

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 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, Albright and Linsky

TC35 -09 ALD. CICCONE AND LENNON on behalf of Steven Groleau, 45 Jefferson Street, Newton requesting a thorough discussion regarding parking restrictions and potential one-way traffic flow for Jefferson Street, Newton Corner. (Ward 1) [09/25/09 @ 10:28 AM]

HELD (5-0) on 6/24/10 for NEW 60-Day Trial, No parking/tow zone, both sides, between Centre Street and Nonantum Place. Rescind one-way flow restriction, for trial of two-way traffic flow between Centre Street and Nonantum Place.

ACTION: Approve as amended (5-0), Tow Zones on south side of Jefferson Street, as approved in the trial established on 11/19/09 and 1/21/10.

NOTE: Mr. Danila briefly described the current trial and area parking restrictions on Jefferson Street and opened the discussion for public comment. Steven Groleau, 45 Jefferson Street, said patrons and employees are still parking on Jefferson Street and park in marked tow zones. He still has difficulty exiting his driveway because people are parking within 5' of his driveway. Patty Walsh Greene, 39 Jefferson Street, said the trial has made Jefferson Street a "speedway". The street is now littered with street signs. She suggests the returning of a one-way street and suggests permit parking. She still has difficulty leaving her driveway and feels this trial has failed. Alison Lucci, 58 Jefferson Street, provided Council members with recent photos, attached to this report. Photos reflect the backup of vehicles waiting to exit Jefferson Street. She agreed people speed and would like this trial to end. Mr. Grafe encouraged her to docket a residential parking permit item.

Mr. Danila said the Council could not consider resident permit parking with this item, a new item would have to be docketed and signed by 50% or more of the residents, not the Aldermen. Ms. Greene said she previously docketed an item for resident permit parking. Mr. Koses said Ward Aldermen docketed the item, therefore, residential parking permits cannot be considered. Ms. Greene said she would docket an item for residential parking. Mr. Koses said residential parking may be appropriate on Jefferson Street but is hesitant because all neighborhoods may now request the same. He said the Transportation Advisory Committee has formed a parking subcommittee that will discuss different parking issues throughout the City. He would like them to recommend and provide guidance when residential parking is appropriate and when it is not. Mr. Koses suggested certain sections of Jefferson Street should be marked tow zones and sections should be marked residential parking. Mr. Grafe suggested installing "no parking within 5' of driveway" signs near Mr. Groleau's home. He then said the trial of two-way traffic

flow between Centre Street and Nonantum Place obviously is not working. He suggested ending this trial and return to the previous trial but is open to suggestions regarding the tow zones. Mr. Danila asked the residents if they would like to change or eliminate the trial while they wait an item be docketed for residential parking.

Mr. Grafe made the motion to approve as amended, Tow Zones on south side of Jefferson Street, as approved in the trial established on 11/19/09 and 1/21/10. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC13-10 RICHARD CLEARY, 216 Waverley Avenue, requesting creation of safe intersection (crosswalks, stop signs and traffic speed reduction) at Waverley Avenue and Franklin Street. (Wards 1, 7) [04/27/10 @ 3:32 PM]

ACTION: No Action Necessary (4-0, Ciccone not present). DPW will remove temporary curb extensions and make modifications to southwest and, possibly, northeast corners to improve sight distance. DPW will also reexamine warning beacon flasher and possibly install new equipment to make drivers more aware of crossing pedestrians.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said residents and the Executive Department have requested temporary curb extensions in the southeast and northwest corners. The stop line has been relocated closer to the intersection. Department of Public Works completed the curb extensions because they were hoping they would have an effect on slowing traffic on Waverly Avenue. This would also allow the opportunity for cars heading east on Franklin Street to pull up closer to the intersection in order for better sight distance and the ability to look down the hill. The City has also installed a pedestrian warning beacon at this intersection.

Mr. Danila said traffic data proved the following on Waverly Avenue: 10,700 vehicles per day, classified as a major collector road. The speed limit is 30 mph. Pre-trial average 32mph, trial average 32 mph. Pre-trial 85th percentile is 36 mph and during the trial 85th percentile is 36 mph. The crash rate is 0.65 crashes per million entering vehicles. There has been one reported crash since May. Mass Dot District 4 average is 0:59. This intersection does not meet the all-way stop warrants because the turning moving counts during the morning and evening peak hours proves there is not enough traffic. Traffic Council does not have the authority to install all-way stop signs unless warrants are met. Department Public Works recommends the removing of existing stop line to square up the southwest corner making vehicles slow down, add new stop line closer to intersection, narrow curb radius and remove curb extension on southwest corner to improve all sight distances.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Jeff Gates, 206 Franklin Street, said this area has to be made safe because there are many children walking to school and the intersection is dangerous. He recommends the Police Department conducting directed patrols to issue speeding tickets. He agrees narrowing the curb radius may help perhaps making the intersection safer for pedestrians. He suggested reducing the speed to 25 mph. Morton Kliman, 215 Waverley Avenue, said bump outs are dangerous and asked what the definition of a safe intersection is. He also recommends Police enforcement. A resident said it is difficult exiting driveways because people have the tendency

to speed. Ald. Baker asked if the curb could be eliminated on the north side of Waverley Avenue where the sight distance is limited due to the trees. He also asked if the street could be restriped narrowing the lane with the intention of improving sight distance. He then asked if the right side of Franklin Street could be squared off perhaps enhancing visibility. Stephen Fabry, 156 Waverley Avenue agreed cars tend to speed on a regular basis. He feels the flashing yellow signal at the crosswalk is not helping; it gives a false sense of security. He suggested making the signal a flashing red signal while pedestrians are in the crosswalk. Mr. Danila said a flashing red signal must meet traffic signal warrants that are stricter than all-way stop warrants. Jeffrey Orlin, 105 Nonantum Street said bump outs are dangerous to bicyclists. He asked what a safe stopping sight distance is allowing a car to see a pedestrian. Mr. Danila did not have data available for this location. Mr. Orlin then asked if warning beacons could be re-located or removed. Mr. Danila said a new item would have to be docketed to Traffic Council for the removal of the warning beacon. The City would have to apply to the State requesting a reduction of speed. The State would not likely reduce the speed limit from 30 mph because they base speed limits on the 85th percentile speed, which is 36 mph.

Sgt. Norcross said the Police Department has conducted several directed patrols in this area and have not issued many tickets. He asked if the rectangular rapid flash beacons would be helpful in this area. Mr. Danila briefly described these signals. He said they are much more effective, the City anticipates installing these at Washington and Harvard Street and if the City were satisfied with their performance, perhaps this location would benefit. Mr. Koses agreed the rectangular rapid flash beacons would be beneficial and suggested the inclusion of microwave detection perhaps eliminating the false sense of security crossing the street.

Mr. Grafe suggested extending the curb radius to square up all corners and if the installation of an island with a red flashing beacon and a yellow flashing beacon on Waverley Avenue is possible. He also suggested textured pavement treatments, additional pavement markings or a raised crosswalk. Mr. Danila said drivers have the tendency to ignore flashing yellow beacons. He did not feel an island would calm traffic on Waverley Avenue. Mr. Danila said the temporary asphalt could be installed this fall and if it appears it is rectifying the problem then permanent granite curb could be installed next spring. This work would be performed using the Department Public Works operating budget and does not need Traffic Council's approval.

Mr. Koses made the motion for no action necessary. Department Public Works will remove temporary curb extensions and make modifications to southwest and, possibly, northeast corners to improve sight distance. Department Public Works will also reexamine warning beacon flasher and possibly install new equipment to make drivers more aware of crossing pedestrians. Council members agreed 4-0, Ald. Ciccone not voting.

TC15-10 JAMES & NANCY BOWDRING, 94 Hammondswood Road, requesting No Left Turn 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the intersection of Beacon Street and Hammondswood Road. (Ward 7) [05/06/10 @ 12:36 PM]

ACTION: HELD (4-0, Ciccone not present) on 10/21/10 for 60-Day Trial, No Left Turn 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., from Beacon Street to Hammondswood Road.

NOTE: James Bowdring, 94 Hammondswood Road, said he docketed this item because of the high volume of traffic traveling from Beacon Street onto Hammondswood Road. He provided his own traffic count data from 7 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., a total 276 cars. He proposes a no left turn from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Danila provided the peak-hour moving counts at this intersection. He agreed with Mr. Bowdring's traffic volume data because his own proved 283 in one hour between 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. He said the potential problem is enforcement. If this item is approved, where will the 283 peak hour cars go (428 over two hours) Grant Avenue, Tudor Street, Hammond Road or College Road? The City does not want to burden other areas. Mr. Danila said Hammondswood Road is a private road open to public travel. Mr. Bowdring said residents pay yearly for street repairs that are caused by the amount of vehicles traveling on and damaging the street.

Sgt. Norcross said the time proposed would be difficult to enforce because the parking control officers are assigned to their school crossing posts during these hours.

Mr. Danila said the Department Public Works recommends 60-day trial: No Left Turn 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. Monday to Friday. They will evaluate traffic effects on Grant Avenue and College Road.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

A resident suggested commercial truck exclusions. Mr. Danila said the City would have to apply to the State for this. A resident of Monadnock Road said the proposed trial would just force the traffic to Tudor Street. Heena Lee, 25 Edge Hill Road, said she does not walk with her children on Hammondswood Road because it is too dangerous. She suggested Traffic Council consider Mr. Bowdring's proposal. Ald. Fuller asked Mr. Danila to complete before and after traffic counts on Grant Avenue, Tudor Street and College Road. Ald. Baker also asked Traffic Council to consider a trial but is also concerned where the cars will go and which streets will be impacted. Mr. Grafe agreed on a trial.

Mr. Koses asked Mr. Danila his opinion of a successful trial. Mr. Danila said a reduction of half or more vehicles would prove successful.

Mr. Koses suggested inviting Boston College to the next meeting. Mr. Grafe asked who would be notified for the next meeting. Mr. Danila said traffic data would be collected, trial put into place, DPW will work with the Police Department on enforcement and collect final traffic data. The same residents would be notified, after reviewing the final traffic data perhaps inviting additional streets.

Mr. Koses made the motion to hold for 60-Day Trial, No Left Turn 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., from Beacon Street to Hammondswood Road. Council members agreed 4-0, Ald. Ciccone not voting.

TC35-10 PLANNING DEPARTMENT, requesting the removal of up to two metered parking spaces in the Langley Road triangle parking lot in Newton Centre, to allow for a car-share trial. (Ward 6) [10/08/10 @ 12:35 PM]

ACTION: Approved (4-0, Ciccone not present). Two metered parking spaces to be removed, location to be determined at the discretion of DPW.

NOTE: Mr. Koses said he docketed this item because it will allow a car-share program. The idea is to implement a one-year program in order to bring zip cars into Newton Centre where there is a demand for the service. The one-year program will allow enough time to resolve any problems that may arise and the opportunity to discuss how to expand this service. This item will provide the program with two parking spaces. Zip car will provide the City with their data.

Mr. Danila said Langley Road parking lot has 150 (2) hour meters, there are two potential locations for the program (Location A and B). The average mid-day occupancy is 83% (26 open spaces) and 5 handicap spaces. Department Public Works prefer location A. Department Public Works will determine the ultimate spots. Mr. Koses said the Planning Department and Ward Aldermen also prefer location A.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

A resident of Sumner Street said she is concerned the over-flow of vehicles will park on Sumner Street. She does not have dedicated house parking; therefore, she parks on the street. Another resident of Sumner Street said he thinks the idea of zip cars is great but fears there will be issues at night when parking because parking in Newton Centre is difficult. Jose Sierra, 575 Watertown Street, asked if the zip car program would pay for the spaces. Mr. Koses said the final decision is up to the Law and Executive Departments on what the fee zip cars would be charged. He estimates \$2,200 per vehicle, per year and the City would not be losing any revenue, the City would be gaining an amenity to the public.

Mr. Grafe said he favors location B, and feels the car-share program is a terrific idea. He also feels it is important for the City to try this one-year program.

Mr. Danila said if the Board does not have an agreement with zip car after one year, the program would end and Traffic Council would docket an item returning these two parking spaces to meters.

Mr. Koses made the motion for approval of two metered parking spaces to be removed, location to be determined at the discretion of Department Public Works. Council members agreed 4-0, Ald. Ciccone not voting.

DISCUSSION ITEM: Chairman's Note: At the request of Ald. Linsky, Public Works will provide input on the number of potential parking spaces that could exist on Walnut Street between Hull Street and Elm Road.

NOTE: Mr. Danila said Ald. Linsky asked that this item be discussed to evaluate parking on Walnut Street. Mr. Danila completed a study allowing potential parking for Newton North High School drivers that proved the following:

West side of Walnut Street

9 spaces north of Tiger Drive

14 spaces between Tiger Drive and Hull Street

East side of Walnut Street

3 spaces north of Trowbridge Avenue

9 spaces between Trowbridge Avenue and Kirkstall Road

Ald. Linsky said he requested this discussion item in order to provide input to Traffic Council members and to be provided with a number of potential parking spaces on Walnut Street. He said that Ms. Price, Newton North High School Principal has reported cars are queuing up on the west side north of Tiger Drive to enter Tiger Drive. Athletic buses are using Tiger Drive during the afternoon hours. He would like to research the possibility of the athletic buses parking on Walnut Street, freeing up space on Tiger Drive.

Mr. Danila said this item would be discussed again at the November meeting.

TC27-10 JAMES DANILA, on behalf of the Department of Public Works, requests the addition of left turn lanes on Watertown Street at Crafts Street to decrease vehicle delays and improve safety. (Ward 2) [08/26/10 @ 8:57AM]

ACTION: Approved (3-0-1, Grafe, Ciccone not present).

NOTE: Mr. Danila said this item was docketed to include two left turn lanes into the TPR, making it enforceable as a lane violation. This intersection is currently under construction. Department of Public Works is proposing to add left turn lanes on Watertown Street at Crafts Street. He then provided his data: Crash data is 1.44 per million entering vehicles. Mass DOT district 4 average is 0.78. The proposed two left-turn lanes are expected to reduce crashes by 10% and reduce delays by 15%.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Jose Sierra, 575 Watertown Street, asked if the streets were wide enough to provide a left turn lane. He then asked if there have been any recent accidents since construction began. Mr. Danila said the 10% reduction is based on all crashes prior to the construction when vehicles were making left turns from Watertown to Crafts Street. It is hopeful to improve driver visibility by adding these left turn lanes. Mr. Danila said Crafts Street is not wide enough to accommodate a left turn lane and will not be considered.

Ald. Linsky reported traffic is backing up at the intersection of Walnut and Watertown Streets headed west bound. Constituents are reporting eastbound delays that appear to be due to the curbing location. Traffic is also queuing back into the intersection appearing to be problematic. Mr. Danila said it is anticipated the signals will be re-timed perhaps coordinating this intersection with Walnut Street.

Mr. Danila said Watertown Street is approximately 38' wide. Mr. Grafe expressed his concerns regarding the lane width for other potential uses of the road and the sharing of lanes with bicyclists on Watertown Street. Mr. Grafe requests sharrows be included in the through lane as part of the left hand turn feature. Mr. Danila said he would research this request.

Mr. Koses made the motion for approval. Council members agreed 3-0-1, Grafe abstaining, Ald. Ciccone not voting.

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]

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

NOTE: Mr. Danila said this proposal would move the Stop Line further north on Lowell Avenue so stopped vehicles will no longer block pedestrian and bicycle access on the Carriage Way. In order to move this Stop Line, control on Carriage Way will have to change to a Right-Turn Only (consistent with Commonwealth Avenue and Chestnut Street intersection) or the signalization. There are no existing driveways on Carriage Way between Beaumont Avenue and Lowell Avenue. Peak Hour counts proved the following: AM.: 0 cars on Carriage Way, PM: 3 cars on Carriage Way (all right-turns). Mr. Danila said the detectors in the road would also be moved hoping to improve traffic on Lowell Avenue.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

A resident of Commonwealth Avenue is concerned with the queuing up of vehicles on the Carriage Way making it difficult to exit their driveway. He feels this proposal may solve some problems but will also create others. He is concerned with moving the stop sign because traffic will back up on Lowell Avenue. Mark Finkelstein, 1071 Commonwealth Avenue, said he parks on Commonwealth Avenue and is concerned that he will not be able to turn left onto Lowell to access Commonwealth Avenue. He said this proposal is not desirable to him and feels traffic will increase and the intersection will be dangerous. Ald. Albright asked why this intersection is proposed to be changed. Mr. Danila said the City has received complaints from bicyclists and pedestrians at this intersection. He then said consistency is desired on the Carriage Road and throughout the City. Ald. Albright said is also concerned that she will not be able to turn left onto Lowell Avenue to access Commonwealth Avenue. She said moving the stop line will back up traffic on Lowell Avenue during rush hour. She asked Mr. Danila to review the intersection of Homer Street, Lowell Avenue and Commonwealth because of the recent car accidents.

Sgt. Norcross asked if a "stop box" could be painted on Lowell Avenue avoiding vehicles from being queued up. Mr. Danila said the loop detectors are not located where a "stop box" is suggested. Painting a "stop box" will only cause interruptions with the signal operation.

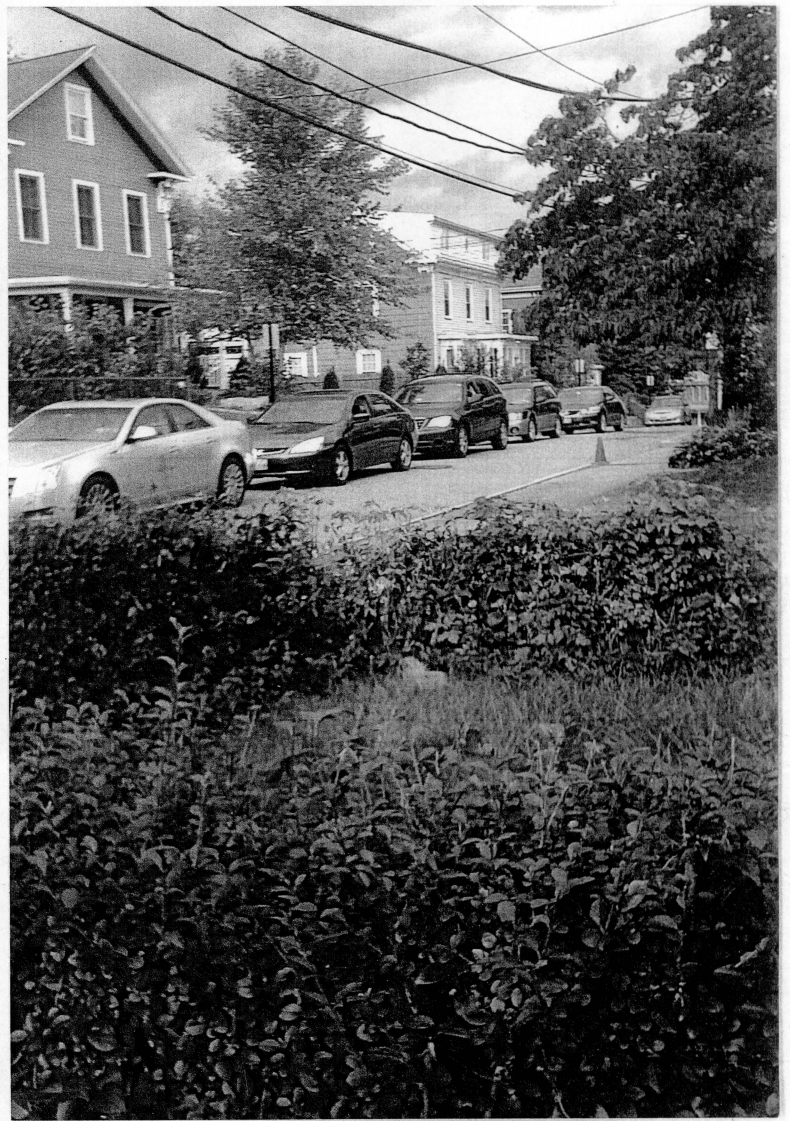
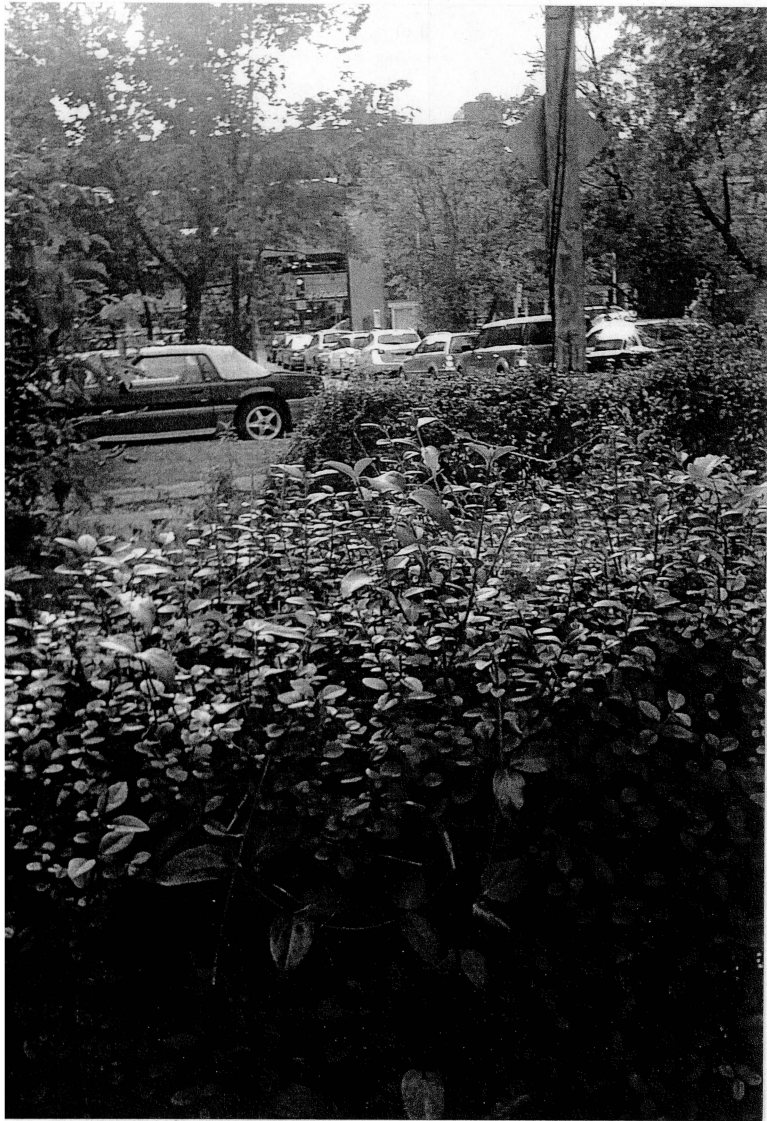
Mr. Koses asked if the Carriage Way dead-ended at Beaumont Avenue. A resident said it dead ends for vehicles. Mr. Koses suggested making one block of the Carriage Way one-way heading eastbound. Residents agreed they would like to hold this item to process and review Mr. Koses suggestion. Mr. Danila agreed and said if a one-way option was to be discussed a new item would have to be docketed.

Mr. Grafe said he would be in favor of DPW's proposal making it consistent with the Chestnut Street intersection and the ability for pedestrians' safety. He also agreed with the residents to hold this item for their evaluation.

Sgt. Norcross made the motion to hold. Traffic Council will await additional input from abutters. Council members agreed 3-0-1, Grafe abstaining, Ald. Ciccone not voting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Danila, Traffic Council Chair



Traffic Council

City Hall
Room 222
Thursday, October 21, 2010
7:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. TC35-09: requesting a thorough discussion regarding parking restrictions and potential one-way traffic flow for Jefferson St., Newton Corner.
(Held on 6/24/10)
 2. TC13-10: requesting creation of safe intersection (crosswalks, stop signs and traffic speed reduction) at Waverly Ave. and Franklin St.
 3. TC15-10: requesting No Left Turn 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the intersection of Beacon St. and Hammondswood Rd.
 4. TC35-10: requesting the removal of up to two metered parking spaces in the Langley Rd. triangle lot in Newton Centre, to allow for a car-share trial.
 5. Discussion Item: Walnut Street Parking
 6. TC27-10: requesting the addition of left turn lanes on Watertown St. at Crafts St. to decrease vehicle delays and improve safety.
 7. 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.
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TC55-09

Requesting a thorough discussion regarding parking restrictions and potential one-way traffic flow for Jefferson St., Newton Corner. (Ward 1)

Held on 11/19/09, 1/21/10, & 6/24/10

Area Parking Restrictions



- No Parking
- 1-Hour Limit: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Mon.-Sat.
- Resident Only: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 12-Hour Meters
- 1-Hour Meters
- Resident Parking

Jefferson Street



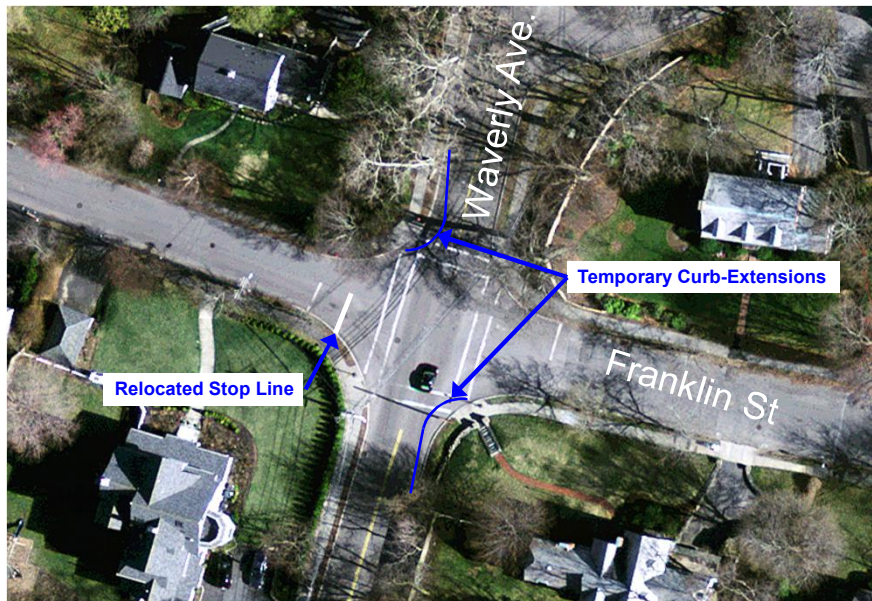
Actions Taken on 6/24/10

- 60 Day Trial:
 - No Parking/Tow Zones, both sides of Jefferson Street, between Centre Street & Nonantum Place.
 - Rescind One-Way Restriction between Centre Street & Nonantum Place.
-

TC13-10

Requesting creation of safe intersection (crosswalks, stop signs and traffic speed reduction) at Waverly Ave. and Franklin St.
(Wards 1,7)

Aerial Photo



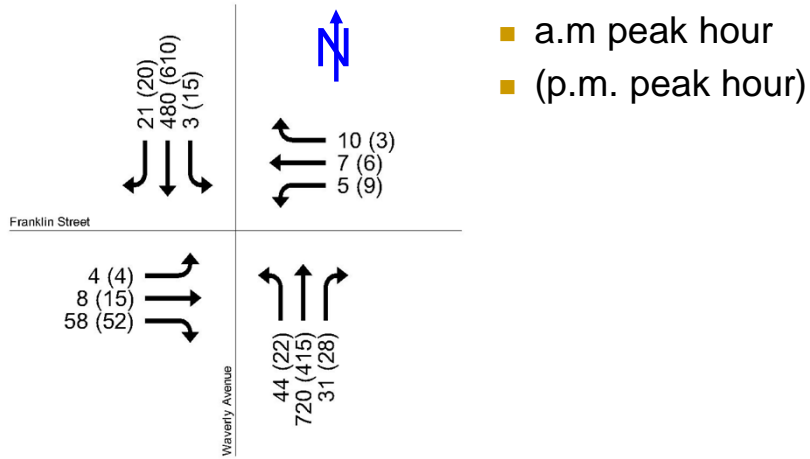
Approach Photos



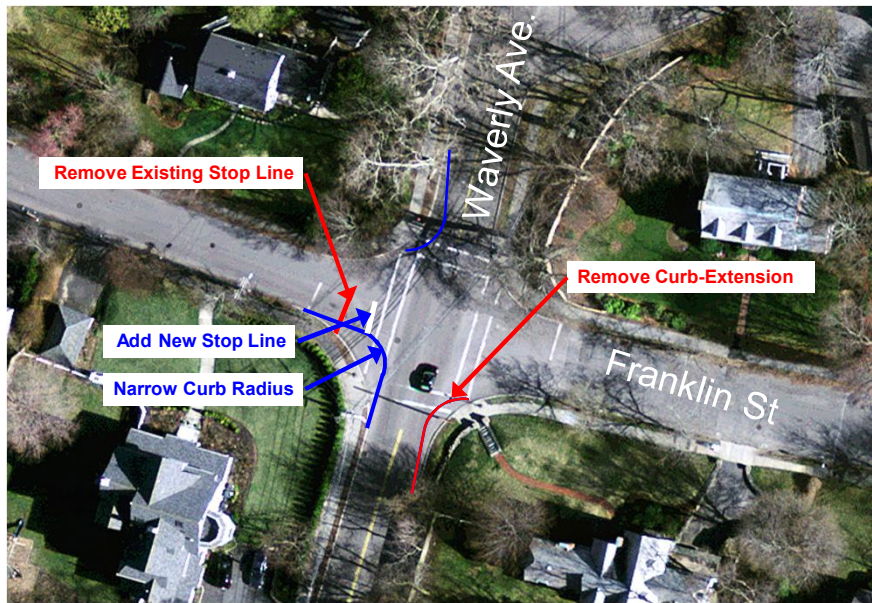
Traffic Data

- Waverly Avenue:
 - 10,700 vehicles per day.
 - Classification: Major Collector.
- Speed Limit: 30 mph.
 - Pre-Trial Average: 32 mph.
 - Trial Average: 32 mph.
 - Pre-Trial 85th percentile: 36 mph
 - Trial 85th percentile: 36 mph
- Crash Rate: 0.65 crashes per million entering vehicles.
 - MassDOT District 4 Average: 0.59.
- Does not meet All-Way Stop Warrants.

Turning Movement Count



DPW Recommendations



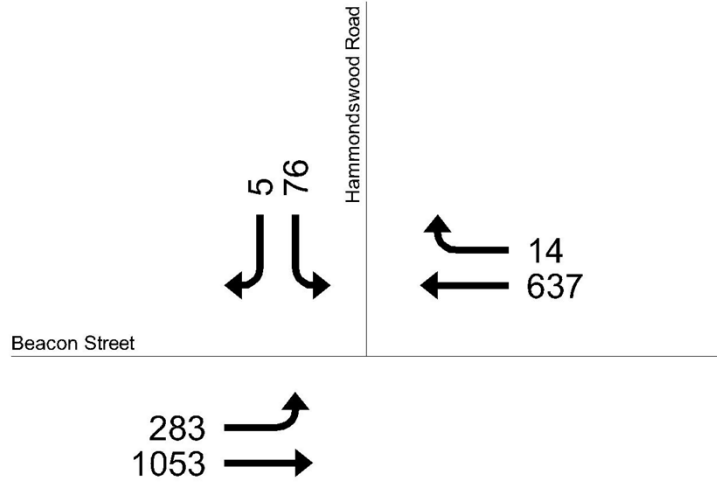
TC15-10

Requesting No Left Turn 7:00 a.m. to
9:00 a.m. at the intersection of Beacon
St. and Hammondswood Rd.
(Ward 7)

Aerial Photo



Peak-Hour Turning Movement Count



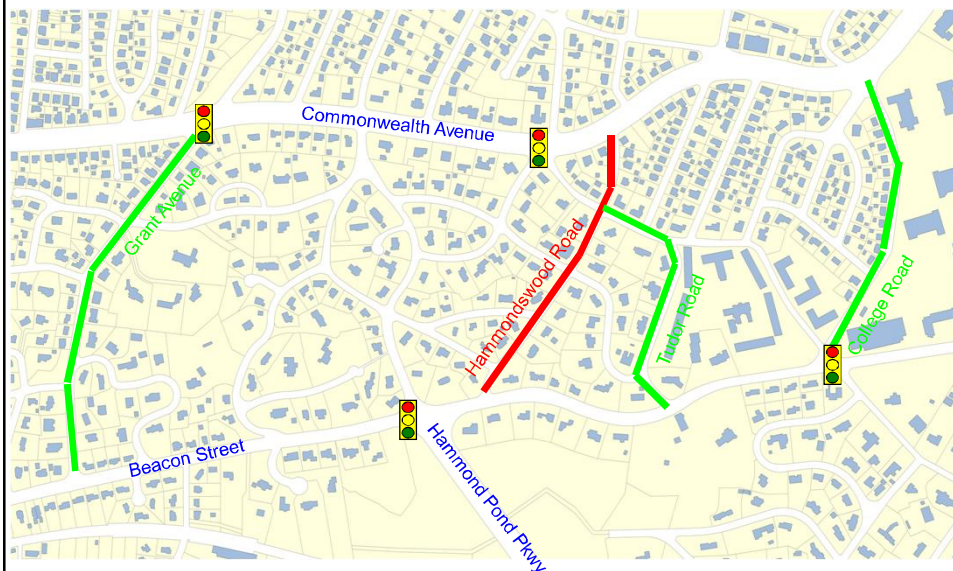
Proposal



Potential Problems

- Enforcement
- Where will the 283 peak hour cars go (428 over two hours)?
 - Grant Ave., Tudor St./Hammond Rd., College Rd.?

Alternative Routes



DPW Recommendation

- 60-day Trial: No Left Turn, 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., Mon.-Fri.
 - Evaluate Traffic effects on Grant Ave. & College Rd.
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TC35-10

Requesting the removal of up to two metered parking spaces in the Langley Rd. triangle lot in Newton Centre, to allow for a car-share trial.
(Ward 6)

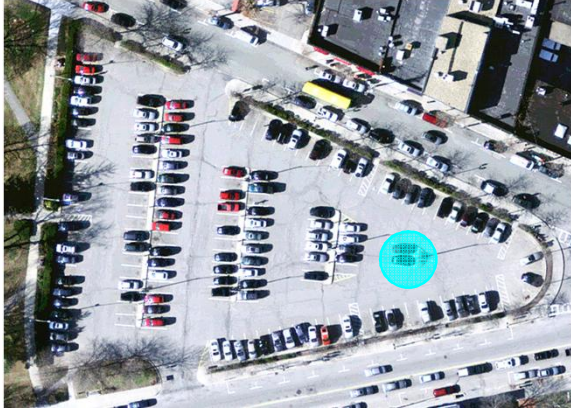
Aerial Photo



Langley Lot Stats

- 150 2-Hr Meters
 - Average Mid-day Occupancy: 83% (26 open spaces)
- 5 Handicap Spaces

Potential Location A

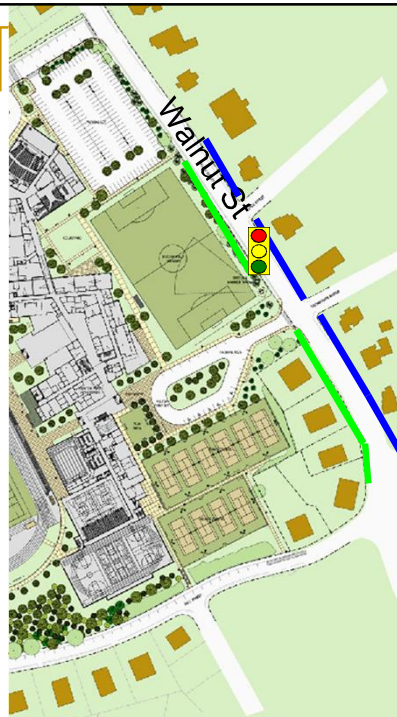


Potential Location B



Discussion Item

Walnut Street Parking in front of NNHS
(Ward 2)



- West side:
 - 9 spaces north of Tiger Drive
 - 14 spaces between Tiger Drive & Hull
- East side:
 - 3 spaces north of Trowbridge Ave.
 - 9 spaces between Trowbridge Ave. & Kirkstall Rd.

TC27-10

Requesting the addition of left turn lanes on Watertown St. at Crafts St. to decrease vehicle delays and improve safety.
(Ward 2)

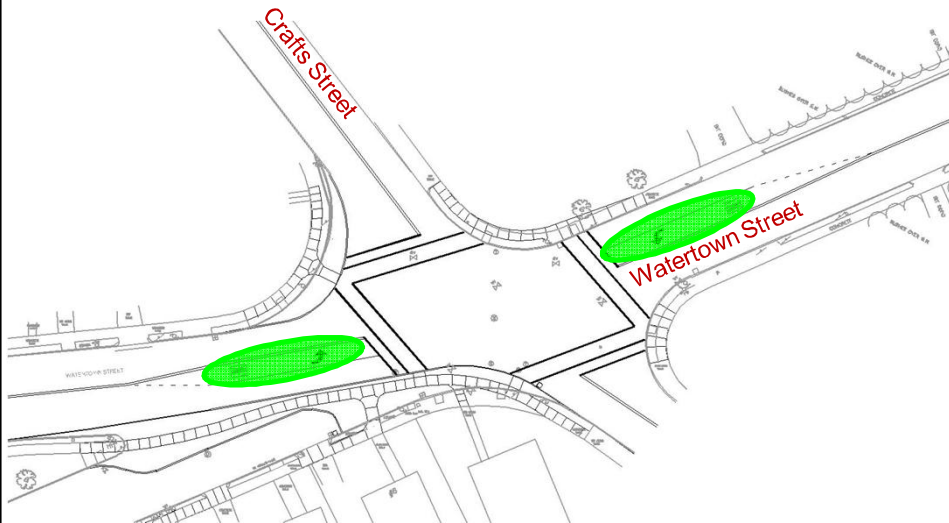
Aerial Photo



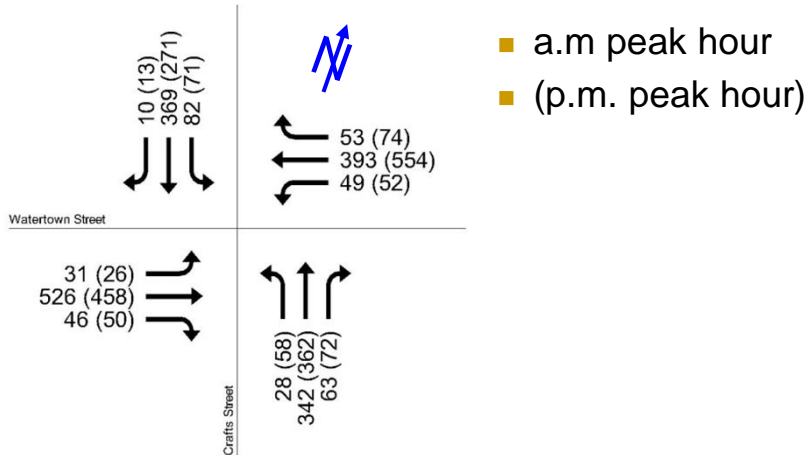
Traffic Data

- Currently under construction.
- Crash Data:
 - 1.44 per million entering vehicles.
 - MassDOT District 4 Average: 0.78.
- Proposed left-turn lanes expected to:
 - Reduce crashes by 10%.
 - Reduce delays by 15%.

Proposed Conditions



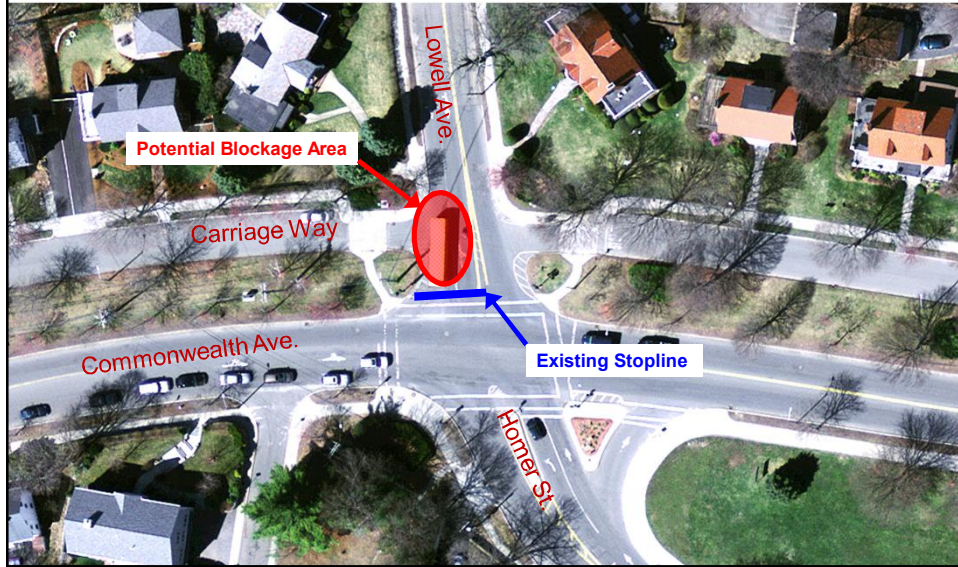
Turning Movement Count



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)

Existing Conditions



Notes

- Proposal will move Stop Line on Lowell Ave. so stopped vehicles will no longer block pedestrian & bicycle access on the Carriage Way.
- In order to move Stop Line, control on Carriage Way will have to change to:
 - Right-Turn Only (consistent with Commonwealth/Chestnut intersection); or
 - Signalization.
- No existing driveways on Carriage Way between Beaumont Ave. & Lowell Ave.
- Peak Hour counts:
 - a.m.: 0 cars on Carriage Way.
 - p.m.: 3 cars on Carriage Way (all right-turns).

Proposed Conditions

