

CITY OF NEWTON  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2012

Present: Sgt. Jay Babcock, Police Department; Ald. Ciccone; Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; Jerome Grafe, Resident member; and David Koses, Transportation Planner  
Also Present: Ald. Danberg

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

Nominations & Election for 2012 Traffic Council Chair

**ACTION: Postponed until July 2012**

TC67-11      DAVID KOSES, 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]  
A) APPROVED on 02/16/12 (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 on 02/16/12 (4-1, Danila opposed) no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street.

**ACTION: APPROVED (4-1, Ciccone). No parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street.**

**This item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.**

**NOTE:** Mr. Danila reviewed with Council members parking observations prior to March 2012, various parking restrictions on the side streets, past and present data on vehicle and bicyclist crashes, daily bicyclist counts and the overall mean and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds on Walnut Street. There are no parking restrictions on Fisher Avenue and Lakewood Road. Data proves an increase in daily bicycle use, 25 cyclists in April 2010 and 83 cyclists in May 2012. Mr. Danila then provided parking survey results. The survey was provided to approximately 40 parked vehicles on Walnut Street with 10 respondents prior to posting trial signs.

Mr. Koses summarized the seven emails received on this item (on file) and opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately fourteen residents spoke in favor and opposition to the trial. The discussion stressed their concerns, advantages, suggestions and questions.

Concerns

Some residents stressed their concerns regarding the variable width of Walnut Street making it difficult to install bike lanes, excessive speeds, area appears less safe when parked cars are eliminated, cars cannot stop at crosswalks when speeding and the MBTA parking lot is expensive. Homeowners are feeling denied because of parking difficulties for their contractors and guests.

### Advantages

Some residents said that since the trial was implemented, they feel Walnut Street has become safer for both cyclists and pedestrians. The trial has allowed better site distance when exiting/entering driveways and side streets. It appears speeds have reduced and there is less congestion. The trial has reduced traffic and parking issues. Dedicated bike lanes are desirable and promote alternate methods of transportation because they allow easier travel throughout the City. Walnut Street is a major thoroughfare and bike lanes are necessary as they promote both pedestrian and bicyclists safety by defining road space.

### Suggestions

Suggestions were made to offer contractors and guests to park on side streets. Some parking should remain on Walnut Street as parked cars help deter speeding and act as a positive traffic calming effect. Suggestions include implementing restricted hours or allow parking on one side of Walnut Street, install additional crosswalks and traffic signals, install a sharrow rather than bike lanes. Some residents stated that parking is necessary in front of their homes. Ask the MBTA why they do not install a parking lot in Newton Highlands. Solutions are necessary to make bicycling attractive. They suggest that if the trial is approved; consider even width bike lanes in both directions.

### Questions

Residents asked about differential parking alternatives for commuters, employees and residents and asked where Walnut Street residents would park if parking is restricted or totally removed.

Mr. Danila said that the width of Walnut Street could accommodate two travel lanes and two bike lanes. Crosswalks cannot be installed without additional safety devices and a two-hour parking restriction cannot accommodate bike lanes; parking has to be removed.

Mr. Grafe said that he originally docketed this item and made the motion to make the trial permanent because he feels the trial has significantly improved Walnut Street promoting safer site distances, safer for pedestrians and bicyclists and a reduction of speed. He then said that parking is plentiful in Newton; it may not be free or convenient which should not affect Traffic Council members' decisions.

Ald. Ciccone said that he opposes making the trial permanent. If the trial is approved then parking should be eliminated from every City Street because of the unfairness, burdens and negative impacts to homeowners. Homeowners, contractors, handicap people and guests should be allowed to park in front of their residence. He said that by approving bike lanes, it only takes away the liberties from homeowners and other solutions are necessary.

Mr. Koses said that he supports making the trial permanent and understands Ald. Ciccone's concerns. He suggests the creation of a permit program to allow residents, commuters and employees the ability to park on the side streets. He suggested resident parking restrictions on Cathay Circle be altered.

Ald. Danberg said that the Beacon Street bike lanes have worked well. She understands the hardship of removing 100% parking on Walnut Street and the effect on homeowners. She supports the implementation of bike lanes and suggests a "Share the Streets" program where a zone is identified, parking restrictions enacted within the zone, and permits would be made

available for residents and others to override the posted parking restrictions. She then suggested the installation of sharrows on the section of Walnut Street where residents encounter the hardships.

Mr. Grafe made the motion to approve no parking, either side, any time, Walnut Street between Beacon Street and Forest Street. Council members agreed 4-1, Ald. Ciccone opposed. Mr. Koses described the appeals process and said that this item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.

HP2-12      ALD. DANBERG, BLAZAR & SCHWARTZ, on behalf of The Parish of St. Paul, 1135 Walnut Street, requesting one handicap parking space in front of 1135 Walnut Street on Sundays only. (Ward 6) [03/20/12 @ 11:08 AM]

**ACTION:**      **APPROVE AS AMENDED (5-0), Pick-Up and Drop-Off Zone, two southerly parking spaces, Walnut Street section located directly to the west of the fountain, 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Sundays Only.**  
**This item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Danberg said that she supports a handicap parking space in front of the church. It is difficult for handicap people without a designated space.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with various area parking restrictions, existing unregulated parking restrictions near Forest Street with 4 parking spaces (west of the fountain).

Mr. Koses said that he has not received notification from the Newton Commission on Disability on their vote or recommendation. Rob Caruso, Co-Chair of Commission on Disability said that the Commission approved this handicap parking request or a live drop off zone leaving it to the church to make the best decision for their needs.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately three residents spoke concerning the handicap request. They said that by approving this request, the business district would lose parking spaces 24/7. They thought the request was odd for Sundays only, a handicap parking space is necessary at all times. Vehicles are also parking on the sidewalk across the street making the sidewalk inaccessible.

A representative on behalf of The Parish of St. Paul attended this discussion. She said that this request for a handicap parking space was made because parishioners require handicap parking spaces for vans, elderly pick-up and drop-off. Currently vehicles are double-parking on Walnut Street to accomplish this. She then said that they were advised not to request a handicap parking space 24/7 space because it will impact the area and most people need access only on Sunday mornings. There are approximately four vehicles requiring handicap parking, but four handicap spaces are not necessary. She then said that there are not many activities during the weekdays requiring this request. Ald. Danberg asked if a loading zone could be considered instead of a handicap space request.

Mr. Danila said that he supports a handicap parking space at the location requested 24/7. Mr. Koses said that the section of Walnut Street west of the fountain accommodates four vehicles, no meters and no parking restrictions. He asked if this area could be converted to a loading zone on

Sundays and if it is close enough to access the church. Mr. Danila said that this section of Walnut Street could be converted to a pickup and drop-off zone only, Sundays, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Sgt. Babcock said that he is concerned with safety and prefers a handicap parking space be designated to the west of the fountain to avoid cars being hit by drivers who have the tendency to speed heading south on Walnut Street.

Mr. Koses made the motion to approve as amended a pick-up and drop-off zone, two southerly parking spaces, Walnut Street section located directly to the west of the fountain, 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Sundays Only. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.

TC50-11      ALD. DANBERG, BLAZAR & SHAPIRO on behalf of Mary Costanza, 53 Lake Avenue, requesting no parking between the driveway at 51 Lake Avenue and south to the curve at Cronin's Cove, Crystal Lake; and examination of other potential traffic calming measures to make the Cronin's Cove area of Lake Avenue safer for pedestrians and those entering and exiting driveways. (Ward 6) [09/16/11 @ 11:42 AM]

**ACTION:**      **APPROVED (3-2, Babcock, Ciccone)**  
**This item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.**

**NOTE:**      Mr. Danila provided Council members with speed limits, parking restrictions, traffic and crash data counts. Lake Avenue is 23' wide looking south, 24' wide looking east. Mr. Danila said that the Department Public Works would install speed limit and curve warning signs on Lake Avenue.

Ms. Costanza provided Council members with photographs (on file). She said that this request was made because pedestrian safety is necessary. She is concerned with speeding vehicles, difficulty exiting and entering driveways, overgrown trees, site obstruction, boat launchers who have the tendency of blocking the road. Cars have the tendency to cross the yellow lines, heading into oncoming traffic in the opposite lane in order to pass parked cars.

Mr. Koses summarized the five emails received on this item (on file) and opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately six residents spoke concerning the request. The discussion stressed their concerns, advantages and questions.

**Concerns**

Residents stressed their concerns of the location of the public school bus stop located at 51 Lake Avenue, traffic issues, site obstruction, people having the tendency to speed and drivers park at the corner of Lake Avenue. There have been near accidents due to drivers gazing at the lake. They agree pedestrian safety is necessary.

**Advantages**

Residents present felt that removing the parking between the driveway at 51 Lake Avenue and south to the curve at Cronin's Cove would be beneficial and are hoping safety will increase.

**Questions**

Residents asked what could be accomplished to reduce speed.

Sgt. Babcock said that he will request the school bus stop be relocated further west on Lake Avenue.

Mr. Koses suggested removing two parking spaces (on the inside of the elbow) and add two parking spaces (on the outside elbow), in a much more visible location. Mr. Grafe agreed. Sgt. Babcock disagreed. He would prefer no parking, both sides at the curve to Beacon Street for pedestrian safety because it is a dangerous curve. The two houses affected have driveways. He then said that it is illegal for vehicles to cross a double yellow line unless obstructed. A parked vehicle is not an obstruction; a construction project is an obstruction. The fine to cross a double yellow line is \$100. Ald. Ciccone agreed with Sgt. Babcock. Mr. Danila supports removing both parking spaces.

Ald. Ciccone and Sgt. Babcock supported the removal of parking along the entire section of Lake Avenue from Beacon Street to the curve, due to cars crossing over the double yellow line.

Ald. Danberg said that she does not support adding parking spaces to the outside elbow because those parking spaces block the entrance to Cronin's Cove and would create dangerous situations.

Mr. Koses made the motion to remove two parking spaces (on the inside of the elbow) and add two parking spaces (on the outside of the elbow). The motion failed with a vote of 2-3 (Babcock, Ciccone and Danila opposed). Mr. Grafe asked if parking could be relocated to the lakefront where it is 24' wide.

Mr. Danila made the motion to approve this item as docketed. Council members agreed 3-2, (Babcock and Ciccone opposed). Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through the close of business June 20, 2012.

Mr. Danila said that he would collect additional data. The Department of Public Works would install speed limit and curve warning signs. If problems continue, an item could be docketed for consideration of traffic calming measures on Lake Avenue.

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.**  
HELD 5-0 on 02/16/12

**ACTION:      DENIED 5-0**

**NOTE:**      Ms. Cornelia Cain-Heard was not present for discussion.

Mr. Koses said that the Newton Commission on Disability voted to deny this request on December 12, 2011. Traffic Council held this item on February 16, 2012 pending the outcome of the trial implemented on item TC67-11(B).

Mr. Danila said that he recalls Ms. Cain-Heard docketing this request because of the difficulty backing out of her driveway due to parked vehicles on Walnut Street.

Mr. Danila suggested and made the motion to deny this item due to Traffic Council's approval of item TC67-11(B). Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that if item TC67-11(B) is

appealed and approved by the Board of Aldermen, then Ms. Cain-Heard could immediately redocket her request, rather than having to wait the required full year, because the overturning of a Traffic Council vote would be considered new information.

HP1-12      GERTRUD REID, 1083 Walnut Street, requesting a handicap parking space in front of 1083 Walnut Street. (Ward 6) [01/10/12 @ 1:21 PM]

**ACTION:**      **DENIED 5-0**

**NOTE:**      Ms. Gertrud Reid was not present for this discussion.

Mr. Koses said that the Newton Commission on Disability never voted on this request.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with area parking restrictions. He suggested the petitioner docket a request for Hillside Road.

Ald. Ciccone suggested and made the motion to deny this item due to Traffic Council's approval of item TC67-11(B). Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that if item TC67-11(B) is appealed and approved by the Board of Aldermen, then Ms. Reid could docket her request because new information would be available.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair

# Traffic Council

City Hall  
Room 222  
Thursday, May 31, 2012  
7:00 p.m.

## Agenda

1. TC67-11: requesting parking restrictions on Walnut St. between Homer St. and Forest St. to facilitate bicycle lanes. (Ward 6)  
[Held for trial on 2/16/12](#)
2. HP4-11: requesting a handicap parking space in front of 974 Walnut St. (Ward 6)  
[Held on 2/16/12](#)
3. HP1-12: requesting a handicap parking space in front of 1083 Walnut St. (Ward 6)
4. HP2-12: requesting a handicap parking space on Sundays only in front of 1135 Walnut St. (Ward 6)
5. TC50-11: requesting no parking between the driveway of 51 Lake Ave. and the curve at Cronin's Cove and traffic calming on Lake Ave. (Ward 6)

## 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



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## Walnut St. Parking Observations, prior to March, 2012

- 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.
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## Pre-Trial Example of Typical Weekday Parking



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## Pre-Trial Example of Typical Weekday Parking



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## With Parking Restrictions Enacted

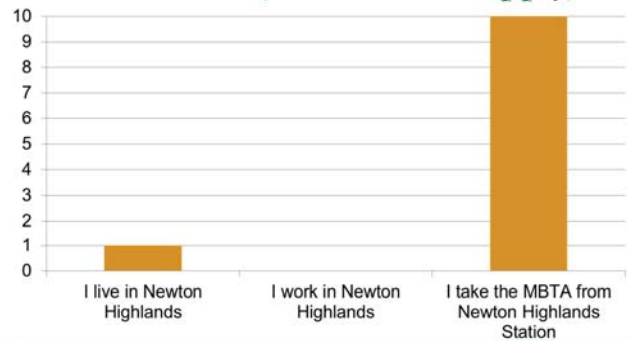




## Walnut Street Parking Survey

- >40 fliers were left on parked cars prior to posting No Parking signage with link to on line survey.
- 10 respondents.

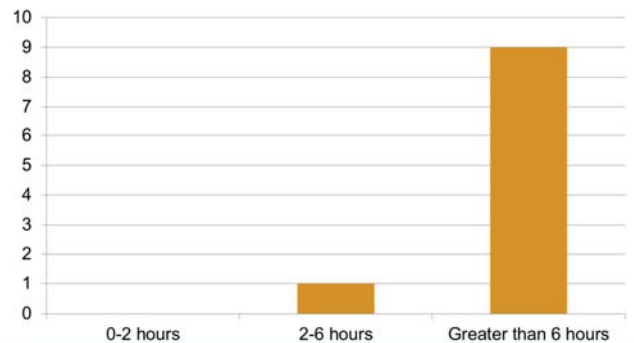
## What is your purpose for parking on Walnut Street? (check all that apply)



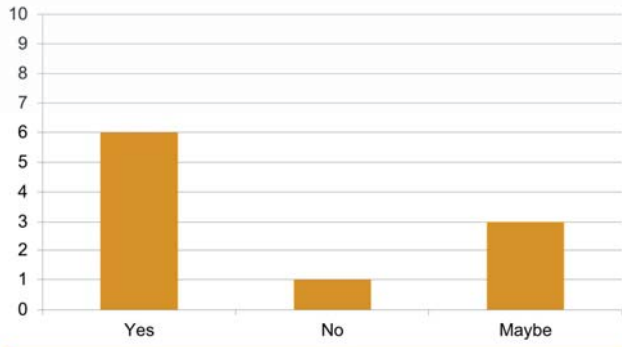
## Why do you choose to park on Walnut Street? (check all that apply)



## How long do you typically park for?



Would you be interested in a permit program that would allow you to park on certain side streets?



### Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



### Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



### Parking Restrictions on Side Streets



## Walnut Street Crash Information

- Beacon St. to Forest St. (not including intersection with Beacon St.): averaged 10 reported crashes per year while parking was allowed.
- March 1-present (3 months): 1 crash on this stretch of road.
  - Car taking left onto Lakewood Ave. was rear-ended.
  - Driver of second car had his foot slip off of the clutch and was unable to stop in time.

## Speeds on Walnut Street

	NB Walnut		SB Walnut	
	Before	After	Before (with parking)	After (without parking)
Mean Speed	31 mph	28	31 mph	31
85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed	36 mph	35	34 mph	36

## Daily Bicyclists on Walnut Street

	Total	NB Walnut	SB Walnut
April, 2010	25	15	10
May, 2012	83	32	51

## HP4-11

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

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## Aerial Photo



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## 974 Walnut Street



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## Requested Space



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## Commission on Disabilities

- Voted to deny request on 12/12/2011.
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## HP1-12

Requesting a handicap parking space in front of 1083 Walnut St. (Ward 6)

## Aerial Photo

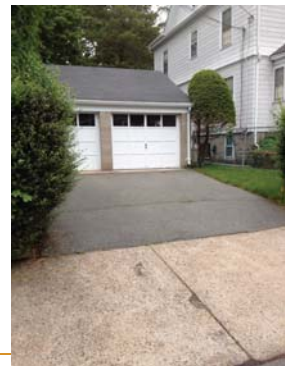


No Parking Any Time | 2-Hr Limit, 8am-6pm, Mon-Fri

## Walnut Street



## Hillside, looking towards Walnut



## HP2-12

Requesting a handicap parking space in front of 1135 Walnut St., Sundays only. (Ward 6)

## Aerial Photo



No Parking Any Time | 2-Hr Limit, 8am-6pm, Mon-Fri | 2-Hr Limit, 7am-7pm, Mon-Fri  
1-Hr Meter, 8am-6pm, Mon-Sat

## Walnut Street, looking south



## Walnut Street, looking north



## Existing unregulated parking near Forest



## TC50-11

Requesting no parking between the driveway at 51 Lake Ave. and the curve at Cronin's Cove; and examination of other potential traffic calming measures on Lake Ave. (Ward 6)

## Parking Restrictions and Speed Limits



Parking: **No Parking Any Time** | 2-Hr Limit, 7am-6pm, Mon-Fri  
Speed Limit: 15 MPH | 25 MPH

## Looking south towards curve



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## Looking east towards curve



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## Traffic and Crash Data

- Average Daily Traffic: 1,175 vehicles per day.
  - Median Speed: 27 MPH.
  - 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed: 32 MPH.
  - 1 reported crash from 2005 to 2009.
    - October 14, 2009; 3:00 p.m.
    - Single vehicle crash: collision with tree.
    - Property damage only; no injuries.
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## Signage to be Added by DPW

- Speed Limit signs.
  - Curve Warning signs.
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