

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2014

Present: Ald. Ciccone (Chair), Yates, Cote, Fuller, Schwartz, Johnson and Harney

Absent: Ald. Lipof

Also Present: Ald. Crossley (Chair), Lennon, Gentile, Albright, Lappin, Danberg and Laredo

Absent: Ald. Salvucci

City Staff: David Turocy, Commissioner of Public Works; Lou Taverna, City Engineer; Capt. Marc Gromada and Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department; Bill Paille, Director of Transportation and David Koses, Transportation Planner

REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. AND PUBLIC FACIL. COMMITTEES

#101-14 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting discussion of proposed intersection improvements at Winchester and Boylston Streets that includes the installation of new traffic signal on westerly side of the intersection to be funded under the Mass Works Grant. [03/03/14 @ 3:03 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: The Public Safety & Transportation Committee discussed the item jointly with the Public Facilities Committee. Please see the Public Facilities report for a detailed account of this discussion.

Ald. Yates made the motion to hold this item. Committee members agreed 7-0.

#310-13(2) ALD. LENNON, on behalf of Dominic Proia, 17 Peabody Street, requesting an amendment to Resident Permit Parking Program Sec. 19-201(B)(1) regarding contiguous lots. [02/24/14 @ 9:08 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0, Ald. Harney not voting**

NOTE: Ald. Lennon, Mr. Koses and Sgt. Babcock joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Committee members were provided with proposed amendments concerning contiguous lots as requested when docket item #310-13 was discussed in October 2013 with Ald. Lennon and Mr. Proia to discuss an amendment to the resident permit parking program. Attached to this report.

Ald. Lennon said that Peabody Street residents continue to experience parking difficulties due to the language in the City Ordinance stating that residents are entitled to a resident permit if their vehicle is garaged in the City at an address which borders a restricted area or which is contiguous to a lot that borders said restricted area of the resident permit parking program for every permit program in the City. He then said that Traffic Council does not have the authority to change City ordinance or to remove parking permits, but the Board of Aldermen, if they desire, could modify

the City ordinance. Traffic Council could decide whether such a lot would be eligible on a case-by-case basis.

The proposed amendment provides two options for consideration:

Option 1- Removes contiguous lot eligibility entirely.

Option 2 - Traffic Council determines case-by-case basis.

Ald. Lennon said that Option 1 may work with certain permit programs in the City, not all. Option 2 may benefit residents of Peabody Street, by striking the ‘contiguous lot language that borders said restricted area’.

Ald. Lennon explained that the program (using Peabody Street as an example) allows residents of Washington and Pearl Streets can apply for permits allowing them to park on Peabody Street. Peabody Street residents were allowed to participate in the program because commuters, patrons and merchants were parking up the area. Peabody Street is a narrow street, allowing safe parking on one side, with multiple driveways and driveway cuts. Peabody Street has approximately 16 legal parking spaces. The large Washington Street apartment building is on the contiguous lot allowing them to obtain permits. The “Resident Permit Parking Only” program allows two permits per unit and two guest passes per unit. Perhaps this amendment would allow residents whose home fronts a street be issued permits first. Sgt. Babcock informed him that he has denied permits to Washington Street residents.

Committee members raised suggestions, concerns and questions regarding amendments to the “Resident Permit Parking Only” program.

Suggestions:

- A Committee member suggested that if Option 2 is approved; perhaps the following should be struck because the following means that residents will not be entitled to a sticker. *“Notwithstanding the foregoing, the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to a lot that borders said restricted area may be eligible provided the traffic council finds that inclusion of such contiguous lot will not place an undue demand on available parking spaces in the restricted area. In no event will the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to the rear lot line of a non-corner lot bordering the restricted area be entitled to a sticker.”*

- Committee members then said that Option 2 has a double-negative *“ In no event will the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to the rear lot line of a non-corner lot bordering the restricted area be entitled to a sticker”*

- Establish perimeters of permit programs when enacted, perhaps limiting the number of permits issued, allowing residents whose home fronts a street be issued permits first.

- Limit the number of permits to households with driveways.

Concerns:

- Committee members feel that residents of #337 Washington Street should be forced to find alternative parking, perhaps on the opposite side of Washington Street.

- Traffic Council should not have to determine on a case-by-case basis.

Questions:

- Where do residents’ park in the winter and are the municipal lots available each season?

Mr. Koses said that he is concerned if the language is modified allowing Traffic Council to decide whether such a lot would be eligible on a case-by-case basis because residents will request program amendments to their streets and Traffic Council may have to revoke permits.

Sgt. Babcock said that the program allows two permits per household and two guest passes per unit. The department has issued nineteen permits on Peabody Street (ten from Washington Street and nine from Peabody Street). The department has stopped issuing permits to Washington Street residents. Each permit receives two guest passes, totaling thirty cars being permitted to park on Peabody Street in approximately 16 legal parking spaces.

Ald. Fuller made the motion to approve Option 2 while Ald. Lennon continues to work with the Law Department.

Mr. Koses suggested that perhaps the language should be modified allowing Traffic Council review the supply of parking spaces perhaps limiting the permits to one per household.

Ald. Lennon said that he will continue working with the Law Department requesting clarification on suggestions made and inquire if the current parking permit program could be amended limiting the number of parking permits issued and if residents whose homes front a street be issued permits first.

Ald. Fuller then withdrew her motion to approve Option 2 and made the motion to hold this item for additional information and clarification from the Law Department as requested. Committee members agreed 6-0, Ald. Harney not voting.

#72-14 ALD. CICCONE & JOHNSON, requesting a discussion of the installation of a possible bike lane on Walnut Street between Otis Street and Commonwealth Avenue. [03/03/14 @ 8:17 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Mr. Paille, Sgt. Babcock and Mr. Koses joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Committee members were provided with the following items, on file. PowerPoint presentation and a transcription from Traffic Council meeting on February 27, 2014; regarding docket items TC66-11 and TC17-10. Two articles provided by Andreae Downs on 1) Bike lanes prevent over-correction by drivers, bicyclists reducing danger for both even when sharing narrow roads and 2) Dedicated bike lanes can cut cycling injuries in half.

Mr. Paille provided Committee members with a detailed PowerPoint presentation including corridor photos, issues/considerations, typical section description, data collection including bike, accidents and speed counts and approaches. Attached to this report.

Corridor Destination:

Mr. Paille said that the corridor includes the high school, stores, Senior Center, Cultural Art Center and the commuter rail station at the northern end of the corridor, including Washington

Street. Churches and City Hall are at the southern end, including Commonwealth Avenue.

Issues/Considerations:

Mr. Paille explained the following issues and considerations that he will consider:

- Roadway – 1) surface condition, available widths for travel lane and shoulder 2) obstructions including gutter, catch basins and snow and 3) sight distance/geometry.
- Vehicle Speeds – 1) Actual versus posted, 2) enforcement on Walnut Street and 3) accident counts for both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Access – 1) Functional Classification including the use of roadway and who uses the roadway 2) Destination/Connection 3) 4 – way Intersections (Commonwealth Avenue, Cabot Street, Newtonville Avenue and Austin Street).4) Side streets including the geometry, sight distance and controls. 5) Driveways including sight distance, width and obstructions. 6) Traffic volume.

Typical Section:

Mr. Paille described the minimum, preferred and actual width of Walnut Street. The average width of Walnut Street is approximately 22 feet wide.

- Travel Lane - Minimum of 10 feet. He would prefer 11 - 12 feet. The actual is 11 feet.
- Paved Shoulder – Minimum is 4 feet. He would prefer 5 feet. The actual is 4 - 5 feet. Paved shoulders tie in with bike lanes. Mr. Paille said that the minimum 4 feet wide is ideal regardless of installing a bike lane. Paved shoulders provide much more comfort for a bicyclist or pedestrian to move down the shoulder.
- Vehicle Parking Lane – Minimum is 7 feet. He would prefer 8 feet. The actual is 7 feet in the village area. A parking lane provides enough room to open the door, a bike and cars can get by. Newtonville village is about 7 ½ feet wide parking lane. It is necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians today.

Data Collection:

- Bike Counts - Data from 2010: That data revealed that 15 bicycles per hour in the morning, 14 bicycles per hour in the afternoon. This coincides with the beginning of the school day and at the end of the school day. Observations included 13 bicycles using the high school bike racks. This tells us that students and other bike riders are using the Walnut Street corridor during the day.
- Bike Counts –Data from 2013 from volunteers: Data proves approximately 44 bikes on the weekend at Commonwealth Avenue and Walnut Street and 38 bikes on a weekday morning at Washington and Walnut Streets. This proves that there are enough bicyclists on Walnut Street to accommodate them.
- Accident Data - Data from 2012 reveals that five pedestrians and two bicyclists were involved in reported accidents. Mr. Paille is working with Sgt. Babcock to receive 2013 data.

Speed Counts:

- South of Prospect Avenue from May 2013: 26.7% travel below posted speed, 50.7% travel 0-4 mph above posted speed limit, 20.5% travel 5-9 mph above posted speed limit and 2.1% travel greater than 10 mph above posted speed limit of 25 mph. Totaling 77.4% traveling below 30 mph and 22.6% are travelling greater than 30 mph.

- South of Trowbride Avenue from May 2013: 27.3% travel below posted speed, 47.6% travel 0-4 mph above posted speed limit, 22.3% travel 5-9 mph above posted speed limit and 2.8% travel 10 mph above posted speed limit of 25 mph. Totaling 74.9% are traveling below 30 mph and 25.1% are travelling greater than 30 mph.

Approach:

Phase 1

It is Department Public Work's intent to cold plane and overlay the existing surface on Walnut Street from Commonwealth Avenue to Cabot Street in 2014. Perhaps perform curb work, review existing signage and adjust, install new markings to establish 11-foot travel lanes to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, continue design of Newtonville reconstruction project and monitor post-construction vehicle speeds.

Phase 2

Develop preliminary bike lane design, present to this Committee then implement.

Ald. Johnson stated that she is very concerned because drivers are speeding on Walnut Street. The posted speed limit is 25 mph. Drivers are traveling 22.6% greater than the 25 mph posted speed limit south of Prospect Avenue and traveling 25.1% greater than the 25 mph posted speed limit south of Trowbride Avenue. This is concerning. She then said that Sgt. Babcock informed Traffic Council members in February 2014, the average speed was 40 mph. Ald. Johnson then stated that this item was docketed because she and Ald. Ciccone feel that Walnut Street is a very unsafe location to install bike lanes as this corridor is particularly challenging. The PowerPoint should be reflecting the percentage of drivers who are traveling the posted speed limit.

Committee members raised questions, concerns and suggestions regarding the installation of a possible bike lane.

Questions:

Ald. Ciccone asked why the PowerPoint reflects 30 mph? Mr. Paille answered that the typical average speed in these two areas are 30 mph. It is unacceptable that drivers are traveling greater than the posted speed limit. This indicates to him that speeders need to be controlled. Safety, education and accommodations are necessary for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is the City's intent to distribute a recently created education flyer to all residents in May or June educating them on bike and travel safety.

Is parking allowed on Walnut Street? Ald. Johnson answered that Traffic Council recently approved parking restrictions both sides of Walnut Street in this section of the corridor. Parking continues to be allowed in the village.

Is data available on accidents and speed volumes on the recently installed bike lanes on Centre and Walnut Streets? If data proves that there are high counts on both, would they be altered? Mr. Paille answered that it is the intent to perform speed volumes. He then said that he is not in favor of providing alternate routes and people will not change corridors or their routes.

Concerns:

Ald. Ciccone stated that he remains concerned with public safety. Parents and buses may queue up on Walnut Street to pick-up/drop-off students in the bike lane, even though parking is restricted. He stated he would never support a bike lane in this corridor. Teenagers are at the greatest risk of having car accidents and drivers are traveling greater than the 25 mph speed limit. At Traffic Council, he was concerned until Mr. Koses stated that Traffic Council does not approve bike lanes; they are designed and installed at the discretion of the Department of Public Works. Traffic Council approves the elimination of parking to implement bike lanes. In Traffic Council, he opposed removing parking on Walnut Street.

Sgt. Babcock said that he and the department remain concerned with the location in the corridor from Mill Street to Elm Street. He supports bike lanes but remains opposed to this section due to the bend of the road, speed and accidents. Speed is an issue. Directed patrols/speed enforcement was conducted and speeding tickets were issued to drivers traveling 10 mph above the speed limit. Observations included vehicles traveling greater than the 25 mph posted speed limit. In Traffic Council, he opposed removing parking on Walnut Street. He conducts approximately eighty court hearings per week at least nine are ticketed to bike violators on Beacon Street. Students do not use the traffic signal. Approving bike lanes at this location is unsafe.

Suggestions:

A suggestion was made to install cycle tracks. Mr. Paille answered that a cycle track could perhaps be an option.

Suggestions from Aldermen and the Police Department were made to perhaps change the administrative process regarding the installation of bike lanes from the Department Public Work to perhaps the Public Safety & Transportation Committee.

Sgt. Babcock said that better construction of the road or curbs are necessary prior to installing bike lanes. He will work on obtaining data regarding accidents.

Ald. Johnson stated that she is pleased to hear that a thoughtful approach will be given when designing bike lanes making them safe, because this corridor is challenging.

Chairman Ciccone opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. Two residents spoke and suggested to Committee members that they read the two articles provided by Andreae Downs. Bike lanes provide traffic calming, delineation, reduce the number of car versus car accidents, deter speeders and provide safety to bicyclists. It is important to keep traffic moving but at the speed limit of 25 mph. One resident asked if it would be safer to narrow travel lanes to 10 feet to deter speeding, perhaps wider travel lanes allow speeding. Bike lanes make streets safer for all and provide additional options. We are looking for alternative modes, so anything we can do to support that. One resident stated that a cycle track does not have to be expensive; they separate bikes from traffic because they provide protected bike lanes and safety.

Before moving forward, the Committee requested and suggested the following. Cost estimates to install a cycle track. What priority is this project and where does it fall with other City

projects. It was suggested when the bike lane design and cost estimates are complete to return to this Committee to present.

Without further discussion, Ald. Johnson made the motion to hold this item to develop a preliminary bike lane design and present to this Committee. Committee members agreed 7-0.

At approximately 10:52 pm, Ald. Ciccone made the motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chairman

Resident Permit Parking § 19-201(B)(1) – proposed amendments concerning contiguous lots

OPTION #1 (removes contiguous lot eligibility entirely)

B. Issuance of resident parking stickers:

- (1) Resident parking stickers shall identify the restricted area to which they apply and shall be of a design specified by the chief of police. One such sticker for a restricted area shall be issued by the chief of police or his designee to an owner of a motor vehicle which is registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with a registered gross weight of under two and one half (2½) tons, which is principally garaged in the City of Newton at an address which borders a restricted area, ~~or which is contiguous to a lot that borders said restricted area,~~ as established in accordance with subsection (a) above, which is owned or used by a resident of the City of Newton at said address, and which otherwise qualifies for issuance of a sticker under this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to the rear lot line of a non-corner lot bordering the restricted area will not be entitled to a sticker.

OPTION #2 (Traffic Council determines case by case)

B. Issuance of resident parking stickers:

- (1) Resident parking stickers shall identify the restricted area to which they apply and shall be of a design specified by the chief of police. One such sticker for a restricted area shall be issued by the chief of police or his designee to an owner of a motor vehicle which is registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with a registered gross weight of under two and one half (2½) tons, which is principally garaged in the City of Newton at an address which borders a restricted area, ~~or which is contiguous to a lot that borders said restricted area,~~ as established in accordance with subsection (a) above, which is owned or used by a resident of the City of Newton at said address, and which otherwise qualifies for issuance of a sticker under this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to a lot that borders said restricted area may be eligible provided the traffic council finds that inclusion of such contiguous lot will not place an undue demand on available parking spaces in the restricted area. In no event will the owner of a motor vehicle principally garaged at a lot which is contiguous to the rear lot line of a non-corner lot bordering the restricted area ~~will not~~ be entitled to a sticker.

**Public Safety & Transportation
 Committee**
 City of Newton
 March 19, 2014

Walnut Street Corridor

72-14

Continued Below

Continued Above

3

72-14

Discussion of Possible Bicycle Lanes Along Walnut Street
 From Commonwealth Avenue to Otis Street

Issues/Considerations

72-14

- **Roadway**
 - Surface condition
 - Available width (travel lane, shoulder)
 - Obstructions (gutter, catch basins, snow)
 - Sight Distance/Geometry
- **Vehicle Speed**
 - Actual vs Posted
 - Enforcement
 - Accidents (Pedestrian/Bicycle)
- **Access**
 - Functional Classification
 - Destination/Connection
 - 4 - way Intersections (Comm. Ave/Cabot/Newtonville - Austin)
 - Side streets (Geometry, Sight Distance, Controls)
 - Driveways (Sight Distance, width, obstructions)
 - Traffic volume

4

#72-14

Typical Section		72-14	
Element	Minimum	Preferred	Actual
Travel Lane	10'	11'-12'	11'
Paved Shoulder	4'	5'	4' - 5'
Vehicle Parking Lane	7'	8'	7' Village Only

5

Photos		72-14	
 Driveways/Obstructions	 Roadway Geometry		
 Side Street Width	 Available Street Width		

7

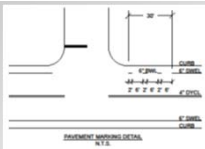


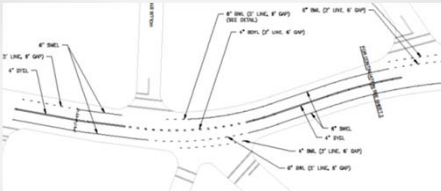
Data Collection		72-14															
<p>Bike Counts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 bicycles/hr - 7:00 to 8:00 am 14 bicycles/hr - 2:30 to 3:30 pm 13 bicycles in racks at NNHS on Sept. 10, 2010 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44 bicycles - 4:00 to 6:00 pm (Saturday) at Commonwealth Ave/Walnut 38 bicycles - 7:00 to 9:00 am (Thursday) Washington/Walnut <p>Accidents (2012 - NPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> #340 (Pedestrian) - March 3 (Highland Ave) #322 (Pedestrian) - March 19 (Madison Ave) #457 (Pedestrian) - June 2 (NNHS) Washington Int. (Bicycle) - August 2 Clyde Int. (Bicycle) - August 24 & September 12 #300 (Pedestrian) - August 30 (Austin St) Int. Otis (Pedestrian) - November 2 	<p>Speed Counts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 1, 2013 (12:00 am to 11:00 pm) <p>South of Prospect:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>26.7% below posted speed (< 25 mph)</td> <td>77.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50.7% 0-4 mph above posted speed (25-29 mph)</td> <td>< 30 mph</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20.5% 5-9 mph above posted speed (30-34 mph)</td> <td>22.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.1% > 10 mph above posted speed (>35 mph)</td> <td>> 30 mph</td> </tr> </table> <p>South of Trowbridge:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>27.3% below posted speed (< 25 mph)</td> <td>74.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>47.6% 0-4 mph above posted speed (25-29 mph)</td> <td>< 30 mph</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22.3% 5-9 mph above posted speed (30-34 mph)</td> <td>25.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.8% > 10 mph above posted speed (>35 mph)</td> <td>> 30 mph</td> </tr> </table>	26.7% below posted speed (< 25 mph)	77.4%	50.7% 0-4 mph above posted speed (25-29 mph)	< 30 mph	20.5% 5-9 mph above posted speed (30-34 mph)	22.6%	2.1% > 10 mph above posted speed (>35 mph)	> 30 mph	27.3% below posted speed (< 25 mph)	74.9%	47.6% 0-4 mph above posted speed (25-29 mph)	< 30 mph	22.3% 5-9 mph above posted speed (30-34 mph)	25.1%	2.8% > 10 mph above posted speed (>35 mph)	> 30 mph
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2.8% > 10 mph above posted speed (>35 mph)	> 30 mph																

6

Photos		72-14	
 Intersections	 Village		
 On-Street Parking	 Bridge Over Mass Turnpike		

8

Approach	72-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold plane & overlay existing surface from Commonwealth to Cabot (2014) Review existing signage and adjust Install new markings to establish 11' travel lanes to provide safe pedestrian/bicycle accommodation Continue design of Newtonville reconstruction project Monitor post-construction vehicle speeds Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop preliminary bike lane design Present to PS&T Implement 	
9	

Typical Applications — Side Street	72-14
  	
	
11	

Typical Applications — Signs & Mkgs	72-14
 <p style="text-align: center;">Bike Lane Symbols</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Bike Lane Sharrows</p>	
   <p style="text-align: center;">Signs</p>	
10	