

Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, October 7th, 2020

Present: Councilors Leary (Chair), Kelley, Crossley, Norton, Laredo, Gentile, Danberg and Kalis

Also Present: Auchincloss, Downs, Grossman, Malakie, Markiewicz, Lipof and Bowman

City Staff Present: Commissioner of the Public Buildings Department Josh Morse, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Interim Police Chief Howard Mintz, Captain Jeffrey Boudreau, Fire Chief Gino Lucchetti, Sergeant Daniel Devine, Director of Transportation for DPW Jason Sobel, Commissioner of the Public Works Department Jim McGonagle and Director of Transportation for the Planning Department Nicole Freedman

#396-20 Request for updates on HVAC and ventilation at Newton Public Schools

<u>The President of the Council</u>, on behalf of the City Council, requesting an update to the Public Facilities Committee from Commissioner Morse on current work on HVAC and air quality in the Newton Public Schools at each meeting of the Public Facilities

Committee this fall until work is complete.

Action: Public Facilities Held 8-0

Note: Josh Morse, Commissioner of the Public Buildings Department, presented an update on the HVAC and ventilation systems at Newton Public Schools. Commissioner Morse explained that there was a joint City Council and School Committee meeting where the department explained their plans to improve the HVAC system and air quality at Newton Public Schools. The department's plan is attached to this report.

Commissioner Morse explained that the department has contacted 100 HVAC contractors in the Northeast and entered into contract with 24 firms. The City received a wavier through the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), which allowed the City to have those firms under contract. Commissioner Morse explained that he hopes to have the HVAC work be completed in 2/3rds of the schools by the end of the weekend (10/13/20). Currently, there are contractors in all the Newton Public Schools.

Crowley Engineering has started their existing conditions analysis. They will be providing air testing and balancing reports which are the framework in which the air balancing firms will preform their testing to ensure that the City is meeting all air quality requirements. Commissioner Morse explained the City is servicing and maintaining every piece of equipment in the district. The heat is also being

checked in the equipment. At this time there are no Capital Improvement Projects that have come out of the work that is being done.

The City has already received data from the contractors, which will be made public on the Newton Public Schools website. Commissioner Morse noted that they are ahead of schedule but there is still a lot of work left to do. The budget is continuously being tracked.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: When the work is completed will the City be able to say that the classrooms are safe from a ventilation point of view?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that they will be able to certify that the classrooms have adequate requisite fresh air introduction and air flow as required by ASHRAE 62.1. The engineer will be the one that will state that the City has met the code requirements. Commissioner Morse noted that they are planning this project based on the full capacity of schools in a pre and post COVID environment. In many cases the City will be exceeding these requirements because of the students that will be allowed in each classroom during COVID.

Q: What is the estimated cost of this project and what is the source?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that this project will be more than \$5,000. Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer explained that the City is hoping to receive these funds from the Federal government and if this does not happen then the funds will be coming from the City and the Schools.

Q: What was the original timeline of the project?

A: Commissioner Morse explained he had originally planned for 6 to 8 weeks and the Newton Public Schools goal was to finish before inclement weather started. The reports that are coming from the engineer may take more time to research but the Commissioner explained that he is still hopeful for the original timeline.

Q: What percentage of the schools have hot water boilers vs. forced air and is there a difference with those technologies regarding bringing in fresh air?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that all the schools have mechanical ventilation and are heated by steam or hot water boilers. There are either unit ventilators or a ducted HVAC with rooftop air-handling equipment in all Newton Public Schools.

Q: Has there been a discussion about adding air conditioners to some schools incase there is a need for summer school?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that this has not been discussed yet, but he noted that he can bring this topic to the administration and the School Department.

Q: Is the City designing to the standard of 3 to 6 exchanges of air per hour in the classrooms?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that they will be following the codes that are required and the engineer could further answer this question.

Q: Will this help bring students back into the schools?

A: Mr. Yeo explained that from a ventilation standpoint the City is making good progress but will need to hear from the contractors before any decision is made. This is a question that will need to be answered by the School Department and the School Committee.

Q: What are the air changes per hour that the ASHRAE code requires?

A: Commissioner Morse explained that the ASHRAE 62.1 requires 10 cubic ft per minute of fresh air introduced per occupant but noted that this would be better answered by the engineer. Additionally, Commissioner Morse noted that this requires more heat during the winter because of the amount fresh air that will need to flow into the classrooms.

Councilors thanked Commissioner Morse and other city staff involved for the work that has been done.

Councilor Crossley motioned to hold item #396-20 which passed unanimously.

Chair's Note: Public Facilities and Public Safety & Transportation Committees met jointly on the following three items.

Referred to Public Facilities and Public Safety & Transportation Committees

#391-20 Adoption of a Vision Zero Resolution

COUNCILORS BOWMAN, DOWNS, AUCHINCLOSS, KELLEY, LEARY, MARKIEWICZ, GROSSMAN, LIPOF, NOEL, DANBERG, AND HUMPHREY requesting the adoption of a Vision Zero resolution by the City Council in recognition that no loss of life or serious injury is acceptable on our city streets and that a systematic, data driven approach will achieve higher levels of safety and better ensure equity.

Public Safety & Transportation Approved 7-0 on 10/07/20

Action: Public Facilities Approved 8-0

Note: Councilor Alicia Bowman presented the request to adopt a Vision Zero resolution. The draft resolution is attached to this report.

Councilor Bowman explained that Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe and healthy equitable mobility for all. This resolution is based off others

that have been passed around the country. Councilor Bowman added that she has been in contact with the Transportation Advisory Group and Safe Routes to School as well as other City Councilors. Green Newton, Safe Routes to School and Bike Newton have also sent letters of support for this resolution. The draft resolution was also sent to the Commission on Disability and Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator, did reach out with some general thoughts.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: Has lowering the speed limit to 25 mph improved safety in the City?

A: Councilor Bowman noted that in the Greater Boston Area there was a test done that showed lowering the speed limit did cause some reduction in speeding because it was established city-wide. Newton was not able to change the speed limits that were established by a speed study. The City would need to petition the State to be able to lower speed limits city-wide. Through Vision Zero, the speed limit on the streets will continue to be investigated.

Councilors made the following comments:

There should be groups that rely on automobiles, including delivery companies, present for the discussion on how to make the roads in Newton safer for all. There needs to representation from all sides of the issue. The Committees agreed that it should be a part of the resolution to include members of these groups.

Regarding the previous comment, Vision Zero's goal is to make the roads safer for all. The National Safety Council, which is an organization funded by auto insurance companies has ways to make the roads safer for driving. AAA is also supportive of making the streets safer. The delivery companies may be harder to contact but that can be discussed. On the Transportation Advisory Group there are members that are primarily drivers and there will be members of Police Department and Fire Department invited to be a part of the Vision Zero Task Force.

Vision Zero is data driven. There will be a priority list of where and how most accidents are happening within Newton.

The public and councilors should be able to easily access the data of accidents from the Police Department.

There is a concern for the safety of bicyclists in the City where drivers are traveling at 40 mph.

There should be a way to retrain drivers as the rules and conditions of the roads have changed.

Jen Martin, member of Safe Routes to School Task Force, emphasized the City needs to make sure all students are able to get to and leave schools safely. Through the task force they were able to identify and implement safety changes around the schools. This work also needs to be done in busier areas in

the City, including village centers. Ms. Martin expressed her support of finding ways to make the roads safer for all.

Councilor Downs, Public Safety & Transportation Committee, motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Councilor Crossley, Public Facilities Committee, motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Public Safety & Transportation Committees

#361-20 Discussion on Vision Zero plan for resident safety

COUNCILORS BOWMAN, DOWNS, AUCHINCLOSS, HUMPHREY, NOEL, ALBRIGHT, DANBERG, KALIS, GREENBERG AND RYAN requesting a discussion of Vision Zero with the Planning Department, Department of Public Works, Newton Police Department and the Newton Fire Department in recognition that no loss of life or serious injury is acceptable on our city streets and that a systematic, data driven approach will achieve higher levels of safety and better ensure equity.

Public Safety & Transportation voted No Action Necessary 7-0 on 10/07/20

Action: <u>Public Facilities voted No Action Necessary 8-0</u>

Note: Chair Leary explained that this item has become redundant and would entertain a motion of No Action Necessary.

Councilor Bowman, Public Safety & Transportation Committee, motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Councilor Crossley, Public Facilities Committee, motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Chair's Note: Public Facilities and Public Safety & Transportation Committees heard from Transportation Director, Jason Sobel about changes within 1500 feet of schools made this summer in response to COVID restrictions on school bus capacity.

Note: Jason Sobel, Transportation Director, updated the Committees on the changes within 1500 ft of schools made this summer in response to COVID restrictions on school bus capacity. Mr. Sobel explained that in the late spring/ early summer there were questions about what the capacity of the school's busses will be and what the crowding will look like at school entrances and exits. If less students will be able to take the bus, there will be more vehicle congestion around the schools. This began with a Traffic Council meeting where a broad base Traffic Council trial was approved within 1500 ft of all schools. Mr. Sobel explained that the trial allows the City to implement and change safety measures as needed.

Mr. Sobel further explained that there were meetings with the Complete Streets Working Group, School Transportation Committee, representatives from Safe Routes to School and representatives from Newton Public Schools. At each meeting the group focused on one school at a time where the

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principal of the school was present. The goal was to find short term improvements but at a few schools there were larger transportation issues that could not be addressed with short term measures.

The DPW Transportation Division created a one page memo for each school where they were implementing changes, along with a map. These memos are located on the DPW's website. (http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/dpw/transportation/default.asp)

For Newton South, Mr. Sobel explained that there were concerns for bicyclists on Hagen Rd, which is a one way. The department decided to only allow parking on one side of the road to allow for a bike lane that allows bicyclists to travel in both directions. Mr. Sobel explained that they also expanded the parking restriction on the southside of Brandeis Road to help with safe travel.

Councilors made the following comments:

The Committees agreed to discuss this item again when back-up is provided.

Jim McGonagle, Commissioner of the Public Works Department, noted that they will provide back-up at a future meeting.

There is a concern regarding the area near Horace Mann where there was a no turn on red sign added. This type of signage has been discussed in the past because when a right turn is allowed it saves fuel.

Regarding the previous comment, there are safety reasons to have no turn on red signs near schools.

The work on Lowell Ave, near Newton North High School, has forced cars to slow down and made it safer for students and other pedestrians to cross.

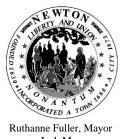
Jesse Corey, 64 Oak Cliff Road, noted that since the high schools are not in session the access restriction sign on the corner of Lowell Avenue and Elm Road should be rescinded until students are back in the classroom. Mr. Corey also noted that Wednesdays are remote days for the students going to school, so trials that deal with schools should not be enforced on that day. Mr. Corey noted a number of changes that should be considered by the Traffic Council.

Councilors thanked Mr. Sobel and the other groups involved for their work on this project.

The Committee adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison M. Leary, Chair



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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October 2, 2020

Re: School HVAC Project Update

Newton Public Schools spent the summer making sure the HVAC systems in the school buildings were all operable, clean, and functional. At the request of the superintendent in September, the City of Newton Public Buildings Department was asked to help Newton Public Schools perform a targeted and aggressive service and maintenance initiative of all ventilation equipment throughout the district with a focus on maximizing air flow and fresh air introduction capacity.

Over the past two weeks, the City of Newton and Newton Public Schools have completed the following steps to address the ventilation systems in our school facilities:

- 1. Contacted more than 100 HVAC service contractors in the northeast.
- 2. Submitted and received an emergency procurement waiver from DCAMM.
- 3. Created contracts with more than 20 of those contractors.
- 4. Substantially completed the service and maintenance of ventilation equipment at Franklin, Ward, Underwood, NECP, Lincoln-Eliot, Peirce, and Burr.
- 5. Started the service and maintenance of the ventilation equipment at Mason-Rice, Countryside, Oak Hill, Brown, Horace Mann, Newton South, and spaces at the Education Center which house student educational programs and services.
- 6. Completed the service and maintenance of all exhaust fans at Williams, Peirce, Oak Hill, and Burr. This work will continue daily until every exhaust fan at every school is complete.
- 7. Crowley Engineering has completed their existing conditions walkthrough and review of Burr, Lincoln-Eliot, Franklin, and Horace Mann.

Over the next week, the following will occur:

- 1. On Saturday, 10/3 and Sunday, 10/4, contractors will begin the ventilation service and maintenance work at Memorial Spaulding, and will continue the ventilation service and maintenance at Countryside, Mason Rice, Oak Hill, Brown, Horace Mann, Newton South, and spaces at the Education Center which house student educational programs and services.
- 2. On Monday, 10/5, three separate contractors will start the ventilation service and maintenance work at F.A. Day, Bigelow, Bowen, and Williams.
- 3. On 10/7, another contractor will begin work at Newton North, Angier, Zervas, and Cabot.
- 4. Multiple air flow testing and balancing firms will be performing testing and balancing throughout the district.

Under the direction of Crowley Engineering the air flow testing and balancing firms will confirm air flow rates and fresh air introduction are in line with applicable codes, and these reports will be made public as they become available. Contractors have been documenting all work performed in detail, with the aid of a 62-point unit ventilator service and maintenance checklist. All data will also be made available as it comes in. To complete this work, every school in the district has an assigned City and/or School project manager, and we are in direct contact with the principals and custodians. As the existing conditions reports from Crowley Engineering become available, these will also be made public and will be a valuable resource now and in the future.

Below is a tentative schedule from Crowley Engineering for their existing conditions site visits, analysis, and reports. Additionally, their schedule shows the project schedule for the air flow testing and balancing firms. This was occur 7 days per week, and this schedule will accelerate as three additional air flow testing and balancing firms are being onboarded today.

Our efforts over the past two weeks have shown promising and noticeable results thus far, and we look forward to having Crowley Engineering and the independent air testing and balancing firms confirm the success of this project.

Corrective Work (if requried)

The above efforts have been a coordinated effort of over a thousand City, School, and contractual employees. In addition to the efforts of Crowley Engineering, I would like to thank the following contractors for their assistance on this initiative:

HVAC Contractors

Aalanco Air Duct Services Associated Mechanical Services Cooling & Heating Specialist Cox Engineering Service Co. Fraser Engineering General Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. **Harold Brothers** J.M. Service Company, LLC Mighty Duct Murphy Specialty NB Kenney Company **Boston Mechanical Services** Patrick J. Kennedy & Sons Inc PJ Dionne Corp SS Service Corp Trane U.S. Inc. William F Lynch Co., Inc. Premier Mechanical, LLC Bay State Air Harry Grodsky & Company Corporate Mechanical **Enterprise Equipment**

Air Flow Testing and Balancing Firms

E.L. Barret
Tekon Technical Consultants
Leonardt
ATAB
Thomas Young

R.P. O'Connell, Inc

Lastly, we would like to thank the principals, teachers, and custodians as they have all been extremely supportive and accommodating of our efforts.

Sincerely,

Josh Morse

Public Buildings Commissioner

A proposal for a Vision Zero Resolution by The Newton City Council

What is Vision Zero? "Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. First implemented in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero has proved successful across Europe — and now it's gaining momentum in major American cities. Vision Zero starts with the ethical belief that everyone has the right to move safely in their communities, and that system designers and policy makers share the responsibility to ensure safe systems for travel." - from Vision Zero Network website

Why is Vision Zero important? Traffic deaths and serious injuries are mostly preventable. Vision Zero is commitment to a systematic, data driven approach to achieve higher levels of safety and ensure equity. Saving lives is not expensive especially when compared to cost of crashes in terms of life and property damage. On this last point, the numbers are shocking. According to the US Department of Transportation, nearly 40,000 people died from vehicle crashes in 2019. (https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/early-estimates-2019-motor-vehicle-traffic-data-show-reduced-fatalities-third) In 2014 there was an \$871 billion economic and societal impact faced by U.S. citizens because of vehicle crashes alone.

https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812013 Of particular concern is the increase in pedestrian and cyclist deaths in the U.S. over the last five years. A recent report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found more pedestrians and cyclists were killed in the US last year than in any year since 1990; approximately 17 pedestrians and two cyclists were killed each day. While overall traffic deaths may be declining, pedestrian fatalities are up 3.4 percent year-over-year and cyclist fatalities are up 6.3 percent. https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812826

Adopting a Vision Zero resolution is a key next step in moving forward with people-oriented transportation in Newton. We would be joining the Massachusetts communities of Boston, Cambridge and Somerville in formally adopting Vision Zero policies. In addition, being a VZ community may qualify Newton to apply for additional grants, ones specifically aimed at VZ communities.

Lastly, it is important to understand the connection of safer streets to meeting climate and sustainability goals. Implementing Vision Zero is a way to improve safety, healthy activity and air quality, while also lessening traffic, traffic noise and reducing green gas house emissions. It also allows the city to better budget for scarce resources.

EXAMPLES of Vision Zero Resolutions

Alexandria VA adopts VZ and calls for city staff to develop an action plan and provide regular reports

https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/16-5940 Attachment%201%20Resolution.pdf

San Francisco CA: Adopts VZ and resolves for City action to implement VZ

https://visionzerosf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BOS-VZ-Resolution.pdf

Los Angeles CA: Executive Directive to Adopt VZ and setting up task force and short- and long-term actions

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/mayorofla/pages/17070/attachments/original/1440454405/Mayor_Garc etti File Executive Directive 10 Vision Zero.pdf?1440454405

Portland OR: Adopts VZ and establishes a VZ committee that reports to City Council

https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/545880

DRAFT Vision Zero Resolution

WHEREAS, the life, health and safety of Newton's residents are our utmost priority; and

WHEREAS, "Vision Zero" refers to the concept that there is no acceptable number of traffic deaths and serious injuries on our roadways; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton recognizes that no one should die or be seriously injured while travelling on our city streets; and

WHEREAS, children and seniors face a disproportionate risk of traffic injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities face many impediments and serious safety concerns in traveling through Newton; and

WHEREAS, the number of seniors and people with disabilities along with the number of people who do not drive are expected to increase in coming years; and

WHEREAS, people walking and bicycling represent a disproportionate number of traffic injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, people who traverse some sections of the city face a disproportionate risk due to street networks designed to move large volumes of traffic at higher speeds and higher speeds are directly correlated to higher crash rates and higher death and injury rates; and

WHEREAS, racial justice and economic justice demand equity for those who rely on sidewalks, bicycles and public transportation and

WHEREAS, Newton has had an active Safe Routes to Schools Task Force since 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Newton Public Schools encourage walking, bicycling, school bus/van, car pool, and other means of mass transit to access school buildings as part of their wellness policies, and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton has adopted increasing bike/pedestrian travel as a goal in the Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton's Open Space and Recreation Plan lists better bicycle and pedestrian access to Newton's open space resources "CONNECTIVITY" as a key goal especially for populations with limited access to open space; and

WHEREAS, safer streets have been shown to significantly increase walking and biking; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton lists SAFETY and ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION as key goals in the Newton Leads 2040/A Transportation Strategy with adopting Vision Zero as a key action, and

WHEREAS, adopting a systematic and data driven approach will achieve higher levels of safety and ensure equity and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton adopted a Complete Streets policy and has an active Complete Streets Working Group since 2016 and has developed a process to evaluate traffic calming requests; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newton has adopted a lower statutory speed limit of 25 mph to reduce crashes and severity of crashes; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a Vision Zero Resolution in 2015 citing overwhelming support for such policy according to a AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety 2014 survey of drivers and in support of USDOT Safer People, Safer Streets program; and

WHEREAS, cities across the country are taking significant action on improving the safety of transportation networks for all people, including those who walk, bike, take public transportation and drive, including adopting formal Vision Zero policies.

WHEREAS Lastly, it is important to understand the connection of safer streets to meeting climate and sustainability goals. Implementing Vision Zero is a way to improve safety, healthy activity and air quality, while also lessening traffic, traffic noise and reducing green gas house emissions. It also allows the city to better budget for scarce resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Newton adopts the goal of Vision Zero - that no loss of life is acceptable on our city streets and that Vision Zero plays an important part in Newton becoming more equitable, accessible and sustainable;

and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that

The Mayor and City Council will appoint a Vision Zero Task Force comprised of city staff, City Council members and key stakeholders including Transportation Advisory Group, Council on Aging, Commission on Disability, Safe Routes to School, Bike Newton and other residents

The Task Force will develop the Vision Zero Policy and Vision Zero Action Plan