



February 17, 2021

Jennifer Norwood  
Director of External Affairs and Partnerships  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114

cc: Honorable Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

RE: 25% design plans for Hammond Pond Parkway Beacon to Route 9

Dear Ms. Norwood –

We, the undersigned Newton City Councilors, enthusiastically support the Department of Conservation and Recreation's plans to reconstruct Hammond Pond Parkway to create a roadway that serves pedestrians and bicycles as well as vehicles. We were inspired by Director Dan Driscoll's description of the project as an "opportunity to create a gem of a complete street." We are pleased that DCR's goals for this project align with City of Newton's transportation, climate change and open space goals. We also recognize that this project will increase livability for the many people who reside close by and will benefit nearby businesses.

Specifically, we support these elements of the plan:

- Creating a very wide multi-use path set back from the main roadway and further protected by a planting berm. This will make the area pleasant and will enhance access to the surrounding park areas.
- Creating the space for the multi-use path and planting berm by reducing Hammond Pond Parkway from four lanes to two lanes. This road diet will create a safer and more pleasant parkway by reducing speeding.
- Reducing impervious surfaces and decreasing stormwater runoff and pollution.
- Adding safety and access improvements at the reconstructed intersection of Beacon St and Hammond Pond Parkway and Route 9 interchange.
- Adding a crosswalk across Hammond Pond Parkway between the two conservation areas.
- DCR's vision of creating more park space along its parkways, putting the park back in parkway.

We have consulted with Newton's advisory, advocacy and friends groups, and generally support their suggestions for improvements as stated in their February 17 letter. <sup>1</sup>

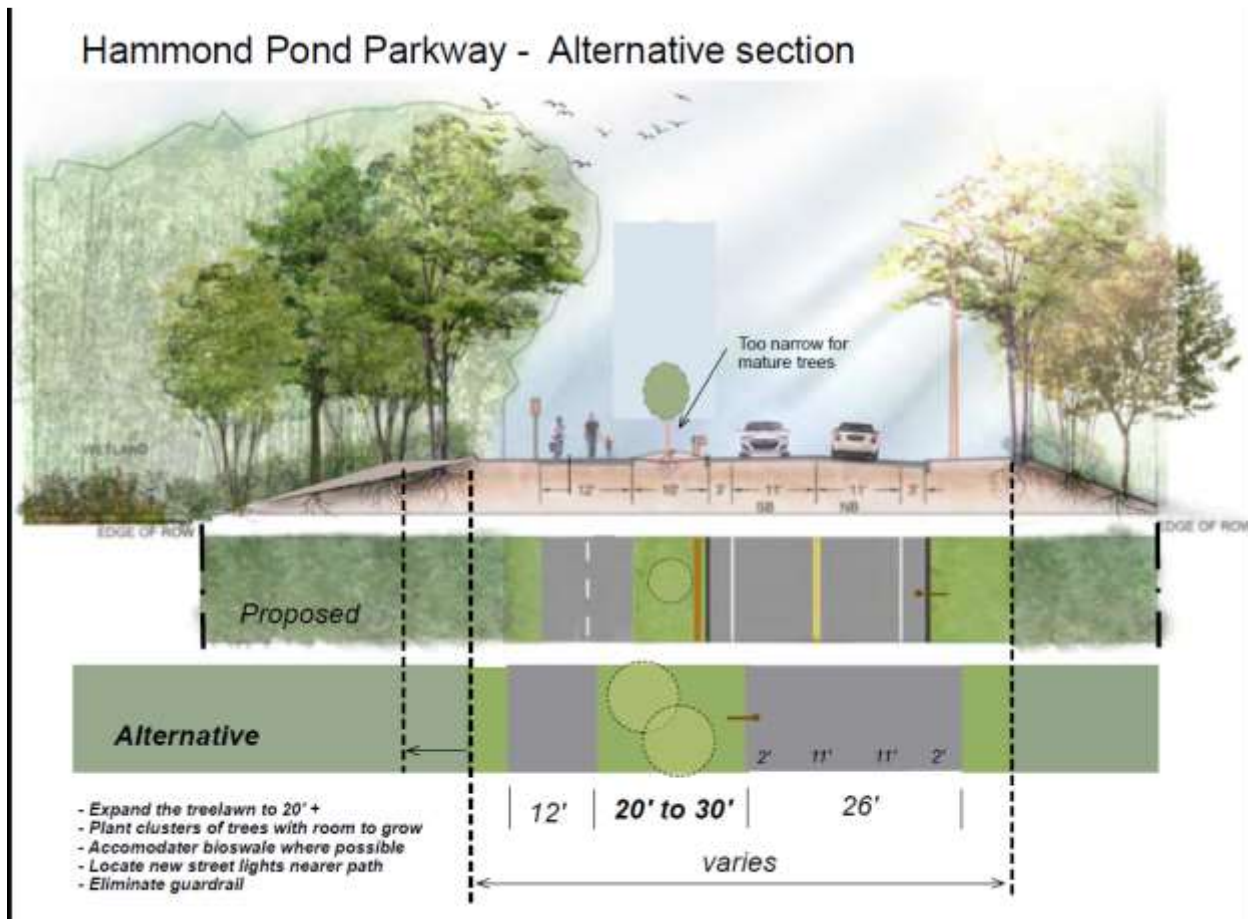
But we particularly urge you to consider these changes to further enhance this project:

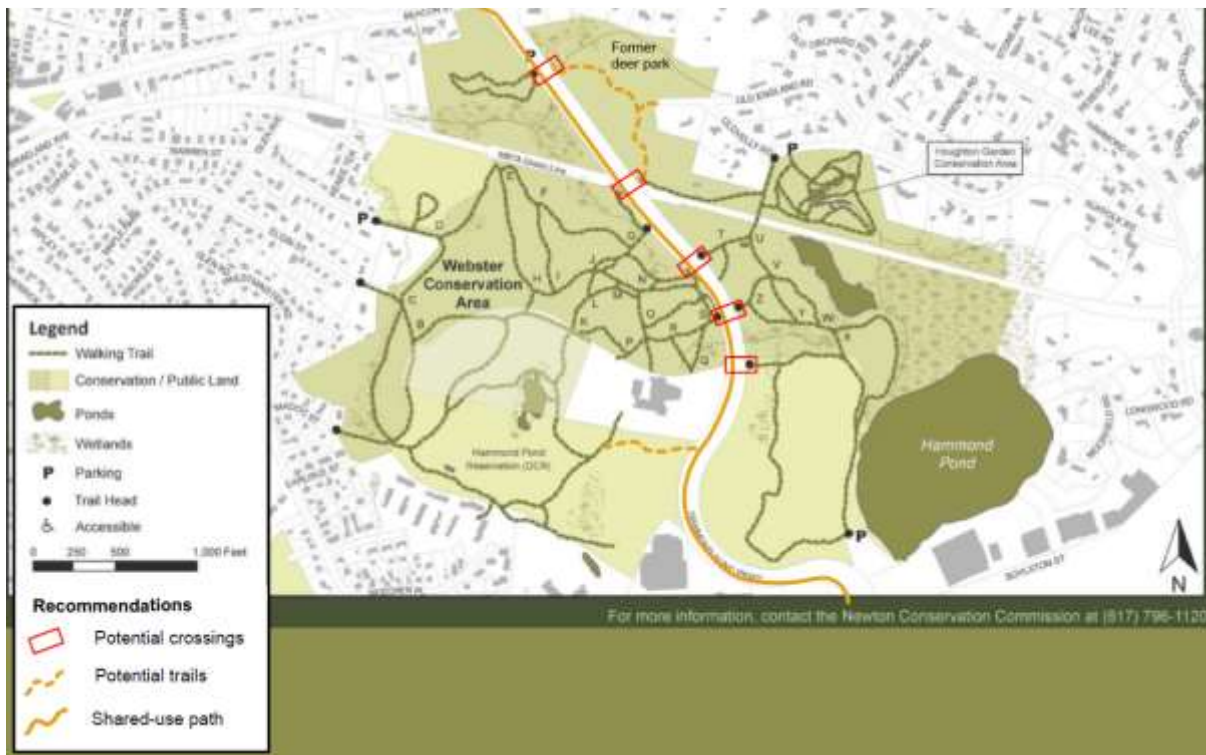
- Provide more protection for bicyclists at the intersection with Beacon Street.
- Move the multi-use path as close to the park as possible to increase comfort on the path. This may reduce the need for guardrails. This change will also significantly widen the planting berm. Increasing the planting berm from 10ft wide to up to 30ft will allow larger trees to thrive.
- Install bicycle parking at all entrances to the parks.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Transportation Advisory Group, Safe Routes to School, Bike Newton, Friends of Webster Woods, Green Newton, Newton Conservators

- Promote the two existing public parking areas on the east-side by Hammond Pond and on the west side adjacent to the Shops at Chestnut Hill by installing wayfinding signs
- Create safe pedestrian and bike access from the parking at the Shops at Chestnut Hill and the Towers to the multi-use trail. Consider creating additional parking in this area closer to the trail.
- If there is to be vehicle parking on Hammond Pond Parkway, it should be designed to be safe for cyclists who will be riding in the roadway and drivers.
- Consider widening the on-street painted buffer to make it more comfortable for thru cyclists, prioritizing width on uphill sections.
- Design roadway to match Newton's default speed limit of 25 mph.
- Instead of closing trailheads, add pedestrian crossings between the parks where trailheads exist. Crossing will be safer if design speed is lowered to 25 mph.
- Improve pedestrian safety from the residential developments south of Route 9, where there are a large number of residents. Of particular concern is the very wide south east crossing of the Route 9 on-ramp with a concurrent crossing without a leading pedestrian interval. This intersection has seen a number of serious crashes in recent years.
- Make the Parkway design senior-friendly. We have a large and likely growing number of seniors in close proximity to this park. Benches, vistas of Webster Woods, low-stress pedestrian crossings and curving the path slightly to slow bicyclist travel are several critical changes. Engage directly with residents at The Towers at Chestnut Hill, a large community with many seniors adjacent to this location, to further refine these ideas.





Respectfully,

Newton City Council President Susan Albright  
 Newton City Council Vice President Rick Lipof  
 Newton City Councilors Alicia Bowman, Deborah Crossley, Vicki Danberg, Andreae Downs,  
 Lenny Gentile, Maria S. Greenberg, Bill Humphrey, David Kalis, Andrea Kelley, Alison Leary,  
 Chris Markiewicz, Brenda Noel, Emily Norton, and Holly Ryan

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