

Respectfully Submitted,


Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chair



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Statistics

- Launched July 2018
- 33,714 trips
- 7,000+ riders
- 125 bikes
- 100+ trips per day
- 2 WebQA calls/week



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