

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2011

Present: Jim Danila (Transportation Engineer), Danielle Delaney (Clerk), Jerome Grafe (Resident member), Ald. Jay Harney, David Koses (Transportation Planner) and Sgt. James Norcross (Police Department)

Also Present: Ald. Albright, Blazer, Danberg, Fuller, Lappin, Lennon, Linsky, Merrill and Shapiro

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

TC3-11 ROBERT TENDLER, 19 Lawrence Avenue, requesting removal of the present parking restrictions and the imposition of “Resident Parking Only” on Lawrence Avenue. (Ward 7) [01/28/11 @ 12:14 PM]

ACTION: APPROVE (4-0-1, Grafe abstaining). This item may be appealed through April 13, 2011.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said that Lawrence Avenue is a 28’ wide private way with two separate parking restrictions: On the East side, No Parking Any Time and on the West side, No Parking 8am-3pm. The West side typically fills up at 3:00 pm. Mr. Danila said he explained to Mr. Tendler that he had the opportunity to place his own parking restrictions because Lawrence Avenue is a private way.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Mr. Tendler said he is frustrated since he cannot park on his street. He understands that he can place his own parking restrictions but does not want to enrage his neighbors. Mr. Tendler provided Council members with photographs showing how the West side typically fills up, attached to this report. Mr. Tendler is also concerned with the difficulty of emergency vehicles accessing the street.

Mr. Koses said that Lawrence Avenue would be eligible for “Resident Parking Only” because of the recent changes. In the past, if a street was not 100% residential that street would not be eligible. He asked how Resident Parking Only could be implemented on this street because there are also institutional buildings. Council members reviewed the current ordinance to determine the appropriate number of permits that could be issued. Mr. Danila said he would make a recommendation to Chief Cummings suggesting that he approve no more than two visitor permits per building and the approval of two permits and two visitor permits to Mr. Tendler’s residence. Therefore, Mr. Danila made the motion to approve this item. Council members agreed 4-0-1, Mr. Grafe abstaining. Mr. Koses briefly described the appeals process and said this item may be appealed through April 13, 2011.

TC28-10 JAMES DANILA, on behalf of the Department of Public Works, requests a right turn only restriction on westbound Carriage Road at Lowell Avenue to facilitate the relocation of the stop line on Lowell Avenue to help improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety. (Ward 2) [08/26/10 @ 8:57 AM]

HELD (3-0-1, Grafe, Ciccone not present) on 10/21/10. Traffic Council will await additional input from abutters.

HELD (5-0) on 12/16/10. Traffic Council will take this item up again in March 2011 with additional design and cost information to be provided by the Department of Public Works.

ACTION: APPROVE Right Turn Only, Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway westbound to Lowell Avenue northbound (4-1, Norcross). Recommendation to the Department of Public Works to move forward with the intersection improvement concept, as presented. This item may be appealed through April 13, 2011.

NOTE: Mr. Danila reviewed with Council members the existing conditions and the conditions as proposed on October 21, 2010, which would move the stop line further north on Lowell Avenue so that stopped vehicles would no longer block pedestrian access on the Carriageway. In order to move this stop line, control on Carriageway will have to change to a Right-Turn Only (consistent with the Commonwealth Avenue and Chestnut Street intersection). There are no existing driveways on the section of the Carriageway between Beaumont Avenue and Lowell Avenue.

Mr. Danila provided the following estimated costs as requested for this project.

Estimated Costs

Install two new ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps: \$10,000.

Install two new traffic signal posts and foundations: \$800.

Relocate two pedestrian indications and install new wiring: \$1,000.

Install new conduit: \$2,500.

Cut new loop detectors: \$2,000.

Paint new crosswalk, stop line, remove existing crosswalk and stop line: \$1,000.

Total Estimated Cost: \$17,300

Mr. Danila said that this project is not a high priority this fiscal year for the Department of Public Works as there are other priorities in the City.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Ald. Linsky said he appreciates the effort Traffic Council has put into this item. He understands larger priorities are necessary in other areas of the City. He suggested keeping this item on the agenda. He agrees there are very few vehicles on the Carriageway during peak hour counts and Public Safety may not be an issue. Mr. Grafe suggested approving a "Right Turn Only" sign, which may be beneficial. Mr. Danila said the crosswalk could not be relocated unless the stop sign was relocated, changing the access on the Carriageway. A traffic signal would be necessary for pedestrian crossing at an additional cost of approximately \$5,000. Sgt. Norcross asked if drivers would focus on the green light and perhaps would just not stop at the crosswalk hoping to make the signal. Ald. Linsky asked if the proposed stop line and "Right Turn Only" sign could be tested on a trial. Mr. Grafe suggested moving the stop line.

Mr. Koses made the motion to approve a Right Turn Only, Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway westbound to Lowell Avenue northbound. He also recommends to the Department Public Works the relocation of the traffic signal and stop sign. Council members agreed 4-1, Sgt. Norcross opposed. Mr. Koses briefly described the appeals process and said this item may be appealed through April 13, 2011.

TC24-10 ALD. DANBERG, BLAZAR AND SHAPIRO requesting discussion on possible methods of improving traffic flow and safety at the intersections of Beacon and Centre Streets and Beacon Street and Langley Road, including but not limited to re-timing of the lights. (Ward 6) [07/02/10 @ 12:22 PM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY (5-0)

NOTE: This item was discussed with TC40-10, see note below.

TC40-10 ALD. DANBERG, BLAZAR, SHAPIRO, FULLER AND BAKER requesting discussion of and possible ban of parking during morning rush hour on Beacon Street a) (North side) between Langley Road and Centre Street and b) (South side) between Langley Road and Centre Street. (Wards 6 and 7) [12/13/10 @ 11:56 AM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY (5-0)

NOTE: TC24-10 and TC40-10 were discussed together.

Ald. Danberg said item TC24-10 was docketed because there have been ongoing traffic issues with congestion and backup at these locations all times of the day. Perhaps re-timing the traffic lights would alleviate vehicles from being backed up and help them avoid getting stuck in the intersections. Mr. Danila said that Beacon and Centre Streets are the biggest bottleneck, causing backups in all directions.

Ald. Fuller said item TC40-10 was docketed because a constituent suggested banning parking in these areas during the morning rush hour to match the afternoon parking ban. Perhaps restricting parking outbound in the evening alleviating additional congestion.

TC24-10

Mr. Danila described the exclusive versus concurrent pedestrian phasing. He said the exclusive phasing also adds congestion in this area because it requires vehicles to stop in all directions each cycle while pedestrians may cross. The concurrent pedestrian phase allows pedestrians to cross with the green signal. Exclusive pedestrian phases are used at locations where conflicting turning volumes are high, sight distance is restricted and intersection geometry is confusing for pedestrians or drivers.

Mr. Danila described the following two potential capacity improvements:

Traffic Signal Option-Enlarge the existing small island located within the intersection and relocate crosswalks. This would enable concurrent pedestrian phasing. This option would require new mast arms for both Centre Street approaches and may allow for a raised crosswalk

Roundabout Option- Has the potential for less delay than the traffic signal option, and would be a significant safety improvement over traffic signal for all users. Higher capital cost with lower maintenance costs. Mr. Danila said that the traffic signals at the intersections of Beacon and

Centre Streets and at Beacon Street at Langley Road have to be run on the same cycle length in order to be coordinated, but are not currently coordinated due to the exclusive pedestrian phase at Centre and Beacon Streets. The more time added to a cycle length the more delay is added to an intersection. Mr. Danila said the City has received a grant to re-time traffic signals at these locations.

Ald. Danberg said that she is hopeful to first see the traffic signal re-timed at the Langley Road and Beacon Street intersection and feels that traffic blocks this intersection the most. Ald. Shapiro agreed, saying that he would be supportive of this because it would be the least expensive fix. Mr. Danila said he would review modifying the signal to have a shorter green signal at westbound Beacon Street. Ald. Danberg then said that prior to Langley Bridge construction there was delayed timing which was better. Mr. Danila said there has been no difference in crash data.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. A resident said, since the Langley Bridge has been completed traffic situations have proven problematic at these intersections, it only appears to be getting worse. Improvements are necessary to make this area safe.

TC40-10

Mr. Danila said Beacon Street is approximately 40' wide (12' travel lane, 8' parking lane). He does not feel Beacon Street is wide enough to have two travel lanes in each direction. He did not feel the prohibition of parking would improve operating conditions. He then said that metered parking is allowed on both sides of Beacon Street (parking prohibited on north side from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday). Average parking meter occupancy during morning peak hour is on the North side with five cars (capacity: 10 spaces) and the South side with eight cars (capacity: 12 spaces). Capacity is constrained due to the intersection of Beacon and Centre Streets and the traffic signal timing changes that cannot improve capacity with the current geometry.

Mr. Koses suggested the removal of parking spaces or meters closest to intersections. Mr. Danila said standards would have to be met to remove parking spaces.

Mr. Koses said these two items were for discussion only; specific items would have to be docketed. Suggestions included the following:

- Review having a shorter green signal at westbound Beacon Street
- Re-timing the Beacon Street and Langley Road traffic signal
- Removal of meters on the north and south side lanes during the morning and evening rush hour on Beacon Street
- Redesign of intersection

Mr. Danila made the motion for No Action Necessary on items TC24-10 and TC40-10. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC34-10 ALD. LAPPIN requesting an analysis of parking and traffic flow on Florence Street as it relates to pedestrian and bike safety. (Wards 7 and 8) [10/04/10 @ 3:44 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY (5-0)**

NOTE: Ald. Lappin said it is her understanding that a sidewalk would be installed on the north side to Atrium Mall as a part of Chestnut Hill Square project. Several constituents have

related their concerns regarding the existing traffic, parking and safety issues on Florence Street. They are also concerned with the school bus stop location. She recommended a traffic study be conducted as a baseline before the Chestnut Hill Square project is completed.

Mr. Danila said the road width on Florence Street varies; there is no parking on the south side near #11. Current data proves that typically 35-40 cars park on Florence Street, adjacent to Atrium Mall. Approximately 20% of parked vehicles are registered to Newton or Chestnut Hill residents. The majority of vehicles park for at least 6 hours (60% of vehicles park for over 8 hours). Partners Health Care Buses drop-off and pick-up occur at the Atrium Mall, with parking occurring on the west end of Florence Street. The Partners Shuttle runs to the Longwood Medical Area.

The traffic and pedestrian data proved the following:

Near Tanglewood Road: The average daily traffic count is 5,200 vehicles per day. The speed limit is 30 mph, mean speed is 31 mph and the 85th percentile speed is 38 mph.

At Newton/Brookline Line: The average daily traffic count is 5,700 vehicles per day on Florence Street. The speed limit is 30 mph, mean speed is 30 mph and the 85th percentile speed is 35 mph.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Mr. Koses said he would contact Partners Health Care requesting them to apply for a bus license from the City. Mr. Koses said bike lanes are being proposed on Florence Street and feels that parking may need to be removed from the north side. Mr. Danila said when the sidewalk is installed; he feels the roadway would be too narrow to allow parking and bike lanes. Ald. Lennon said that if parking were removed, Florence Street would become a speedway. Mr. Grafe suggested the narrowing of the travel lane to calm traffic and to allow the opportunity for a bike lane. Ald. Lappin said she would prefer bike lanes rather than parked vehicles.

Sgt. Norcross asked for clarification of the school bus stop location. A resident replied that approximately 20 children from Avalon Bay cross Florence Street (without crosswalks) to the bus stop that is located at Louise Road and Florence Street making them stand on the side (without sidewalks). She said she has asked the Transportation Department to relocate the bus stop. Mr. Koses recommends that the Transportation Team discuss the issues and possibilities of the bus stop relocation at their March 28 meeting.

Mr. Koses said this item was for discussion only; specific items would have to be docketed. Suggestions included the following:

- Relocate school bus stop
- Installation of a crosswalk
- Eliminate parking on Florence Street once the sidewalk is installed
- Request Partners Health Care Bus to obtain a bus license from the City

Mr. Danila made the motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC2-11 ALD. SALVUCCI, LENNON, CICCONE AND MERRILL on behalf of the Citizens of Newton Corner requests establishing reasonable regulations and install traffic safety devices as are necessary to protect pedestrians traveling to the south side of the Massachusetts Turnpike. (Ward 1) [01/11/11 @ 9:42 AM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY (5-0)

NOTE: Ald. Lennon said this item was docketed because constituents have expressed their concern relating to the inability for pedestrians and school age children safe access to the south side of the Massachusetts Turnpike. He then asked if a crossing guard position is being considered in this area.

Mr. Danila said there have been zero crash reports in the area. It is Mass DOT's intention to replace the signs and the City is planning to install additional signage and pavement markings.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Richard Belkin, 149 Park Street, said the Advisory Committee did not recommend the "No Turn on Red" sign that was installed because of public safety issues. Mr. Koses said the Department of Public Works would be responsible for removing this sign. Mr. Danila suggested that the consultant, soon to come on board to retime traffic signals citywide, could review the possibility of separating Park Street from Washington Street. If this is possible, Mr. Danila said he would docket an item for Traffic Council's consideration that would install a "No Turn on Red" sign at the merge of Park and Washington Streets north/westbound into the Newton Corner rotary

Ald. Lennon asked for the installation of additional crosswalk signs and for enhanced painted crosswalks.

Mr. Koses said this item was for discussion only, as it was not specific to take actions; specific items would have to be docketed. Suggestions included the following:

- Installation of crosswalk signs
- Installation of "No Right Turn on Red", if Park and Washington Street traffic could be separated
- Enhanced crosswalk paint, perhaps with a ladder design inside
- Automated pedestrian or activated push button signals with pedestrian count down timers

Ald. Lennon said he would remain in contact with Mr. Danila on the suggestions provided.

Ald. Harney made to the motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair

Traffic Council

City Hall
Room 222
Thursday, March 24, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Agenda

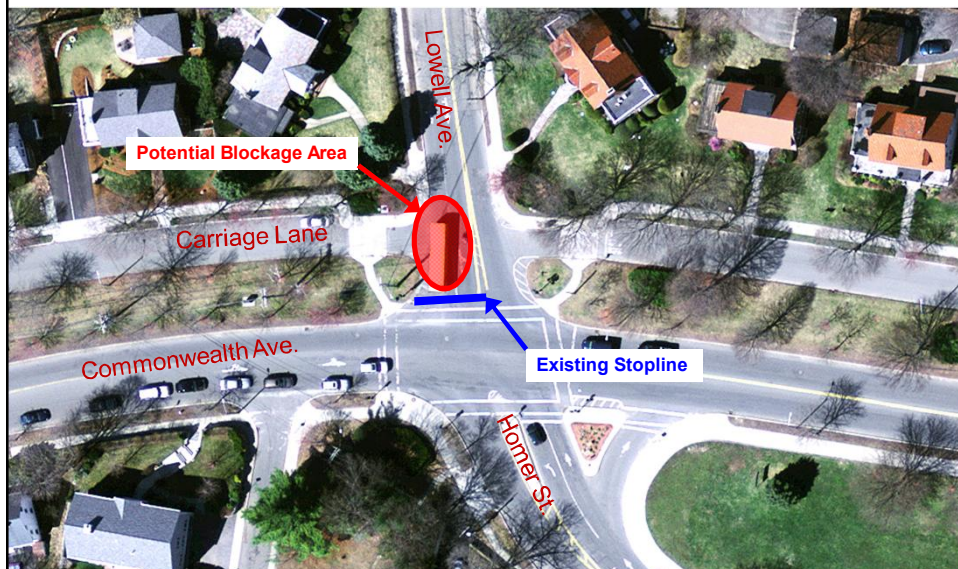
1. TC28-10: requesting a right turn only restriction on westbound Carriage Rd. at Lowell Ave. (Ward 2)
(Held on 10/21/10 & 12/16/10)
 2. TC24-10: requesting methods of improving traffic flow and safety at the intersections of Beacon St. at Centre St. & Beacon St. at Langley Rd. (Ward 6)
 3. TC40-10: requesting discussion of and possible ban of parking during morning rush hour on Beacon St. between Langley Rd. and Centre St. (Ward 6)
 4. TC34-10: requesting an analysis of parking and traffic flow on Florence St. as it relates to pedestrian and bike safety. (Wards 7 & 8)
 5. TC2-11: requests establishment of reasonable regulations and traffic safety devices to protect pedestrians traveling to the south side of the Massachusetts Turnpike. (Ward 1)
 6. TC3-11: requesting removal of the present parking restrictions and the imposition of %Resident Parking Only+on Lawrence Ave.
-

TC28-10

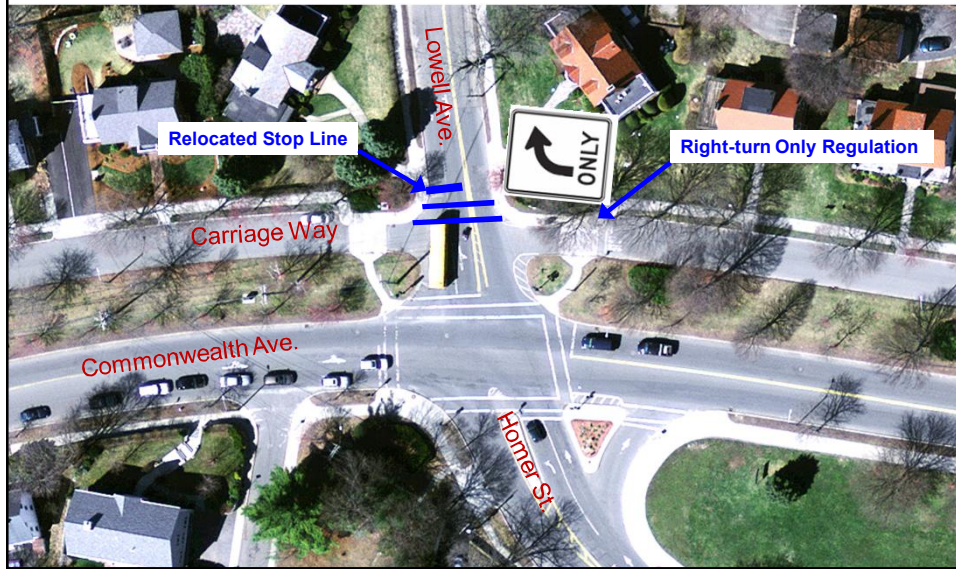
Requesting a right-turn only restriction on westbound Carriage Rd. at Lowell Ave. to facilitate the relocation of the stop line on Lowell Ave. to help improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety. (Ward 2)

Held on 10/21/10 & 12/16/10

Existing Conditions



Condition Proposed on 10/21/10



Notes

- Proposal will move Stop Line on Lowell Ave. so stopped vehicles will no longer block pedestrian & bicycle access on the Carriage Lane.
- In order to move Stop Line, control on Carriage Lane will have to change to:
 - Right-Turn Only (consistent with Commonwealth/Chestnut intersection);
 - Signalization; or
 - Reverse One-Way on Carriage Lane between Lowell & Beaumont.
- No existing driveways on Carriage Lane between Beaumont Ave. & Lowell Ave.
- Peak Hour counts:
 - a.m.: 0 cars; p.m.: 3 cars on Carriage Way (all right-turns).
- Lowell/Commonwealth/Homer Crashes (2005-08): 28
 - Crash Rate: 0.72 per million entering vehicles.
 - District Average Crash Rate: 0.78 per million entering vehicles.

Estimated Costs

- Install 2 new ADA-compliant wheelchair ramps: \$10,000.
 - Install 2 new traffic signal posts + foundations: \$800.
 - Relocate 2 pedestrian indications + install new wiring: \$1,000.
 - Install new conduit: \$2,500.
 - Cut new loop detectors: \$2,000.
 - Paint new crosswalk + stop line and remove existing crosswalk + stop line: \$1,000.
 - Total: \$17,300
-

TC24-10

Requesting discussion on possible methods of improving traffic flow and safety at the intersections of Beacon and Centre Streets and Beacon Street and Langley Road, including but not limited to re-timing of the lights.

(Ward 6)

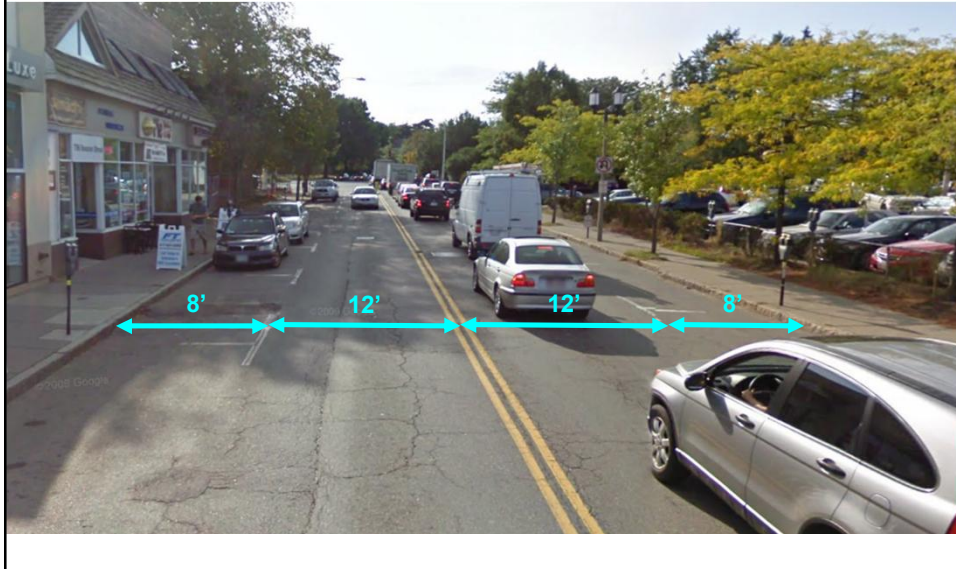
TC40-10

Requesting discussion of and possible ban of parking during morning rush hour on Beacon Street a) (North side) between Langley Road and Centre Street and b) (South side) between Langley Road and Centre Street. (Ward 6)

Aerial Photo



Current Space Allocation



Notes

- Metered parking on both sides of Beacon St.
 - Parking prohibited on north side from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday.
- Average parking meter occupancy during morning peak hour:
 - North side: 5 cars (capacity: 10 spaces)
 - South side: 8 cars (capacity: 12 spaces)
- Capacity is constrained due to the intersection of Beacon St. & Centre St.
 - Traffic signal timing changes cannot improve capacity with current geometry.

Exclusive vs. Concurrent Pedestrian Phasing

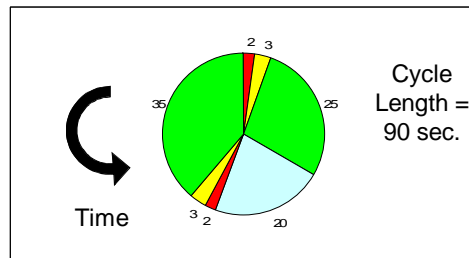


Exclusive Pedestrian Phase: pedestrians only walk when vehicles are stopped.

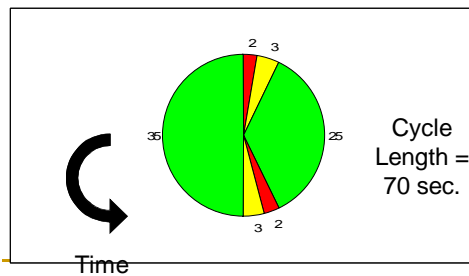


Concurrent Pedestrian Phase: pedestrians are crossing with green.

Exclusive Pedestrian Phases



- Exclusive Pedestrian Phase increases the amount of stopped time for all vehicles.

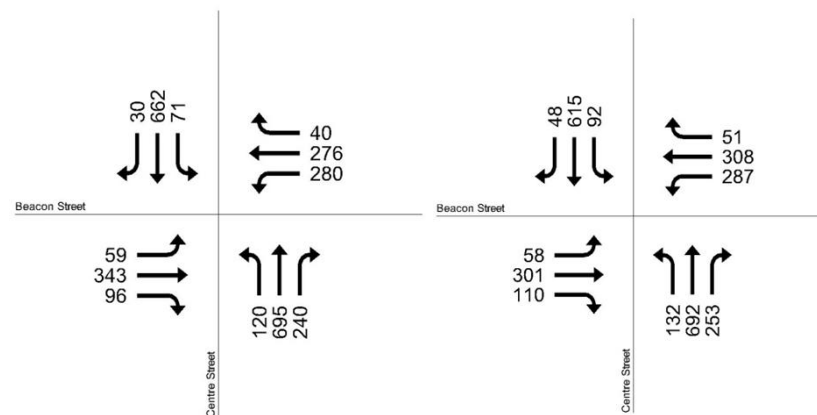


- Pedestrian phase at Beacon/Centre is >20% of the total cycle.
 - Causes a significant portion of all delay.

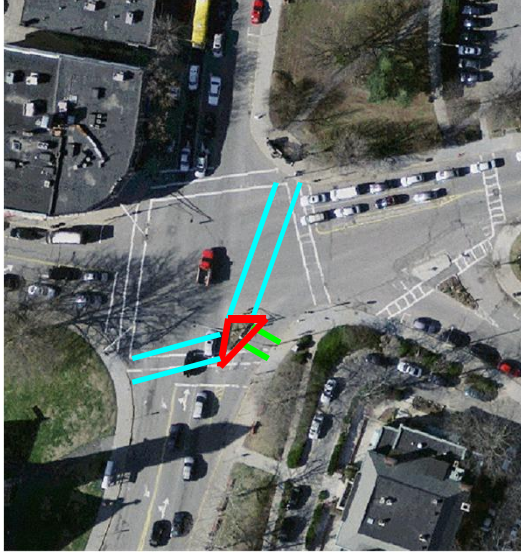
Why Exclusive Pedestrian Phases?

- At locations where:
 - Conflicting turning volumes are high;
 - Sight distance is restricted; or
 - Intersection geometry is confusing for pedestrians or drivers or does not require a driver to slow down prior to making a turn.

Turning Movement Diagrams



Potential Capacity Improvements



Traffic Signal Option

- Enlarge island and relocate crosswalks.
- Would enable concurrent pedestrian phasing.
- Would require new mast arms for both Centre Street approaches.
- May allow for raised crosswalk.

Potential Capacity Improvements



Roundabout Option

- Likely less delay than traffic signal.
- Significant safety improvement over traffic signal for all users.
- Higher capital cost.
- Lower maintenance costs.

TC34-10

Requesting an analysis of parking and traffic flow on Florence Street as it relates to pedestrian and bike safety. (Wards 7 & 8)

Aerial Photo



Parking Data

- Typically 35-40 cars parked on Florence Street.
 - Adjacent to Atrium Mall, 280 Boylston Street, and 11 Florence Street.
- Approximately 20% of parked vehicles registered to Newton or Chestnut Hill.
- Majority of vehicles park for at least 6 hours.
 - 60% parked for over 8 hours.
- Partners Health Care Bus drops off and picks up on west end of Florence Street.
 - Route runs to Longwood Medical Area.

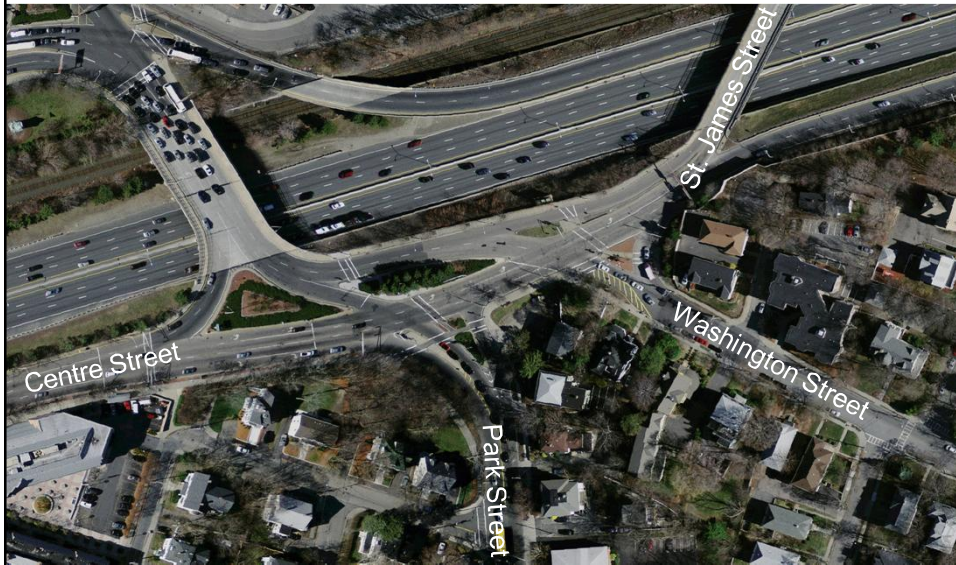
Traffic and Pedestrian Data

- Near Tanglewood Road:
 - Average Daily Traffic: 5,200 vehicles per day.
 - Speed Limit: 30 mph.
 - Mean Speed: 31 mph.
 - 85th Percentile Speed: 38 mph.
- At Newton/Brookline line:
 - Average Daily Traffic: 5,700 vehicles per day.
 - Speed Limit: 30 mph.
 - Mean Speed: 30 mph.
 - 85th Percentile Speed: 35 mph.
- Sidewalk will be constructed on north side to Atrium Mall as a part of Chestnut Hill Square project.

TC2-11

Requests establishment of reasonable regulations and traffic safety devices to protect pedestrians traveling to the south side of the Massachusetts Turnpike. (Ward 1)

Aerial Photo



TC3-11

Requesting removal of the present parking restrictions and the imposition of ~~%~~ Resident Parking Only+on Lawrence Avenue. (Ward 7)

Aerial Photo



No Parking Any Time | No Parking 8am-3pm | No Parking 4pm-9pm
1-Hr Limit 8am-5:30pm & Prohibited 5:30pm-9pm

Lawrence Ave. after 3:00 p.m.



Notes

- Lawrence Avenue is a private way.
- West side typically fills up at 3:00 p.m.





