

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2012

Present: Ald. Ciccone; Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; Jerome Grafe, Citizen Representative; David Koses, Transportation Planner and Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department
Also Present: Ald. Blazar, Danberg, Fuller, Laredo and Linsky

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

TC29-10 ALDERMEN BAKER, FULLER AND SCHNIPPER requesting installation of pedestrian activated warning light at a crosswalk location to be determined on Beacon Street between Hammond Street and Reservoir Avenue, together with suitable illumination, or other enhancements, to facilitate Safe pedestrian crossing while maintaining through traffic flow. (Ward 7) [08/26/10 @ 8:53 AM]

HELD 4-0 on 08/09/11

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0, Babcock not voting. This item may be appealed through the close of business April 4, 2012.

NOTE: Boston College's consultants attended tonight's meeting. They have completed the design to install a bump out and Pedestrian Hybrid Signal to be located on Beacon Street near Reservoir Avenue, and 100% paid for by Boston College as it primarily benefits their students.

Mr. Danila said that a Pedestrian Hybrid Signal has a different set of MUTCD guidelines for installation than a traditional traffic signal. A Pedestrian Hybrid Signal operates differently than a traditional traffic signal and studies have shown driver compliance rates greater than 95%. A Pedestrian Hybrid Signal remains dark for traffic unless a pedestrian activates the push-button. When a pedestrian presses the button, approaching drivers will see a flashing yellow signal for a few seconds. The flashing yellow is followed by a solid yellow signal indicating that motorists should reduce speed and be prepared to stop. The yellow signal is followed by a solid red signal, requiring motorists to stop. The solid red signal is followed by double flashing red signals. The signal will then go dark until activated again by a pedestrian. This is the most expensive option mainly due to the installation of the mast arm. The installation of a 4' x 6' bump out would allow motorists to better see pedestrians and would meet ADA standards.

Without discussion, Mr. Danila made the motion to approve this item. Council members agreed 4-0, Babcock not voting. Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through the close of business April 4, 2012.

TC56-11 STEVEN OSTROW, 44 Travis Drive, requesting restricted on-street parking for three hours during 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Travis Drive. (Ward 7) [09/28/11 @ 2:22 PM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0, Babcock not voting

NOTE: Mr. Ostrow attended tonight's meeting. He said that he docketed this item hoping to discourage Boston College students from parking on Travis Drive. He also requests parking restrictions on Reservoir Drive. Mr. Koses said that this restriction could not be considered because residents of Reservoir Drive were not notified.

Mr. Danila said that Travis Drive is 24' wide. During six observations made, an average of 2 cars were observed parking on Travis Drive which only has parking restrictions during BC football games. There are no time limits or time-of-day parking restrictions on adjacent streets.

Ald. Fuller said that the petitioner may want to document the problems, and then docket a new item to include parking restrictions on Travis Drive and Reservoir Drive.

Mr. Grafe made the motion for no action necessary on this item due to the low count of cars Mr. Danila observed parking on Travis Drive. Council members agreed 4-0, Babcock not voting.

TC57-11 DAVID KOSES, requesting establishment of left-turn lane on Beacon Street westbound at Glen Avenue and adding parking restrictions on north and/or south side(s) of Beacon Street, as appropriate and necessary for this action. (Wards 6 & 7) [10/07/11 3:13 PM revised 03/14/12]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 3-2, Danila and Grafe opposed**

NOTE: The six e-mails received on this item are on file.

Mr. Danila provided parking restrictions, evening turning movement counts, vehicle volumes and road geometry. He said that 19 reported crashes have occurred during 2005-2009. A crash rate of 0.48, the local average crash rate is 0.57. He then said that the addition of a left-turn lane would require removal of parking on both sides of Beacon Street.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately eleven residents were present for this discussion. Residents stressed their concerns and suggestions.

Concerns

The discussion stressed safety issues for residents pulling out of their driveways versus safety of cyclists. Residents feel that there are more accidents than what was reported. They expressed their concerns and said that if parking were to be removed along this section of Beacon Street, it would create a safety hazard as parked cars act to slow the speed of traffic. They also are concerned with declining property values, speeding vehicles as well as large volumes of traffic. Some residents said that the left hand-turn on Glen Avenue is dangerous and that eliminating this would increase safety.

Suggestions

Suggestions were made to hold this item to consider a no left-turn on Glen Avenue. They also suggested increasing police enforcement to observe cyclists behavior.

Some residents said that more cyclists decrease overall traffic, and marked bike lanes are necessary to make cycling safer. Some Council members suggested that the Aldermen consider docketing an item to restrict turning on Glen Avenue.

This item was voted no action necessary, 3-2, Danila and Grafe opposed.

TC55-11 ALD. DANBERG, BLAZAR & SHAPIRO, requesting 1) Installation of a pedestrian activated crossing signal on Centre Street in the vicinity of Allerton Road to make crossing Centre Street safer for pedestrians, including the many who cross to and from Crystal Lake and the elementary school bus stops on Centre Street. 2) A discussion of speeding and possible traffic calming in this area of Centre Street. (Ward 6) [9/28/11@ 8:59 AM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-1, Grafe opposed

NOTE: The four e-mails received on this item are on file.

Ald. Danberg said that since this item was docketed the neighborhood has requested the signal not be approved.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with data collection. He said that the average daily traffic on Centre Street is 14,500 vehicles. The speed limit is 35 mph, median speed is 33 mph and the 85% percentile speed is 39 mph. He observed a maximum of 19 pedestrians crossing Centre Street in any one hour. He said that it is the intention for the Department of Public Works to install additional pedestrian warning signs to identify crosswalks.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately seven residents were present for this discussion. Residents stressed their concerns and suggestions.

Concerns

Residents stressed their concerns for speeding, safety and a false sense of security. They said that it is difficult to enter and exit their driveways. They agreed that improved signage is necessary.

Suggestions

Some residents suggested that geometric changes and street width consistency are necessary. One resident suggested the installation of stop signs on Centre Street. Mr. Danila said that a stop sign would not meet the necessary warrants.

Mr. Grafe agreed the installation of additional signs would be helpful. He suggested painting the crosswalk and line striping.

Ald. Danberg recommends a motion of no action necessary. Therefore, Mr. Danila made the motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed 4-1, Grafe opposed.

TC65-11 SARAH KANG, 49 Gay Street, requesting a one-hour parking restriction on school days between 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Gay Street. (Ward 2) [11/14/11 @ 12:06 PM]

ACTION: HELD 5-0. Trial of no parking, East Side of Gay Street.

NOTE: The two e-mails received on this item are on file.

Items TC65-11 and TC68-11 were discussed together. See TC68-11 summary below.

Sarah Kang attended tonight's meeting. She said that she docketed this item hoping to deter Newton North High School student parking.

Sgt. Babcock made the motion of a 60-day trial of no parking, east side of Gay Street. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC68-11 ANN BASSI, 84 Atwood Avenue, requesting a one-hour parking restriction on school days between 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Atwood Avenue. (Ward 2) [12/05/11 @ 12:13 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 5-0**

NOTE: The two e-mails received on this item are on file.

Ann Bassi attended tonight's meeting. She said that she docketed this item hoping to deter Newton North High School student parking.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with current parking restrictions on Gay Street and Atwood Avenue. He said that Gay Street and Atwood Avenue are 24' wide. He observed an average of 28 cars parked on Gay Street. These cars park on both sides and narrow the intersections. He observed an average of 7 cars parked on Atwood Avenue, most cars parked at the west end of the Avenue.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately four residents were present for this discussion. They provided photographs illustrating the number of cars parked on both sides and the encroaching of driveways and street corners.

Concerns

Residents stressed their concerns regarding the difficulty entering and exiting their driveways, inability for emergency vehicle access and feel that the observed parking count is low.

Suggestions

Suggestions were made to restrict parking on Gay Street and Atwood Avenue to deter parking.

Council members discussed these parking restriction requests and were hesitant to approve them without a trial because they felt students would perhaps park further into the neighborhood impacting residents of Frederick Street, Harvard Street and Harvard Circle.

Mr. Danila made the motion to hold this item pending the outcome of TC65-11. Council members agreed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair

Traffic Council

City Hall
Room 222
Thursday, March 15, 2012
7:00 p.m.

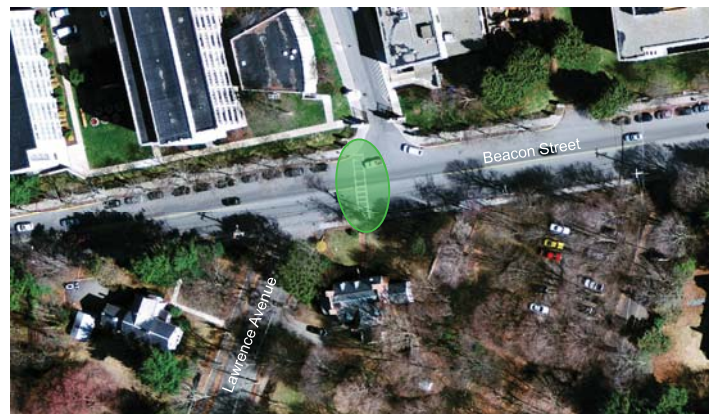
Agenda

1. TC29-10: requesting a pedestrian activated warning light on Beacon St. (Ward 7)
[Held on 08/09/2011](#)
2. TC56-11: requesting a 3-hour parking limit on Travis Dr. (Ward 7)
3. TC57-11: requesting a left-turn lane with subsequent parking restrictions on Beacon St. at Glen Ave. (Wards 6 & 7)
4. TC55-11: requesting a pedestrian activated warning light on Centre St. and a discussion of traffic calming. (Ward 6)
5. TC65-11: requesting a 1-hour parking limit on Gay St. (Ward 2)
6. TC68-11: requesting a 1-hour parking limit on Atwood Ave. (Ward 2)

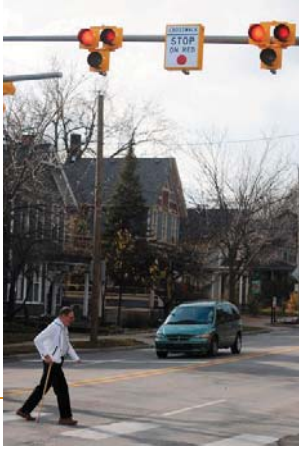
TC29-10

Requesting installation of pedestrian activated warning light on Beacon St. between Hammond St. and Reservoir Ave. (Ward 7)
[Held on 08/09/2011](#)

Proposed Location

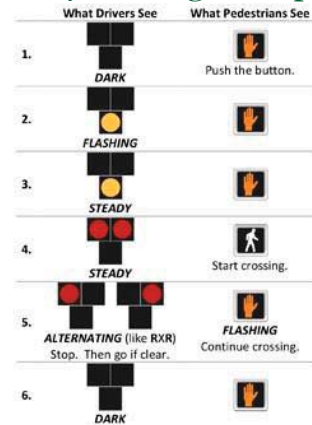


Pedestrian Hybrid Signal



- Has a different set of MUTCD guidelines for installation than a traditional traffic signal.
 - Guidelines, not mandates.
- Operates differently than a traditional traffic signal.
- Studies have shown driver compliance rates of greater than 95%.

Pedestrian Hybrid Signal Operation



Pedestrian Hybrid Notes

- Crossing does not meet warrants for full (green-yellow-red) traffic signal.
 - Full traffic signals must meet at least one warrant or they cannot be installed.
- Crossing does meet guidelines for a pedestrian hybrid.
- Signal can be timed to prevent backups on Beacon St.
 - Will also help by grouping pedestrians that cross.

TC56-11

Requesting 3-hour restricted on-street parking from 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Travis Drive. (Ward 7)

Aerial Photo



Travis Drive



Notes

- An average of 2 cars were observed parking on Travis Drive.
- Only existing restriction is for BC football games.
- No time limit or time-of-day restrictions on adjacent streets.

TC57-11

Requesting establishment of left-turn lane on Beacon St. westbound at Glen Ave. and adding parking restrictions on Beacon St., as appropriate and necessary for this action. (Wards 6 & 7)

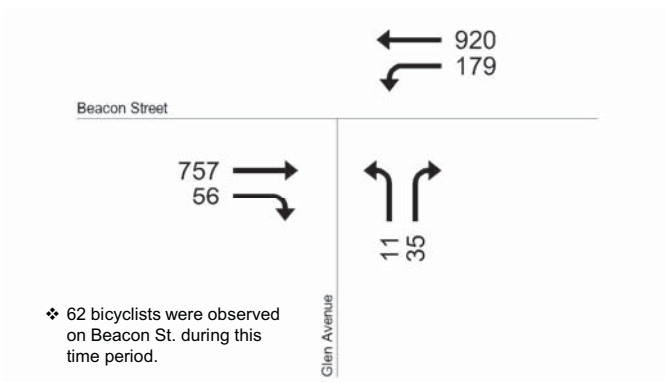
Aerial Photo



Looking to the east



Turning Movement Count (5-6 pm)



Volume and Geometry Notes

- Road cross-section currently consists of:
 - 2-11' vehicle travel lanes.
 - 2-5' bicycle lanes.
 - 2-7' parking lanes.
 - (46' total)
- Traffic volumes (left turns vs. opposing traffic) meet minimum criteria for when a left-turn lane should be considered.
- Addition of left-turn lane would require removal of parking on both sides.

Example of car passing in bike lane



Intersection Crash Data

- 19 reported crashes (2005-09).
 - 53% involved slowing or stopped cars traveling west on Beacon St.
- Crash rate: 0.48.
 - Local average: 0.57.

Parking that would be removed



TC55-11

Requesting installation of a pedestrian activated crossing signal on Centre St. in the vicinity of Allerton Rd. and a discussion of speeding and possible traffic calming in this area of Centre St. (Ward 6)

Aerial Photo



Approach Photo (from the south)



Approach Photo (from the north)



Data collection and notes

- Average Daily Traffic: 14,500 vehicles.
- Speed Limit: 35 mph.
 - Median Speed: 33 mph.
 - 85th Percentile Speed: 39 mph.
- Maximum number of pedestrians observed crossing Centre Street over any one hour: 19.
- DPW to do: new pedestrian warning signage.



TC65-11

Requesting a one-hour parking restriction on school days between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Gay St. (Ward 2)

TC68-11

Requesting a one-hour parking restriction on school days between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Atwood Ave. (Ward 2)

Aerial Photo



Gay Street



Atwood Avenue



Observations

- An average of 28 cars parked on Gay St.
 - Cars parked along both sides.
 - Narrowness at intersections may cause turning problems for larger vehicles.
 - An average of 7 cars parked on Atwood Ave.
 - Most cars stacked at west end of street.
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