

CITY OF NEWTON

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

Present: Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; David Koses, Transportation Planner; Sgt. James Norcross, Newton Police Department, Jerome Grafe, Citizen Representative and Ald. Ciccone
Also Present: Ald. Baker, Fuller, Schnipper and Danberg
City Staff: Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer

TC7-10 ALD. FULLER, BAKER AND SCHNIPPER requesting on Beacon Street, east of Hammond Street to the Newton/Boston City line adjacent to Boston College: (a) changes to the existing parking regulations to facilitate the addition of marked bicycle lanes on both the north and south sides of Beacon Street and (b) installation of parking meters on the north, and possibly, south sides of Beacon Street, to facilitate through travel and short-term daytime parking. (Ward 7)
[03/18/10 @ 9:48 PM]

ACTION: 1) Approved (5-0). No Parking, Tow Zone, south side of Beacon Street from Hammond Street to a point 750 feet east of Hammond Street. 3-Hour Limit, south side of Beacon Street, from a point 750 feet east of Hammond Street to Stone Avenue; 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. are approved, pending approval from Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission. No Parking, Tow Zone, south side of Beacon Street, from Stone Avenue to Boston City Line.

2) Approved (5-0). 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., north side of Beacon Street, from the Boston City Line to a point 190 feet west of the Boston City Line. Live Parking Only, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., from a point 260 feet west of the Boston City Line to a point 360 feet west of the Boston City Line. 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., north side of Beacon Street, from a point 430 feet west of the Boston City Line to a point 840 feet west of the Boston City Line.

3) Approved (5-0). No Parking, Tow Zone, north side of Beacon Street, from a point 420 feet east of Hammond Street to Hammond Street.

NOTE: Ald. Baker said the Ward 7 Aldermen docketed this item at the request from the Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force. Ald. Baker said the bicycle lane on Beacon Street goes to the Boston line, can it continue into Newton.

Mr. Danila said there are current parking restrictions on Beacon Street needing modification. He indicated bicycle lanes will support and encourage cycling, reduce the chance of motorists straying into cyclists' path, remind motorists to look for cyclists when turning or opening car doors, define road space, decrease the likelihood of crashes, etc. The project area where bicycle lanes should be considered is from the Boston line to Hammond Street. However, bicyclists will be able to continue using the shoulder on Beacon Street to Hammond Pond Parkway.

Parking restrictions on Beacon Street are currently inconsistent. On the south side, there is no parking from 8am to 6pm., on the north side; there is no parking at any time and no parking 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm. Mr. Danila proposed the following changes to accommodate the

bicycle lane. Change the area with no parking 8am to 6pm to a permanent no parking/tow zone, eliminate the varied section of no parking 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm allowing 3 hour meters from 8am to 6pm and adding live parking 7am to 6pm.

The goals of the bicycle lanes are to provide safe delineated lane for travel, to extend existing bicycle lanes that terminate at the Newton line, to improve pedestrian crossing, reduce vehicle speeds by reducing travel lane widths and add parking during daytime hours. The bicycle lane design conforms to state and federal standards and will have no impact on the operation of traffic signals on Beacon and Hammond Streets intersection.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Ald. Baker provided photographs of the current situations on Beacon Street; parking, crosswalks and conditions of Beacon Street to Council members. He said he is opposed to adding 3 hour meters beyond the Boston College bus stop.

Ald. Fuller asked what is the width of Beacon Street, how does Beacon Street change in the section from Hammond Street to the Boston line and what are the rules for parking meters being installed in Historic districts. Mr. Danila said Beacon Street at the City line is 50' wide which allows for 2 parking lanes, 2 travel lanes and 2 bicycle lanes. In the middle section of Beacon Street where it tapers down to 42' wide a lane would have to be eliminated, either one of the 2 travel lanes, bicycle lanes or parking lanes. It is proposed to eliminate the parking lane on the south side, making the bicycle lane hug the curb. To accommodate the left turn lane to turn south on Hammond Street, it was proposed to eliminate the parking to the corner. Mr. Danila said the City Planning Department advised him he would have to inquire at the Chestnut Hill District Commission to receive their approval for installing parking meters on the south side. If the Chestnut Hill District Commission does not approve the request then Council should consider an alternative measure regarding parking.

Ald. Danberg said she supports the installation of bicycle lanes on Beacon Street. She asked how far into Newton the lanes will be installed and what can be done to extend them into Newton Centre and into Ward 6. Ald. Danberg expressed her concerns regarding the south side of Beacon Street with additional parking. She asked if an alternative plan has been considered rather than installing parking meters to perhaps coordinate the Community Parking Permit Program in this area. Mr. Danila said to accommodate bicycle lanes to extend into Newton Centre (between Hammond Street and Hammond Pond Parkway) there are currently no parking allowed on either side of the streets, due to the shoulder which could be used for a bicycle lane. Perhaps, in the future when Beacon Street is restriped marked lanes could be considered administratively. Beyond Hammond Pond Parkway, looking to the west, parking is allowed on both sides of the street. This area is not wide enough to consider 2 bicycle lanes, 2 travel lanes and parking on both sides. Mr. Danila said an item would have to be docketed requesting to change parking regulations on Beacon Street. In order to consider the Community Parking permit Program it would allow the City to assign up to 75% of long-term meter spaces and if it were to be considered the proposed three hour meters would have to be designated to twelve hour meters. Ald. Fuller said people who are street parking near Boston College are paying less than the cost of the Community Parking Permit Program. Ald. Danberg asked if Boston College

would be interested in renting parking spaces in this program. Ms. Leveque answered Boston College has their own parking permit program.

Sean Roche, 42 Daniels Street, said he appreciates and is delighted on the efforts proposed but he personally would not benefit from these bicycle lanes as he travels Beacon Street on a regular basis without them. Mr. Roche said installing bicycle lanes would encourage more bicyclists. He said parking on streets tend to slow vehicles down, making it safer for bicycling. He shares Ald. Bakers concern regarding the west bound lane, west of the bus shelter which is the most dangerous part to travel. He suggested that Mr. Danila proposals be implemented on a trial basis and recommends that they be closely monitored. Lois Levin, Bike Newton, said she likes the idea of implementing bicycle lanes and would like to have this idea put into place soon. Jean Leveque, Boston College, said she appreciates the work put into this item. She expressed her concerns on the parking spaces near Boston College. Charlie Russo, of Newton expressed this is a great plan and is hoping it will be implemented.

Sgt. Norcross said he likes the idea of implementing the bicycle lanes but is concerned about bicycles traveling east towards Boston because of the proposal of no parking at the steep incline this will also encourage bicycles to speed crossing over side streets and eventually traveling near parked vehicles.

Mr. Grafe said he also supports bicycles lanes be implemented. He asked if the Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission would have to approve the Community Parking Permit Program in this area. He then asked for clarification on the left and right turn lanes. Mr. Danila answered currently there is a left turn only lane and a shared through right lane. There is not enough cross section space to provide a lane for left turns, right turns and straight forward traveling lanes.

Mr. Koses said he would also like to see this proposal move forward. He asked how the plan could be made safer in order for bicyclists to make a left turn at Hammond Street heading south bound. Mr. Danila answered the bicyclist would have to decide prior to making a turn to choose traveling in the middle or right lane in order to turn left. He said parking would not impact the area being safer. Mr. Koses expressed his concerns about placing meters in front of residential homes. Ms. Leveque said properties on both sides of the street are owned by Boston College.

Ald. Baker asked this item be voted on in three parts. Mr. Koses agreed and made the following three motions to approve this item:

- 1) Approved (5-0). No Parking, Tow Zone, south side of Beacon Street from Hammond Street to a point 750 feet east of Hammond Street. 3-Hour Limit, south side of Beacon Street, from a point 750 feet east of Hammond Street to Stone Avenue; 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. are approved, pending approval from Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission. No Parking, Tow Zone, south side of Beacon Street, from Stone Avenue to Boston City Line.
- 2) Approved (5-0). 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., north side of Beacon Street, from the Boston City Line to a point 190 feet west of the Boston City Line. Live Parking Only, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., from a point 260 feet west of the Boston City Line to a point 360 feet west of the Boston City Line. 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., north side of Beacon Street, from a point 430 feet west of the Boston City Line to a point 840 feet west of the Boston City Line.

3) Approved (5-0). No Parking, Tow Zone, north side of Beacon Street, from a point 420 feet east of Hammond Street to Hammond Street. Council members agreed 5-0 on all three motions.

TC9-10 JAMES DANILA on behalf of Public Works, requesting a change to the lane usage on the northbound Washington Street approach to Washington Street/Commonwealth Avenue to facilitate a change to the traffic signal phasing. (Ward 4) [04/05/10 @ 9:47 AM]

ACTION: Approved (5-0). Remove Right Lane Must Turn Right, northbound Washington Street onto Commonwealth Avenue. Add Left Lane Must Turn Left, Commonwealth Avenue eastbound onto Washington Street, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Washington Street, and Washington Street northbound onto Commonwealth Avenue. Add No Turn on Red when traffic signal is under Fire Department Control, northbound Washington Street onto Commonwealth Avenue.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said he docketed this item in order to change traffic signal phasing in the Washington Street and Commonwealth Avenue area. The Department of Public Works is requesting to change the through lane to a left turn lane eliminating a right turn lane.

Crash data proves in 2005 to 2008 there have been 71 crashes. Crash rate is 1.18 per million entering vehicles, the 8th highest crash rate in Newton. Mr. Danila is proposing to make the following improvements: Reduction in crashes, improved safety for emergency vehicles and the reduction in queuing on Washington Street. The proposed no turn on red changes for exiting fire and ambulance which will turn signal red for all approaches because fire and ambulance exit the wrong-way onto Commonwealth Avenue to head north, south and west. The current warning system violated MUTCD regulations. The proposed sign will remain dark unless a fire or ambulance turns the signal red.

Mr. Danila said he would like to propose the following changes to the Traffic Parking Regulations (TPR):

- 1) No Turn on Red Signs, add to section (c) Washington Street, northbound at Commonwealth Avenue when traffic signal is under Fire Department control.
- 2) Left lane must turn left, add Commonwealth Avenue, eastbound onto Washington Street (existing but missing from TPR). Add Commonwealth Avenue, westbound onto Washington Street (existing but missing from TPR) and to add Washington Street, northbound onto Commonwealth Avenue.
- 3) Right lane must turn right; delete Washington Street, northbound onto Commonwealth Avenue.

Ald. Ciccone said cars heading west on Washington Street making left turns onto Commonwealth Avenue is a hazard. He asked if there is also a plan for people heading east. Mr. Schuckel said many plans have been considered but the problem with vehicles traveling east is because the street is not wide enough to introduce a left turn lane. This current proposal eliminates vehicles turning left from the westbound direction, improving the situation by 50%. Funding would be available through the Mitigation Account.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion to approve this item. Remove Right Lane Must Turn Right, northbound Washington Street onto Commonwealth Avenue. Add Left Lane Must Turn Left,

Commonwealth Avenue eastbound onto Washington Street, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Washington Street, and Washington Street northbound onto Commonwealth Avenue. Add No Turn on Red when traffic signal is under Fire Department Control, northbound Washington Street onto Commonwealth Avenue. Council members agreed 5-0.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Preliminary Design of Beacon Street, Collins Road and Waban Avenue intersection.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said the Department of Public Works and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) have been working on preliminary designs to change the existing design of Beacon Street, Collins Road and Waban Avenue.

Mr. Greenberg from VHB, provided Council members with a diagram of the existing condition proposing future designs perhaps reducing some conflicts and confusion. He said there are four to five conflict areas in the existing design which need to be modified by being creative in the conflict areas. He provided Council Members with the following plans:

Existing Design: Has an antiquated traffic signal, crosswalk and ADA issues. This existing design has four to five conflicts.

Concept 1: The biggest conflict is where Waban Avenue and Collins Road intersect. He proposes to leave the traffic signal, straighten out the islands, add stop signs, yield signs, right turn only signs perhaps reducing some conflicts.

Concept 2: Proposes to upgrade the traffic signal, redesign some islands, add stop lines, striping, make Collins Road and Waban Avenue one-way streets by closing traffic movement from Collins Road to Beacon Street.

Concept 3: Mr. Greenberg stated he likes this concept but it is still confusing. This concept includes upgrading the traffic signal. Vehicles will still travel from Collins Road to Beacon Street in a one-way direction on Collins Road and Waban Avenue avoiding any confusion by traveling to the right of the island.

Concept 4: Proposes to install roundabouts, eliminate the traffic signal and add one-way streets. All traffic from Beacon Street would be diverted.

Concept 5: Proposes to create a one-way couplet, upgraded traffic signal, installation of additional traffic signals and increase parking on the interior of the island. This plan would reduce 70% of the current conflicts.

Mr. Schuckel asked if the two crosswalks proposed could be located closer to the school crossing guard.

Mr. Koses asked if the installation of additional traffic signals would be a significant cost or would they be reduced because they are tied in with another signal. Mr. Danila said the current signal will need to be upgraded; a new controller will not be added. Mr. Greenberg said a signal upgrade costs approximately \$100,000; a signal with a mast arm costs approximately \$125,000.

TC4-10 JAMES DANILA on behalf of Public Works, requesting change to parking regulations and lane usage on Commonwealth Avenue in the vicinity of Mt. Alvernia Road, College Road and Old Colony Road. (Ward 7) [03/12/10 @ 11:08 AM]

ACTION: Approved (5-0). Remove Left Lane Must Turn Left, Commonwealth Avenue eastbound onto Mt. Alvernia Road, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Old Colony Road, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Boston College Entrance. Add One-Hour Limit, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., south side of Commonwealth Avenue, from Manet Road to Old Colony Road. Add No Parking Tow Zone, from College Road to a point 450 feet east of College Road.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said changes were made to this location in January. Since these changes, traffic data counts were taken because a traffic signal was originally proposed at this location but will not be installed. Department Public Works initially wanted to install left turn lanes and additional traffic data counts were taken again proving left turn lanes were not necessary at this location. Residents also complained about losing parking in front of their homes. Mr. Danila said Department Public Works would like to remove left lane must turn left turns which does not have an effect on through traffic.

Mr. Grafe asked what the traffic volumes were at this location. Mr. Danila answered they were minor, less than 40 vehicles per hour.

Ms. Leveque, Boston College, said she was not aware of a left turn being proposed to be removed at the entrance of Boston College and asked why it was proposed. Mr. Danila answered it is a maintenance issue restricting what the City can do along the curb lanes and restricts the installation of bicycle accommodations on Commonwealth Avenue. Ms. Leveque expressed her concerns regarding bicycle lanes in the section of Commonwealth Avenue in front of the Boston College Campus. Mr. Danila said the bicycle lane is proposed to be painted on the west bound of the curb and perhaps a sharrow on the east bound side. Mr. Danila informed her pavement markings decisions do not go before Traffic Council.

Ald. Ciccone asked why the carriage lane cannot be considered for bicycle lanes. Mr. Danila answered the carriage lane has many stop signs and legally bicyclists have to stop. The carriage lane is used for more recreational bicycling.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion to remove left lane must turn left, Commonwealth Avenue eastbound onto Mt. Alvernia Road, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Old Colony Road, Commonwealth Avenue westbound onto Boston College Entrance. Add One-Hour Limit, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., south side of Commonwealth Avenue, from Manet Road to Old Colony Road. Add No Parking Tow Zone, from College Road to a point 450 feet east of College Road. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC5-10 JAMES DANILA on behalf of Public Works, requesting change in the designation of the parking on Chestnut Street east of Oak Street in Newton Upper Falls from an off-street parking area to on-street parking. (Ward 5) [03/21/10 @ 11:08 AM]

ACTION: Approved (5-0). Modify time and days in TPR-195 Municipal off-street parking areas – Time limits to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Remove Chestnut Street Parking area from TPR-194 and TPR-195. Add Fifteen Minute Limit, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., south side of Chestnut Street, from Oak Street to a point 90 feet east of Oak Street. Add 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., south side of Chestnut Street, from a point 105 feet

east of Oak Street to a point 215 feet east of Oak Street. Add No Time Limit parking meters, south side of Chestnut Street, from a point 215 feet east of Oak Street to a point 360 feet east of Oak Street.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said a section of Chestnut Street in Newton Upper Falls is listed twice in the Traffic Parking Regulations (TPR). It is listed as an on-street parking facility and is also listed in the off street municipal parking areas. Mr. Danila would like to remove Chestnut Street from the off street municipal parking areas. He would also like to correct TPR-194 Areas in Municipal Off-Street Areas – sections that have no time limits. This section describes the areas which have twelve hour meters. Parking is now enforced from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm; except on Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays which the City can not enforce long-term meters on Saturdays. He would like the TPR to read 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday.

Mr. Koses made the motion to modify time and days in TPR-195 Municipal off-street parking areas – Time limits to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Remove Chestnut Street Parking area from TPR-194 and TPR-195. Add Fifteen Minute Limit, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., south side of Chestnut Street, from Oak Street to a point 90 feet east of Oak Street. Add 3-Hour parking meters, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., south side of Chestnut Street, from a point 105 feet east of Oak Street to a point 215 feet east of Oak Street. Add No Time Limit parking meters, south side of Chestnut Street, from a point 215 feet east of Oak Street to a point 360 feet east of Oak Street. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC1-10 DAVID KOSES requesting adjustment to TPR-179(b) to allow for enforcement of the existing Blue Zone on Ward Street, and potential future Blue Zones.
[02/10/10 @ 12:26 PM]

ACTION: Approved (5-0). Delete Monday through Friday from TPR-179(b).

NOTE: Mr. Danila said the language in Blue Zone areas only indicate Monday through Friday.

Mr. Koses said he docketed this item because Captain Mintz has requested to extend the Blue Zone in front of the Temple Emanuel on Ward Street. This is the only Blue Zone that is not in front of an elementary school. At Temple Emanuel, the current sign reads Blue Zone is in effect on Sundays and after school.

Mr. Koses said this Blue Zone cannot be enforced because Blue Zones are designated Monday through Friday on days that school is in session. He asks that the words Monday through Friday be deleted. Mr. Danila said this change would apply to any school that has a Blue Zone.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion to delete Monday through Friday from TPR-179(b). Council members agreed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Danila, Traffic Council Chair