

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Present: Ald. Harney; Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; Jerome Grafe, Citizen Representative; David Koses, Transportation Planner and Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department

Also Present: Ald. Danberg, Rice and Schwartz

Mr. Danila provided a PowerPoint presentation on these items, attached to this report.

TC69-11 ALD. SHAPIRO, requesting removal of "No Right Turn On Red" sign when turning from Walnut Street right onto Centre Street in Newton Highlands in order to reduce traffic backups on Walnut, increase motorist convenience, and reduce unnecessary idling time. (Ward 6) [12/09/11 @ 8:55 AM]

ACTION: **DENIED (5-0). This item may be appealed through the close of business March 7, 2012.**

NOTE: The one e-mail received on this item is on file.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with the four separate traffic signal operation phases. He said that the signal is currently being studied by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) for a re-timing project and will be rebuilt with the Walnut Street TIP project. He then described where No Turn on Reds are used. A No Turn On Red sign should be considered when an engineering study finds that one or more of the following conditions exists: Inadequate sight distance, geometrics or operational characteristics of the intersection that result in unexpected conflicts or difficulty in seeing approaching vehicle, an exclusive pedestrian phase, or an unacceptable number of pedestrian conflicts with right-turn-on-red maneuvers, especially involving children, older pedestrians, or persons with disabilities.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately four residents were present for this discussion. The discussion stressed their concerns regarding inadequate site distance, pedestrian safety and heavy traffic. They disagreed that traffic backups on Walnut Street. They feel the No Right Turn on Red sign should remain at this location, as it is appropriate. Ald. Rice agreed.

Mr. Danila made the motion to deny this request. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through the close of business March 7, 2012.

TC67-11 JEROME GRAFE, requesting parking restrictions as necessary and the installation of a bicycle lane on Walnut Street between Homer and Forest Streets in both northbound and southbound directions. (Ward 6) [11/28/11 @ 3:16 PM]

ACTION: **A) APPROVED (5-0) no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Homer Street and Beacon Street. This item may be appealed through the close of business March 7, 2012.**
B) HELD for 60-day trial (4-1, Danila opposed) no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street.

NOTE: Mr. Koses read the one e-mail received on this item, on file.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with parking observations, various parking restrictions on the side streets, vehicles and bicyclist crash data, overall mean and 85th percentile speeds and the effects of parked cars on Walnut Street. He then described the Walnut Street reconstruction project and the reasons why bicycle lanes should be considered.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately twelve residents were present for this discussion. The discussion stressed their concerns, advantages, suggestions and questions.

Concerns

Some residents stressed their concerns regarding pedestrian safety, inadequate site distance, side streets are too narrow to allow parking on both sides, variable width of Walnut Street makes it difficult to install bike lanes, difficulty exiting and entering driveways and side streets, limited parking, blocking driveways, convenient parking for commuters and service vehicles, excessive speeding and the number of accidents. They feel that the entire neighborhood would be affected if bike lanes were approved.

Advantages

Some residents said that Walnut Street is a major north/south thoroughfare and bike lanes are necessary as they promote both pedestrian and bicyclists safety by defining road space. Dedicated bike lanes are desirable and promote alternate methods of transportation.

Suggestions

Suggestions were made to impose a pilot "Share the Streets" program, install crosswalks and traffic signals and implement a parking restriction on side streets to deter commuters. Some residents stated that parking is necessary in front of their homes and for village employee parking. A suggestion was used to allow commuters to park at Crystal Lake and install parking meters on Walnut Street to deter long-term "free" parking.

Questions

Residents asked if the Mayor would be implementing some of TAC's recommendations. They asked where Walnut Street residents would park if parking was restricted or totally removed. They asked how this problem could be resolved so that everyone is satisfied. They asked where commuters would park if parking were to be removed on Walnut Street. They asked if a resident permit-parking program could be implemented on the side streets. A resident asked if Traffic Council members received their petition. Mr. Koses answered no.

Some residents agreed that a study is necessary prior to eliminating parking. Some parking should remain as parked cars help deter speeding. They said that if all parking is eliminated, it

promotes safer site distance exiting side streets. They then agreed that compromises and a comprehensive traffic and parking study are necessary. Parking restrictions should be realistic and balanced. It is necessary for pedestrians and bicyclists to feel safe and urged for traffic calming measures.

Ald. Danberg, Rice and Schwartz suggested the following ideas: Suggestions were made to restrict parking on the bends of Walnut Street, paint 5' driveway setbacks, implement a two-hour parking restriction on all side streets and Walnut Street. Install additional crosswalks with stanchions at Lakewood Road and Duncklee Street locations, implement safety and traffic calming measures, install "Share the Road" signs, install sharrows, remove parking on Walnut Street from Lakewood Road to Fisher Avenue, allow parking at the Crystal Lake lot, street painting identifying spaces and a 60-day trial of bike lanes. They felt a comprehensive traffic and parking study, "Share the Streets" program are necessary, and agreed safety should be the first priority. They suggested holding an additional neighborhood meeting to determine parking restrictions on side streets.

Mr. Danila said that crosswalks cannot be installed without additional safety devices. A two-hour parking restriction cannot accommodate bike lanes, parking has to be removed.

Ald. Harney said that parking was originally added to Walnut Street in hopes of reducing speeding. He recommends completing the parking survey, business survey, traffic calming, alternate parking locations, bicycle lanes and evaluation of a trial period and measurement of outcomes as recommended by the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council. Mr. Grafe said that he docketed this item for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to define road edge and to create safer mobility between the north and south. Sharrows should not be considered on main thoroughfares. Mr. Grafe is hopeful that TAC's recommendations will address parking issues in the City. Surveys prove that bike lanes are helpful to promote bicycling. He then said that parking is plentiful in Newton; it may not be free or convenient which should not affect Traffic Council members' decisions. He requests members to consider the demand for bike lanes and all road users. Mr. Danila said that if parking were not removed on Walnut Street, sharrows would be painted in the middle of the street. He then said that trials cannot be considered for bike lanes. Sgt. Babcock said that his first concern is safety. He agreed additional neighborhood meetings are necessary. He is concerned with site distance and the difficulty drivers have exiting and entering their driveways and side street. He suggested implementing a temporary parking restriction for later review and consideration.

Mr. Koses said that he supports removing parking on Walnut Street and adding bicycle lanes. He then said that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) developed over 26 recommendations that have been endorsed by the Executive Department, including one referred to as "Share the Streets" where a zone would be identified, parking restrictions would be enacted within the zone, and permits would be made available for residents and others to override the posted parking restrictions.

Mr. Koses also mentioned that Walnut Street is being looked at comprehensively as part of the reconstruction project.

Mr. Danila said that the public and Aldermen did not express concerns regarding the removal of parking on Walnut Street between Homer and Beacon Street. He suggested splitting this item into two parts: A) Walnut Street between Homer and Beacon Streets and B) Walnut Street between Beacon and Forest Streets.

Mr. Grafe made the following two motions: A) Approve no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Homer Street and Beacon Street with the implication, Department Public Works would stripe bike lanes on both sides of Walnut Street when painting resumes. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that this may be appealed through the close of business March 7, 2012. B) Hold for a 60-day trial no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street. Council members agreed 4-1, Danila opposed.

HP4-11 CORNELIA CAIN-HEARD, 974 Walnut Street, requesting a handicap parking space in front of 974 Walnut Street. (Ward 6) [11/20/11 @ 8:42 AM]
The Newton Commission on Disability voted on 12/12/11, to deny this request due to safety concerns.

ACTION: **HELD (5-0).**

NOTE: Ms. Cornelia Cain-Heard was present for this item.

Mr. Danila suggested and made the motion to hold this item pending the outcome of the 60-day trial of no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street, TC67-11(B). Without discussion, Council members agreed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair

Traffic Council

City Hall

Room 222

Thursday, February 16, 2012

7:00 p.m.

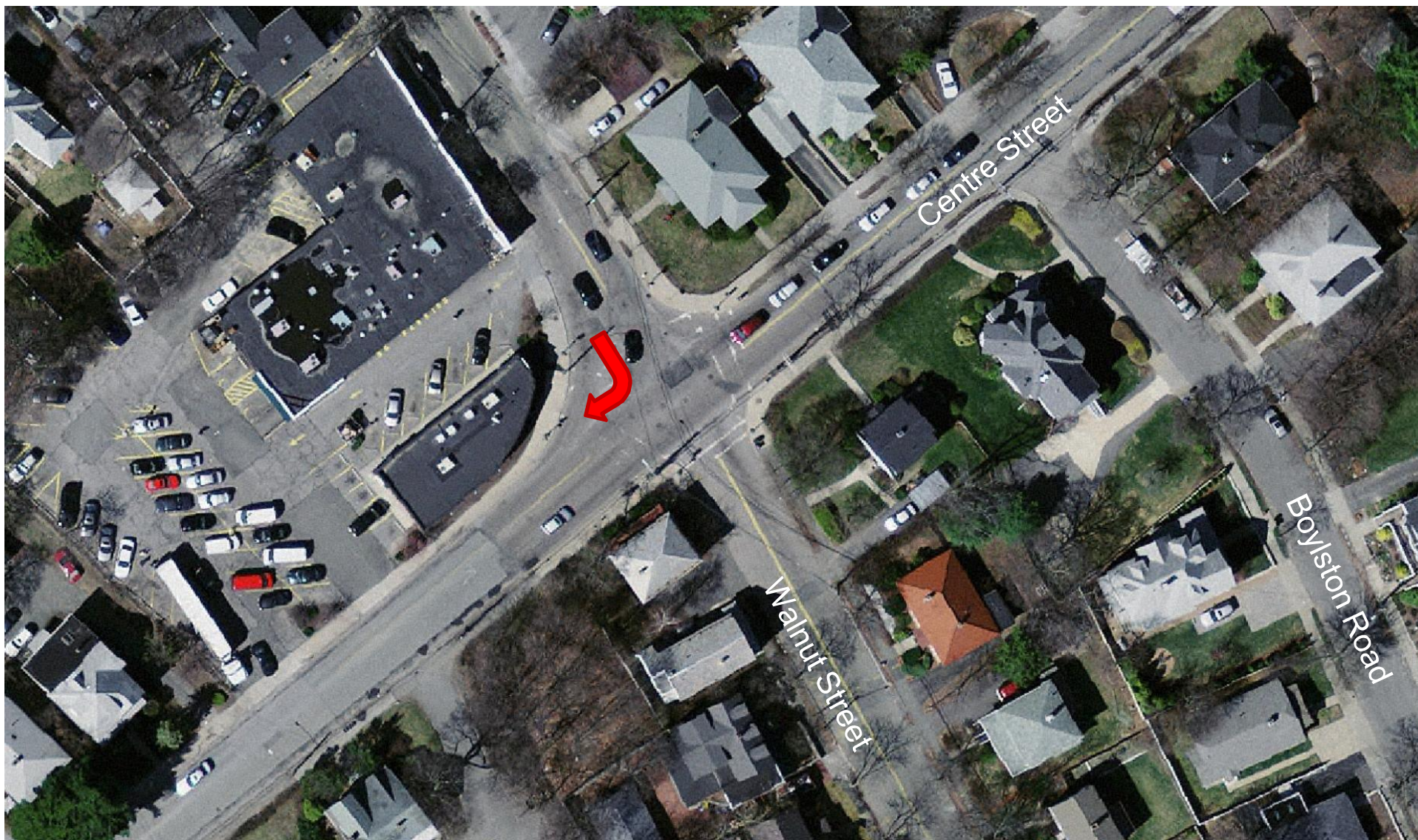
Agenda

1. TC69-11: requesting removal of No Turn on Red restriction from Walnut St. onto Centre St. (Ward 6)
 2. TC67-11: requesting parking restrictions on Walnut St. between Homer St. and Forest St. to facilitate bicycle lanes. (Ward 6)
 3. HP4-11: requesting a handicap parking space in front of 974 Walnut St. (Ward 6)
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TC69-11

Requesting removal of "No Right Turn On Red" sign when turning from Walnut St. right onto Centre St. in Newton Highlands. (Ward 6)

Aerial Photo



Looking left up Centre St.



Traffic Signal Notes

- Operates with 4 phases:
 - Both Walnut St. approaches.
 - NB Centre St. with Green Left Arrow + Green Right Arrow for EB Walnut St.
 - Both Centre St. approaches.
 - Exclusive Pedestrian Phase.
 - Currently being studied by VHB for re-timing project.
 - We be rebuilt with Walnut St. TIP project.
-

Where No Turn on Reds are used

- A NTOR sign should be considered when an engineering study finds that one or more of the following conditions exists:
 - ❑ Inadequate sight distance;
 - ❑ Geometrics or operational characteristics of the intersection that result in unexpected conflicts or difficulty in seeing approaching vehicles;
 - ❑ An exclusive pedestrian phase; or
 - ❑ An unacceptable number of pedestrian conflicts with right-turn-on-red maneuvers, especially involving children, older pedestrians, or persons with disabilities.
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TC67-11

Requesting parking restrictions as necessary and the installation of a bicycle lane on Walnut St. between Homer St. and Forest St. in both northbound and southbound directions.
(Ward 6)

Study Area



Walnut St. Parking Observations

- Homer St. to Beacon St.:
 - Parking allowed on both sides (except at traffic signals).
 - Typically 0 cars parked.
 - Beacon St. to Forest St., east side:
 - Parking allowed between Carthay Cir. & Lakewood Rd.
 - Typically 1 car parked.
 - Beacon St. to Forest St., west side:
 - Parking allowed between Carthay Cir. and Forest St., except within the vicinity of some intersections.
 - Typically 30-35 cars observed.
 - Most cars arrive during the early morning.
 - 63% of parked cars registered in Newton.
-

Example of Typical Weekday Parking



Example of Typical Weekday Parking



Walnut Street Crash Information

- Homer Street to Beacon Street (not including actual intersections with Homer St. or Beacon St.): averages 2 crashes per year.
 - Beacon Street to Forest Street (not including intersection with Beacon St.): averages 10 crashes per year.
-

Effects of Parked Cars on Speeds on Walnut

| | NB Walnut (no adjacent parking) | SB Walnut (adjacent daytime parking) |
|---|--|---|
| Overall Mean Speed | 31 mph | 31 mph |
| Overall 85 th Percentile Speed | 36 mph | 34 mph |
| | | |
| Daytime Mean Speed | 31 mph | 30 mph |
| Daytime 85 th Percentile Speed | 36 mph | 34 mph |
| | | |
| Overnight Mean Speed | 33 mph | 33 mph |
| Overnight 85 th Percentile Speed | 38 mph | 37 mph |

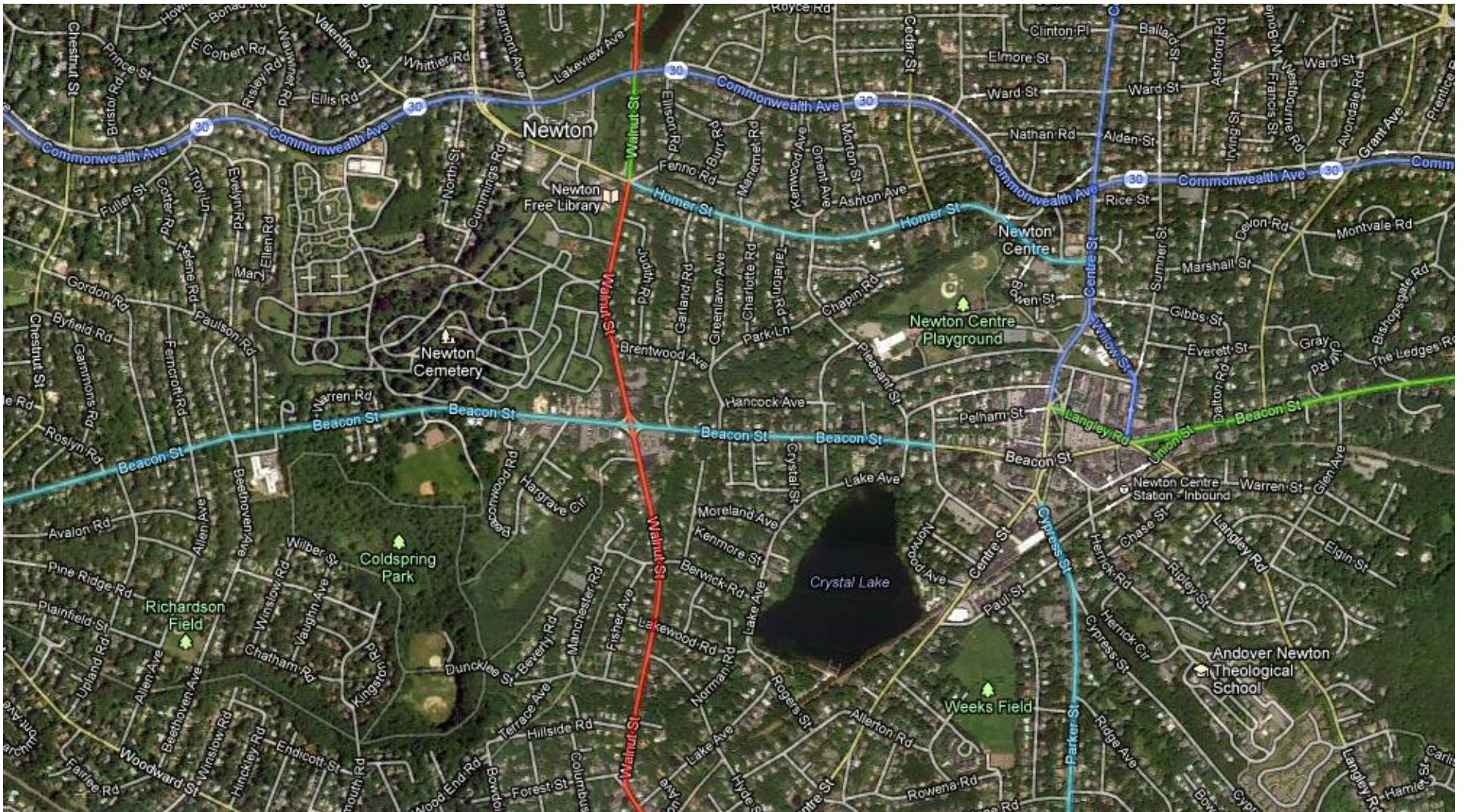
Walnut Street Reconstruction

- Project will rebuild Walnut St. from immediately south of Homer St. to Centre. St. and Centre St. between Walnut. St. and Route 9.
 - Includes new traffic signals at Beacon St., Lincoln St., and Centre St.
 - To be funded through the Boston Region MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
 - 80% federal, 20% state funding.
 - Requires adherence to MassDOT standards.
 - Construction funding not currently programmed.
-

TIP Project Timeline

- March, 1996: funding for design approved.
- July, 1996: 25% Design Plans submitted to MassHighway.
- Following 25% submission:
 - Scope of project was expanded.
 - Bicycle accommodation requirements enacted.
- February, 2003: Revised 25% Design Plans provided for City review.
- November, 2004: Board passes resolution requesting a bike lane waiver for entire corridor.
- January, 2008: following discussions between City, MassDOT, and community groups, anticipated bike lane waiver request limited to only the section between Forest St. and the aqueduct.

Local On-Street Bicycle Network



Existing Bike Lanes | **Bike Accommodations Currently Under Design**
Painted Shoulder with Legal, Infrequent Parking



Why Bicycle Lanes?

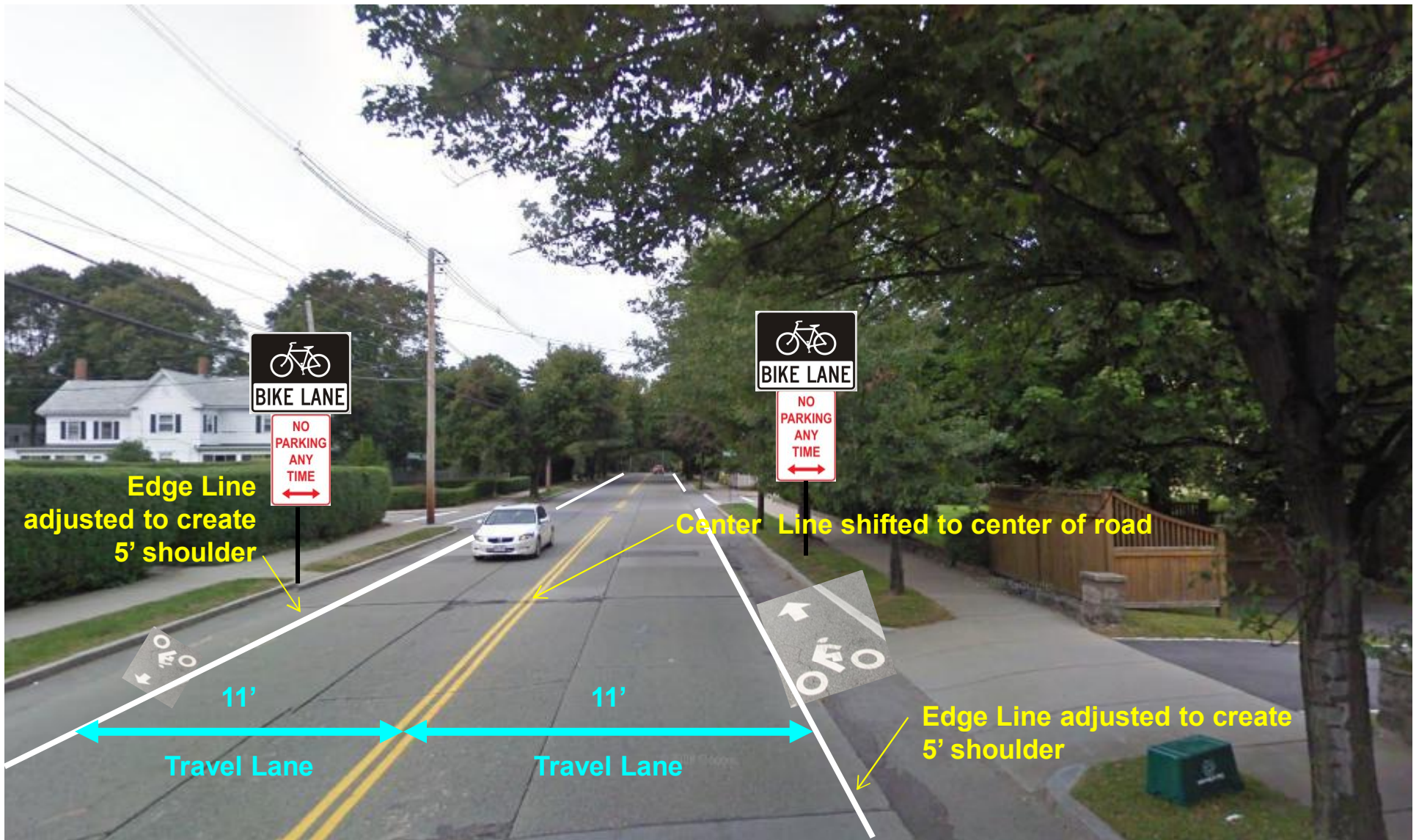
- Bike Lanes:

- Support and encourage bicycling as a means of transportation.
 - Reduce the chance that motorists will stray into cyclists' path of travel.
 - Make it less likely that passing motorists swerve toward opposing traffic.
 - Remind motorists to look for cyclists when turning.
 - Help define road space.
 - Promote a more orderly flow of traffic.
 - Signal that cyclists have a right to the road.
 - Decrease the likelihood of crashes.
 - Decrease the stress level of bicyclists riding in traffic.
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Walnut St. Bicycle Crash History ('05-'12)

- 9/1/09: Car traveling north on Walnut collided with cyclist exiting Lakewood.
 - 12/18/09: Car turning right onto Duncklee collided with cyclist on Walnut.
 - 8/31/10: Car turning left into Walgreens collided with cyclist traveling south on Walnut.
 - Two additional crashes on Homer St. near Walnut St.
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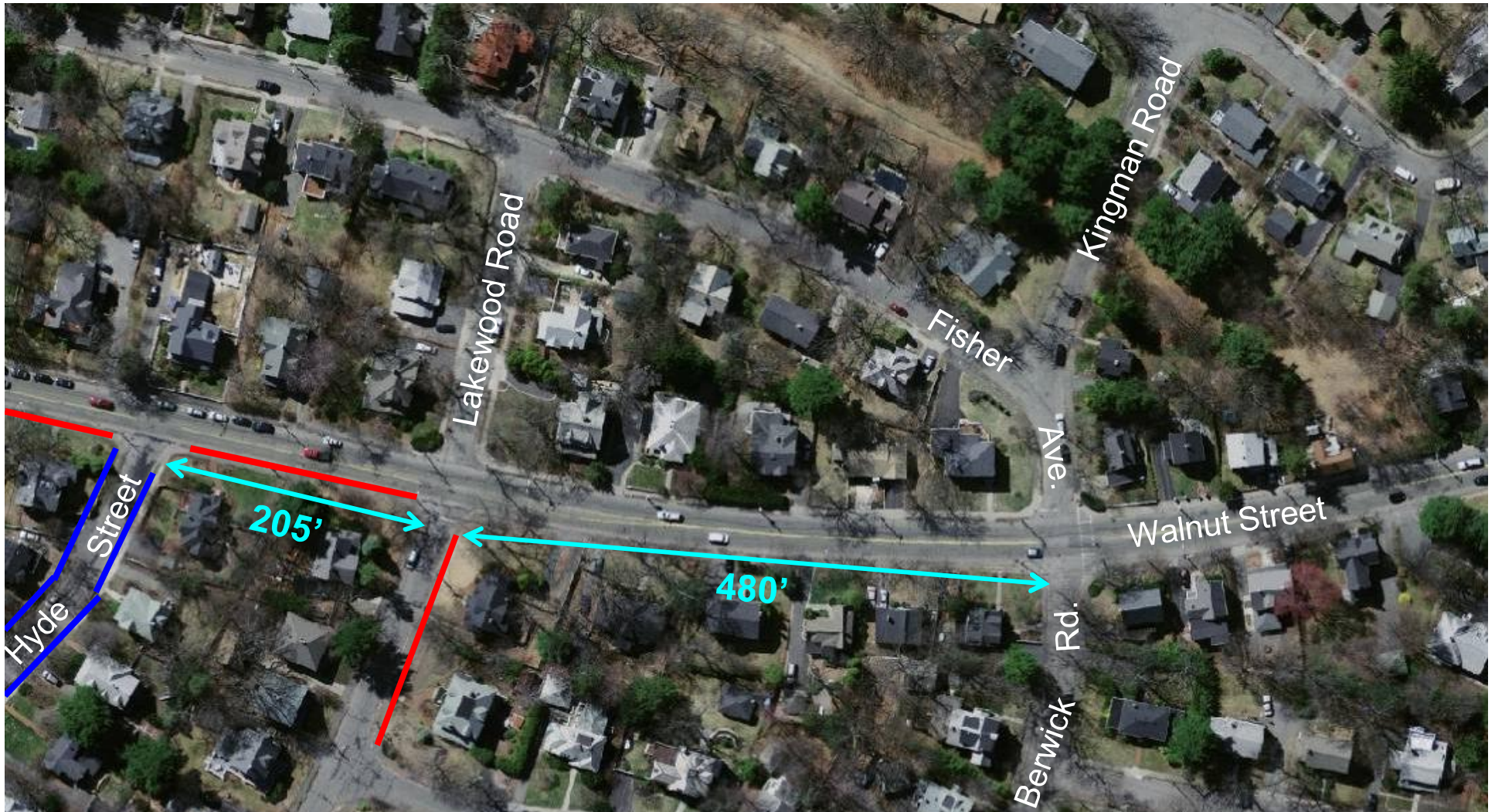
Possible Cross-Section



Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



No Parking Any Time | **2-Hr Limit, 7am-10pm, Mon-Fri**

Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



No Parking | **Resident Parking**

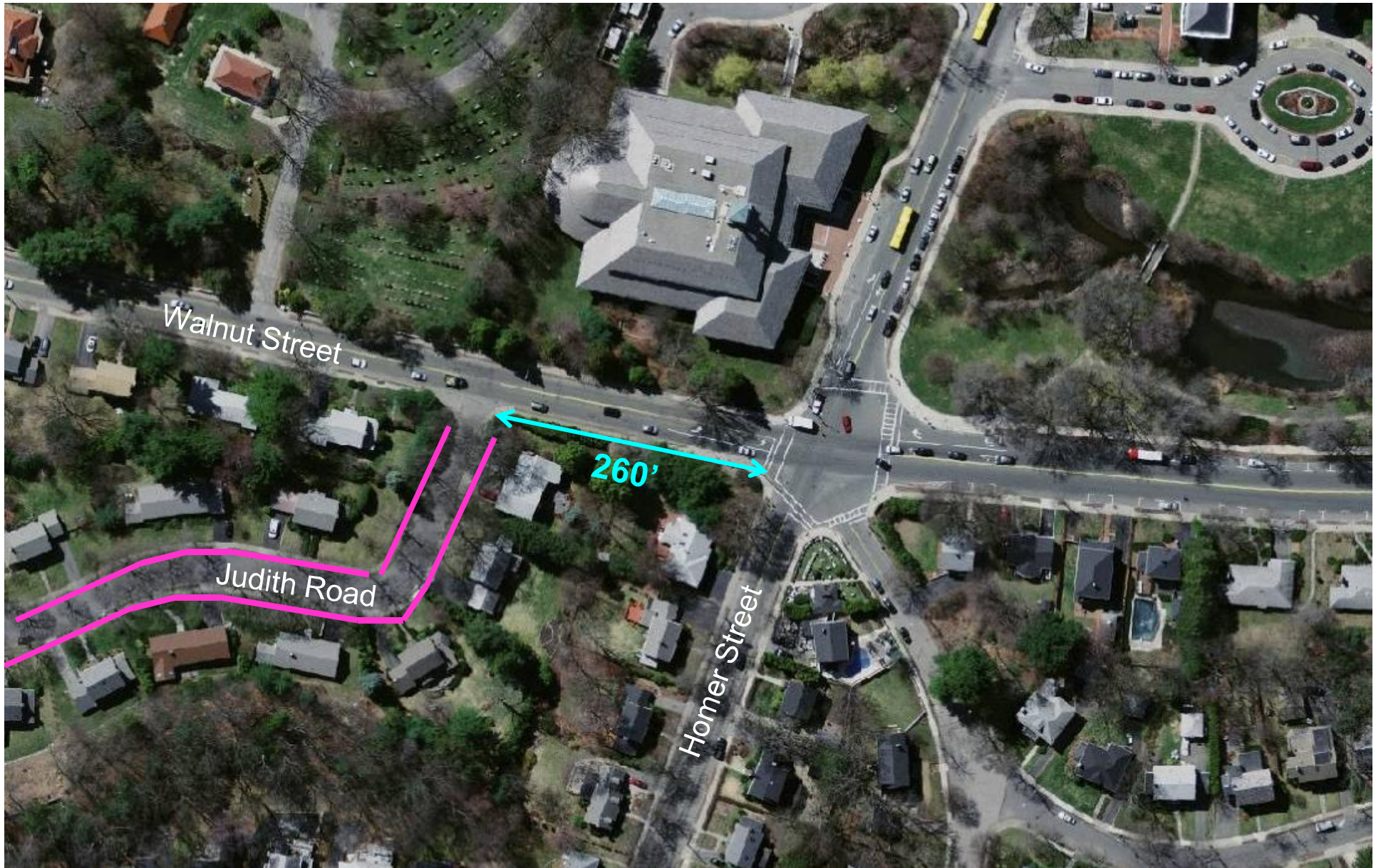


Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



No Parking | **Resident Parking** | **2-Hour Limit**

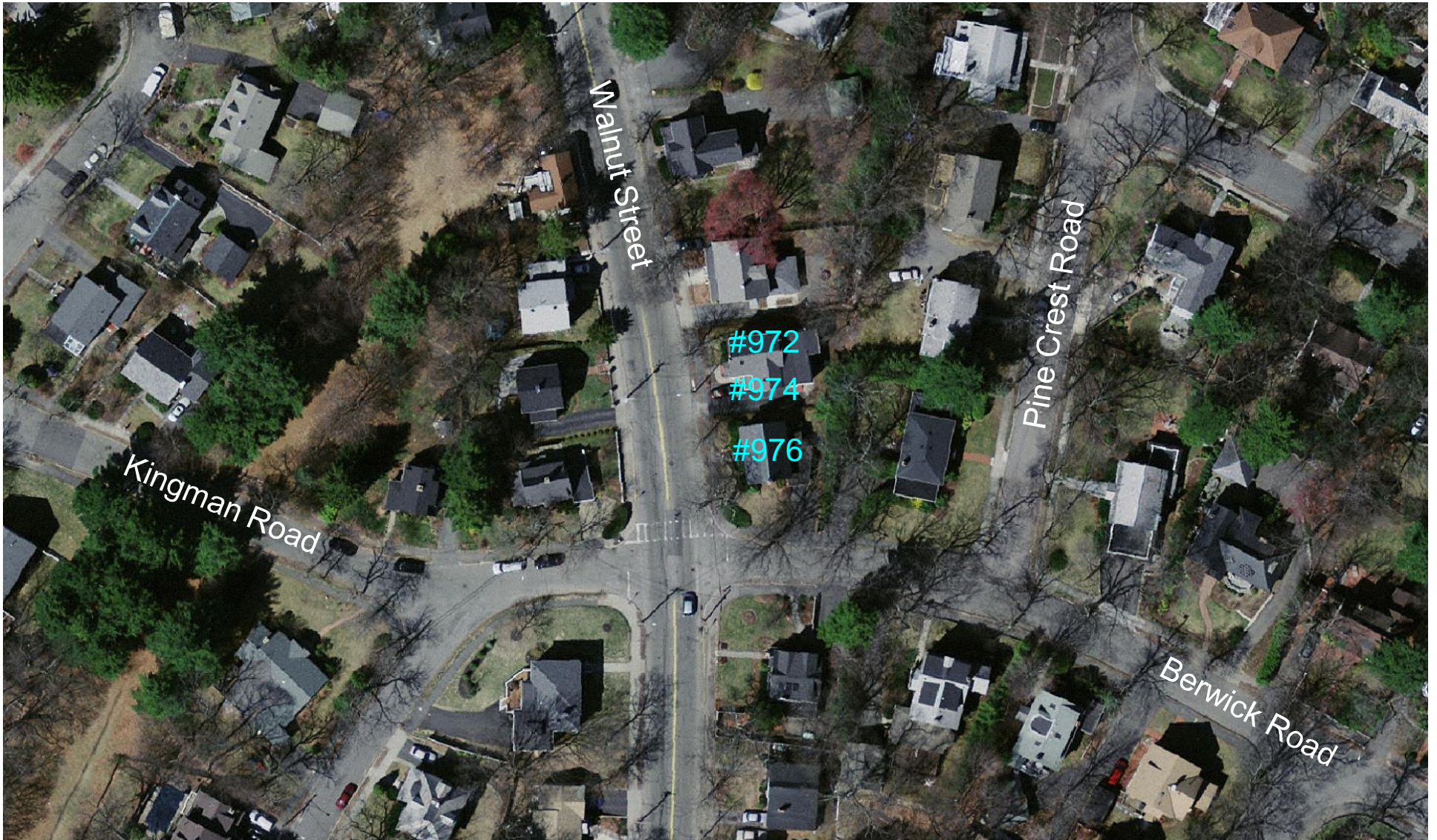
Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



HP4-11

Requesting a handicap parking space in front of 974 Walnut St. (Ward 6)

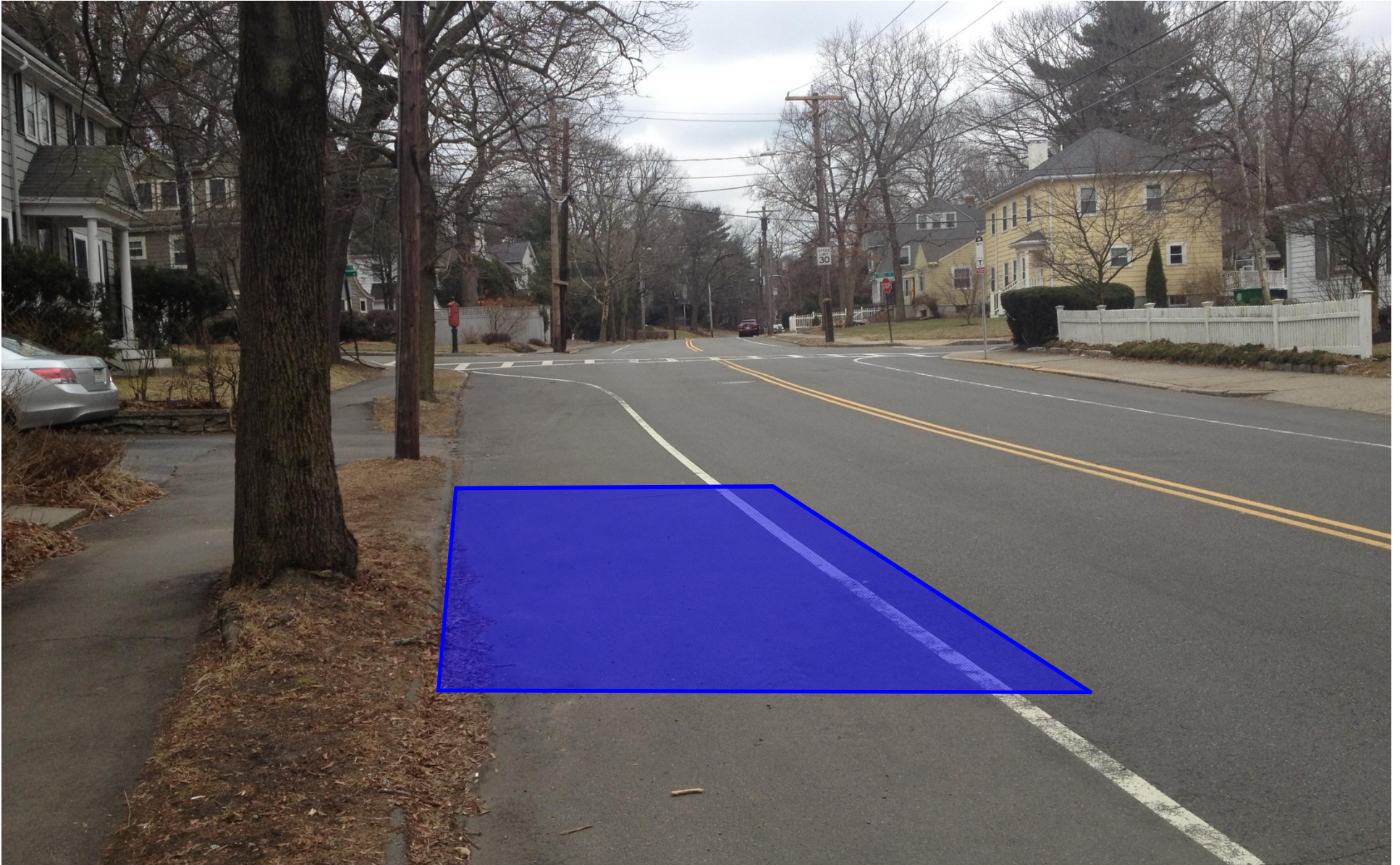
Aerial Photo



974 Walnut Street



Requested Space



Commission on Disabilities

- Voted to deny request on 12/12/2011.

