

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2012

Present: David Koses, Transportation Planner; Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department; Ald. Harney; Nina Wang, Acting Transportation Director and Jerome Grafe, Citizen Representative

Also Present: Ald. Linsky and Albright

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

TC29-12 DAVID KOSES, on behalf of the Planning Department, requesting removal of metered parking spaces adjacent to crosswalks on Walnut Street between Newtonville Avenue and Otis Street, and adjacent intersections, to improve visibility and pedestrian safety. (Ward 2) [06/26/12 @ 12:31 PM]

ACTION: **(A) APPROVE removal of Meter #266, Walnut Street across from Washington Park (4-1, Harney opposed)**
(B) APPROVE removal of Meters #253 and #254, Walnut Street across from Madison (5-0)
(C) APPROVE removal of Meters #282 and #283, Walnut Street across from Austin Street (5-0). The Planning and Public Works Departments will look to install an on-street bicycle rack within one of the spaces that was voted to be removed, likely in the space occupied by Meter #254. DPW is to install a new crosswalk across Walnut Street at the intersection of Austin Street. Meter #288 will remain.
This item may be appealed through the close of business August 15, 2012.

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

Mr. Koses provided Council members with an overview of Walnut Street, concept plan and the area of a new proposed crosswalk (would require removal of two to three meters). He then provided recent pedestrian crossing counts at Austin Street, data on three-year crash history at Highland and Newtonville Avenues and the Planning Departments recommendations. He then said that meter #253 (Walnut Street at Madison Avenue) has been temporarily removed by the Police Department due to two motor vehicle accidents and to increase safety. Meters #254 and #266 should also be removed to improve safety. The MUTCD guidelines suggest that there should be no parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk.

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

Concerns

Residents said that they are concerned regarding inadequate site distance, pedestrian safety and heavy traffic. They stated visibility is necessary for safety reasons and pedestrians. A merchant

said that she is opposed to removing meters because it creates parking issues for customers, merchants and residents.

Suggestions

Suggestions were made to construct bump-outs, have additional police presence, install crosswalk stanchion signs and maintain painted crosswalks to allow better visibility. They feel that in order to have a more vibrant Newtonville, some meters need to be removed to deter “one stop” shoppers.

Ald. Linsky said that the goal is to make this area more pedestrian friendly and that revitalization of this area is necessary for the merchants. Parking is at a premium and he is opposed to removing two of the meters as recommended (meter # 266 and meter # 254). Ald. Albright suggested installing additional signs directing patrons to the municipal parking lot.

Ald. Harney asked how the various needs could be balanced and if an additional crosswalk at Austin Street was necessary. Mr. Koses answered that because of high demands crossing count data proves two crosswalks are necessary.

Council members reviewed and discussed meter locations and recommendations made to remove meters. To increase safety and promote shopping, suggestions were made to install permanent crosswalk stanchions and a bicycle corral if meters are removed. Mr. Koses said that if Traffic Council were to approve the removal of the parking meter, the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works would be able to work toward the installation of a bike corral. Ms. Wang said that the City does not install permanent crosswalk stanchions because they are dangerous to vehicles. A suggestion was made to relocate the handicap parking space to the opposite side of Walnut Street. Mr. Koses answered that the Commission on Disability would have to review this request.

Sgt. Babcock stated it is necessary for safety reasons to remove meter #253 (Walnut Street at Madison Avenue) and meter #266 (Walnut Street across from Washington Park, at the Newton Senior Center). Ald. Linsky said that he is opposed to removing meter #266.

Council members agreed on the above actions to remove meters #266, 253, 254, 282 and 283. Meter #288 will remain. The Planning and Public Works Departments will look to install an on-street bicycle rack within one of the spaces that was voted to be removed, likely in the space occupied by meter #254. DPW is to install a new crosswalk across Walnut Street at the intersection of Austin Street. Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through the close of business August 15, 2012.

TC4-12 ALD. LINSKY, ALBRIGHT & JOHNSON, requesting an establishment of a school zone on Walnut Street between Watertown Street and Crafts Street to govern traffic flow around the Education Center (100 Walnut Street) inclusive of a blue zone to facilitate pick-up and drop-off of students. Several populations of Newton Public School students attend classes on the premises, including the Newton Early Childhood Program, the Middle School Stabilization Program (MSP) and the Newton Central High School. Existing traffic signals (crosswalk and pedestrian sign) are frequently ignored by motorist posing a significant safety concern. The Newton Police Department has conducted numerous directed patrols, most recently yielding an average of 3.5 violations per half hour. (Ward 2) [01/25/12 @ 9:01 AM]

ACTION: (A) **APPROVE (5-0), creation of new School Zone on Walnut Street in front of the Education Center property.**

This item may be appealed through the close of business August 15, 2012

(B) **HOLD FOR TRIAL (5-0), 15 minute parking zone, Walnut Street, east side (Education Center side), between the Education Center Building driveway entrance and Watertown Street, 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.**

NOTE: Items TC4-12 and TC10-12 were discussed together. Refer to TC10-12 summary below.

TC10-12 JIM DANILA, on behalf of the Department of Public Works requesting the removal of parking within the vicinity of the crosswalk on Walnut Street, adjacent to the Education Center at 100 Walnut Street. (Ward 2) [04/19/12 @ 10:47 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVE (5-0). No parking within 27 feet of crosswalk, both sides of crosswalk, both sides of Walnut Street, (5-0).**

This item may be appealed through the close of business August 15, 2012.

NOTE: Items TC4-12 and TC10-12 were discussed together. The two e-mails received on these items are on file.

Mr. Koses provided Council members with an overview of this area including current parking restrictions, 3-year crash history data on this section of Walnut Street, the proposed school zone location, minimum warrants for school zones, and the Planning Departments recommendations. He then asked Council members to consider approving a short-term parking area or a blue zone.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately six residents were present for this discussion. The discussion stressed their concerns, requests, suggestions and questions. Residents said that they support these items being approved because pedestrian safety and visibility are necessary.

Concerns

Residents stressed their concerns regarding visibility issues. They said that it is difficult to exit their driveways; there are concerns with the crash history data, speeding, traffic flow, limited parking and the number of near accidents. They agree that parking should be removed near the crosswalks to allow for better visibility.

Requests

Residents asked whether signs could be installed indicating, “No parking within 5’ of driveway” and “No parking within 10’ of fire hydrants”. Ms. Wang answered that the Department Public Works would install these two signs administratively.

Suggestions/Questions

Residents asked if parents were allowed to park in the circle to drop-off/pick-up students. They suggested implementing a short-term parking area to allow this. Michael Thurm, Director, Newton Early Childhood Program answered that school buses, vans and four handicapped vehicles are allowed to park in the circle. Parents are required to escort children in and out of school. School program times differ and he feels implementing a short-term parking area would not resolve parking issues. He then said that parents are parking illegally on the northbound side of Crafts Street and neighboring streets. He asked Council members to approve the creation of a school zone. Residents then suggested implementing short-term parking on Walnut Street and changing the parking restrictions on Crafts Street to allow staff parking. Ald. Albright and Linsky said that they would consider docketing an item to change the current parking restrictions on Crafts Street to allow parking to one side.

Mr. Koses said that if parking were removed on Walnut Street to allow a short-term parking area, it would impact approximately 14-16 parking spaces.

Ald. Linsky asked Council members to approve the creation of a school zone on Walnut Street.

Council members reviewed and discussed the MUTCD school zone warrants, recommendations made to remove parking near the crosswalk and consideration to approve a blue zone or short term parking area. Ald. Harney asked who would be displaced if parking were changed. Mr. Koses answered that staff, residents and visitors would be displaced. Sgt. Babcock suggested creating a 15-minute trial for a parking zone on Walnut Street. He said that the Police Department would be able to enforce the trial because they are at the school daily. He then said that a crosswalk violation fine is \$200.00, parking over 15-minute violation fine is \$25.00. Mr. Koses then suggested removing the parking spaces near the crosswalks.

Council members agreed on the above actions to A) Create school zone on Walnut Street in front of the Education Center property, B) Trial of 15 minute parking zone, Walnut Street, east side, between the Education Center Building driveway entrance and Watertown Street, 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and C) Approve no parking within 27 feet of crosswalk, both sides of crosswalk, both sides of Walnut Street. Mr. Koses said that these items may be appealed through the close of business August 15, 2012.

Ms. Wang said that the Department Public Works would install the school zone signs. Mr. Grafe suggested the school notify the staff and parents of the 15-minute parking zone trial.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair

TRAFFIC COUNCIL

*Newton City Hall
Room 222
Thursday July 26, 2012
7:00 PM*

Agenda

- (1) TC29-12 DAVID KOSES, on behalf of the Planning Department, requesting removal of metered parking spaces adjacent to crosswalks on Walnut Street between Newtonville Avenue and Otis Street, and adjacent intersections, to improve visibility and pedestrian safety.
- (2) TC4-12 ALD. LINSKY, ALBRIGHT & JOHNSON, requesting an establishment of a school zone on Walnut Street between Watertown Street and Crafts Street to govern traffic flow around the Education Center (100 Walnut Street) inclusive of a blue zone to facilitate pick-up and drop-off of students.
- (3) TC10-12 Jim Danila, on behalf of the Department of Public Works requesting the removal of parking within the vicinity of the crosswalk on Walnut Street, adjacent to the Education Center at 100 Walnut Street.

TC29-12

TC29-12 DAVID KOSES, on behalf of the Planning Department, requesting removal of metered parking spaces adjacent to crosswalks on Walnut Street between Newtonville Avenue and Otis Street, and adjacent intersections, to improve visibility and pedestrian safety.

Overview – Walnut St/Newtonville



Concept Plan



View of Walnut Street, Southbound from Newtonville Avenue



Area of Proposed New Crosswalk Walnut Street & Austin Street



*******(Would require removal of two to three meters)*******

Walnut Street & Austin St



Walnut Street at Newtonville – Austin Pedestrian Crossings - Friday July 13, 2012



Metered Space #253 at Walnut & Madison (Removed by Police Department)



Crosswalk at Walnut & Madison



**** (Consider removing Meter #254) ****

Safety



3-Year Crash History - Walnut between Highland & Newtonville Ave

- Five crashes documented (all listed as Walnut at Madison)
 - Two (2) were motor vehicle - only
 - Both stopped short / rear ended
 - Three (3) were motor vehicle - pedestrian
 - 1 failed to yield to pedestrian
 - 1 left the scene of injury
 - 1 didn't see pedestrian

Standard Setbacks from Crosswalks

- MUTCD Guidance: No Parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk.
- Cambridge: "Vehicles parked too close to the approach side of the crosswalk reduce the sight distance of both pedestrians trying to cross the street and oncoming traffic".

Recommendations

Walnut & Newtonville Avenue:

- Retain Crosswalk

Walnut & Austin Street:

- Add crosswalk
 - *Remove Meters #282, #283 and #288*

Walnut & Madison:

- *Remove Meter #253*
 - Already removed by Police Department
 - Already striped out
- To improve safety, *Remove Meter #254*

Walnut & Washington Park

- To improve safety, *Remove Meter #266*

TC4-12 and TC10-12

TC4-12 ALD. LINSKY, ALBRIGHT & JOHNSON, requesting an establishment of a school zone on Walnut St between Watertown Street and Crafts Street to govern traffic flow around the Education Center (100 Walnut Street) inclusive of a blue zone to facilitate pick-up and drop-off of students. Several populations of Newton Public School students attend classes on the premises, including the Newton Early Childhood Program, the Middle School Stabilization Program (MSP) and the Newton Central High School. Existing traffic signals (crosswalk and pedestrian sign) are frequently ignored by motorists posing a significant safety concern. The Newton Police Department has conducted numerous directed patrols, most recently yielding an average of 3.5 violations per half hour.

TC10-12 Jim Danila, on behalf of the Department of Public Works requesting the removal of parking within the vicinity of the crosswalk on Walnut Street, adjacent to the Education Center at 100 Walnut Street.

Overview – Education Center Area



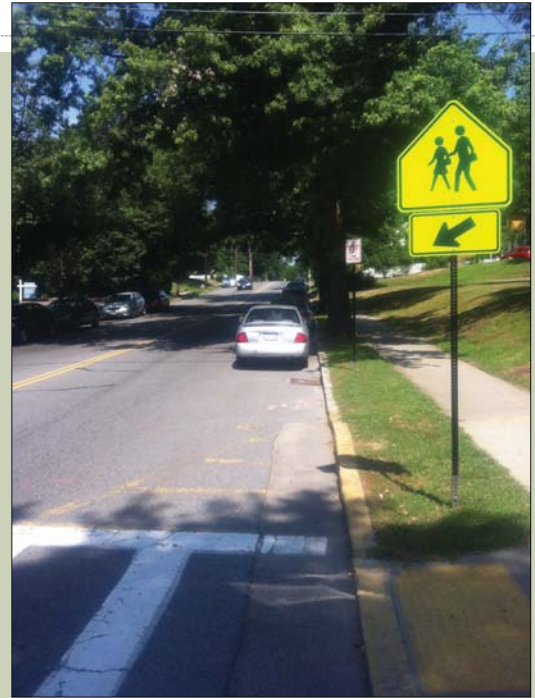
Walnut Street Northbound at Education Center



Walnut Street Northbound at Crosswalk to Education Center Entrance



Walnut Street NB – North of Crosswalk Short Term Parking or Blue Zone?



3 Year Crash History



100 Walnut St

- Five crashes documented
- All motor vehicle only (no peds, no bikes)
 - One (1) Stopped short
 - One (1) Opened door / got struck
 - One (1) Side swiped
 - One (1) Vandalism
 - One (1) Forgot to put vehicle in gear

Warrants for a School Zone



20 Miles Per Hour When Children Are Present Minimum Warrants

- The school property abuts the public ROW >
- School Children have direct access to the street or roadway from the school property >
- The zone must contain a marked crosswalk >
- The school must involve one or more grades between Grade 1 and Grade 8, inclusive >

(From MA Amendments to MUTCD, Section 7E-2)

School Drop-Off Zones (Blue Zones)



No person shall park a vehicle upon any street within a school drop off zone except while engaged in dropping off or picking up passengers, which shall not be permitted for a period of time longer than one minute.

Monday through Friday on days that school is in session, during the following times:

- (1) from 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of school until the scheduled start of school; and
- (2) from one hour prior to the scheduled end of school until one-half hour after the scheduled end of school.

(From TPR-179)

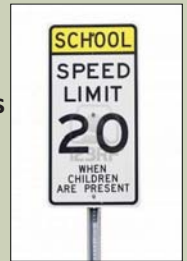
Recommendations



Approve a School Zone

Add a School Zone on Walnut Street, NB and SB

- Include all proper signs
 - School Zone Ahead signs
 - School Zone signs or flashers
 - End School Zone or MPH signs
 - "SCHOOL" paint in street



Remove Parking near Crosswalk

- 27 feet either side

Consider Approving a Blue Zone or Short-Term Parking Area

Walnut Street, NB, between crosswalk and Driveway exit

- Would displace appx. 7 all-day parking spaces
- Short term parking zone allows walk-ins

Walnut Street at Newtonville Avenue Crosswalk Island

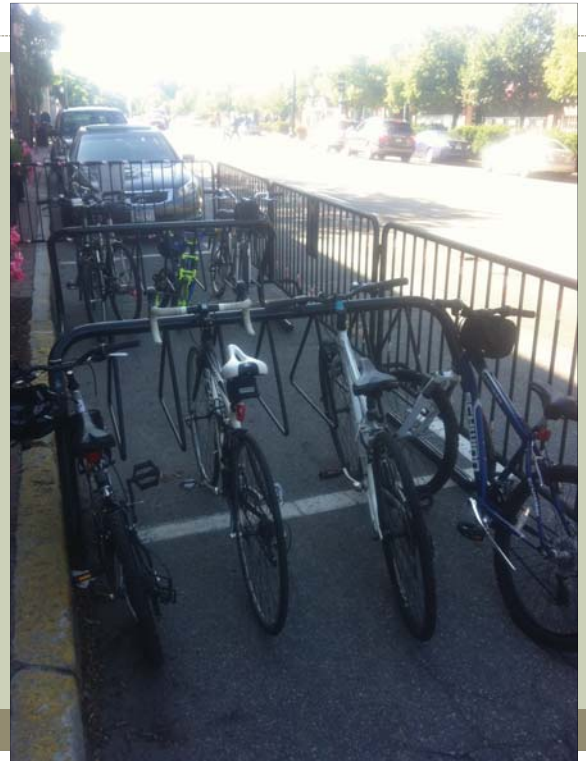


Crosswalk at Walnut & Washington Park



(Note: meter #266 is close to the crosswalk)

Bike Racks in Parking Space - Lexington



Proposed School Zone Markings

