



# Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

## City of Newton In City Council

**Wednesday, April 21, 2021**

Present: Councilors Downs (Chair), Markiewicz, Bowman, Grossman, Lipof, Oliver, Lucas and Malakie

Also Present: Councilors Wright and Norton

City Staff: Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning, Planning & Development Department; Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer; Chief Gino Lucchetti, Newton Fire Department; Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation Operations, Department of Public Works and Captain Jeffrey Boudreau, Newton Police Department

Others Present: NewTV

### Referred to Public Safety & Transportation and Zoning & Planning Committees

**#76-21**

**Request for discussion regarding process of condemning buildings**

COUNCILORS WRIGHT, ALBRIGHT, KELLEY, MALAKIE, BAKER, HUMPHREY, BOWMAN, LAREDO, KRINTZMAN, DOWNS, LIPOF, NOEL, KALIS, DANBERG AND RYAN requesting a discussion with Newton Fire and Inspectional Services Departments regarding the process for condemning buildings, including standards and timetable; the status and duration of currently condemned buildings; and current process for dealing with condemned or fire-damaged buildings to ensure safety and reduce neighborhood blight.

**Action: Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 8-0**

**Note:** Chief Gino Lucchetti, Newton Fire Department and Councilor Wright joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chief Lucchetti stated that the official process of condemning structures is the responsibility of the Public Buildings Department (PBD). Responsibilities of the PBD include shutting power to the utilities, water, gas and electric. The Fire Department supports the PBD at the time of condemning structures and the Fire Department is notified to inspect the structure, deeming a structure unsafe for fire operations or as a habitat. The structure is marked and brought to the attention of all Fire Department personnel. One line through a 'red x' means take CAUTION, two lines through a 'red x' means DO NOT ENTER, structure is unsafe. If a structure is in structural disaster (leaning) Chief Lucchetti would insist the structure be condemned. In other cases, the PBD makes the decision.

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) assists with ending electric service and utilities, but the Fire Department receives a better response to this request.

Committee members and Councilors questions and answers.

Questions/Answers:

The Fire Department condemned a structure, but the PBD was not notified. Is there a process to notify other City Departments when the Fire Department condemns a structure? Chief Lucchetti answered that the Fire Department does not condemn structures, the department only deems them uninhabitable or deem the property to be a hazard. The information is sent to the Building and Inspectional Services Departments (ISD).

If a structure is deemed unsafe, do Fire Department personnel enter? Chief Lucchetti answered that personnel will not enter unless they are aware of people inside.

Which City department determines a structure unsafe? Chief Lucchetti answered that the Fire Department makes this determination.

Can structures with a 'red x' be worked on or renovated? Chief Lucchetti answered yes, structures can be worked on or renovated. Once a structure is sound, the 'red x' is removed.

Is there a time limit that structures can be marked with a 'red x'? Chief Lucchetti answered no.

Does the City keep a record of condemned buildings? Chief Lucchetti answered yes, he keeps a record, there are approximately six structures currently.

If a structure remains on the list for a long period, is there a next step? Chief Lucchetti answered that he was not aware of a next step. Most times, such structures are tied up in the court system.

Who makes the determination that a structure should be condemned? Chief Lucchetti answered that the PBD makes that determination. The property owner may contact ISD to pull permits requesting either a teardown or a renovation permit.

Does the Fire Department reinspect structures which were marked? Chief Lucchetti answered yes, the Fire Department and Inspectional Services will reinspect and sign the permits. ISD issues the occupancy permit.

Councilor Wright said that she supports a vote of no action necessary. She then stated that additional information and clarity are necessary from the Public Buildings Department and will docket an item for the Public Facilities Committee's consideration.

Without further discussion, Councilor Oliver made a motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 8-0.

**Referred to Public Safety & Transportation and Public Facilities Committees**

**#108-21**      **Discussion about the use of speed bumps/humps/tables as a traffic calming measure**  
**COUNCILORS NORTON, ALBRIGHT, GREENBERG AND LEARY** requesting a discussion about the use of speed bumps/humps/tables as a traffic calming measure more frequently deployed by Newton DPW.

**Action:**      **Public Safety & Transportation Held 8-0**

**Note:**      Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation Operations, Department of Public Works; Chief Gino Lucchetti, Newton Fire Department; Captain Jeffrey Boudreau, Newton Police Department; Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning, Planning & Development Department and Councilor Norton joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Sobel explained the traffic calming process including speed bumps/humps and tables. He stated that the City receives many traffic calming requests regarding safety and speeding. In 2017, the City developed a process to evaluate and prioritize the requests. The City has reviewed each request. The process includes collecting traffic and speed data, road-way classification, crash history, and proximity to a village center, school, park or transit stop.

In approximately 2018, the City added a budget line specifically for traffic calming measures totaling \$175,000 per year. After prioritizing the requests, the City determines the best traffic calming measure. Signage and pavement markings are the least expensive. Flashing signs, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), and curb extensions, slow speeds and increase visibility. The City has in the past installed vertical deflections including speed bumps, raised crosswalks, raised intersections, speed bumps and speed humps. These are the most expensive calming measure and not appropriate on every roadway. The Department Public Works (DPW) works with Chief Lucchetti to ensure that there is not a big impact on response times and emergency calls. Vertical deflections are appropriate and are effective at the correct location.

Several years ago, the City created a Complete Streets Design Guide in which raised elements are discussed. The City now generally aims for a ten-foot transition, which is much less severe than the older speed humps and speed bumps. These vertical deflections, including speed tables, raised crosswalks and raised intersections, do not necessarily slow vehicles down to 5 mph but generally 20 mph, which deters speeders but is not detrimental to emergency vehicles.

Chief Lucchetti stated over the years, he has worked with Mr. Sobel requesting the City not install the old-style speed bumps but to install the gradual transition speed bumps which work where they are necessary. Fire vehicles can weigh 80,000 pounds. The older speed bumps can damage the vehicle and injure firefighters.

Committee members and Councilors concerns, questions, answers, comments and suggestions:

**Concerns:**

Speed bumps or speed humps can be dangerous for firefighters and their vehicles.

Not all residents have vehicles. Streets must be safe for all.

Questions/Answers:

What year was the last fire vehicle damaged on a speed hump? Chief Lucchetti answered that the vehicles are constantly being damaged. Air suspensions and springs are constantly being replaced.

How fast can a fire vehicle travel over the ten-foot transition? Chief Lucchetti answered it depends on the road type, but generally 20 mph.

Does DPW keep a record on where speed humps, speed bumps, raised crosswalks are installed and where the City plans to install them? Mr. Sobel answered yes, he did not have this information at hand, but could provide it to Committee members.

What is the cost to install raised crosswalks, raised tables and raised intersections? Mr. Sobel answered that it varies on the width of the road. Design work must also include additional costs for drainage. A raised intersection costs approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000. A raised crosswalk or raised table costs approximately \$100,000.

What is the cost to permanently install speed feedback signs? Mr. Sobel answered that the cost depends on whether the signs are solar or hardwired, an approximate cost is \$10,000. The City tries to limit installing these types of signs to areas where the regulatory speed limit changes and locations where a 20 mph zone begins. The signs can be effective when installed at proper locations. It is less expensive to install solar speed feedback signs because there is less infrastructure.

Do the solar powered speed feedback signs receive enough power? Mr. Sobel answered yes, the signs have battery backups. Solar panels continuously charge the battery. Approximately every three to five years the battery is replaced.

It is important for the City to be equitable. How is the City made aware of traffic calming requests, how are residents made aware they can make these requests and is a traffic calming map available? Mr. Sobel answered that requests are typically received through the 311 app or email requests. The City has reviewed over one hundred requests and the process continues annually. Last year, the decision was made not to update the evaluation and prioritization list due to the pandemic.

Once traffic calming is implemented, what is the evaluation process? Mr. Sobel answered that the evaluation process varies on a case-by-case basis. Signage and paving markings are easy to alter, while reconstruction projects such as bump outs or raised tables are more expensive to convert. During the design process, the City tries to gather as much information as possible including information from the Complete Streets Working Group and working with the Fire Department.

Comments:

It is important for residents to know once a traffic calming request is received, the request is evaluated and prioritized by the Engineering Department. And that once a traffic calming measure is implemented it is later evaluated.

Suggestions:

Public education is necessary on modern traffic calming devices and the City should focus on installing modern traffic calming devices.

A suggestion was made to docket a Budget Resolution to increase the Traffic Calming Budget.

Councilor Norton stated that she and Councilors Albright and Greenberg met with residents Ms. McPherson and Ms. Tsuda who inspired the Councilors to docket this item request. There are two issues when discussing this item, budget and policy. The Budget reflects the City's values and policy is a reflection to balance needs of the safety of pedestrians, drivers, emergency response times and safety of firefighters. The City of Newton has an epidemic of speeding, making people fearful of walking or biking. This epidemic will not be controlled by the Police Department. There are not enough personnel to make it effective and it is expensive. What is the cost of directed police patrols? Hardscape is necessary to make a difference. Other traffic calming tools are necessary. A pro-active policy of identifying funding, deploying the funding and deploying traffic calming measures more frequently may be the only way to reduce speeds.

Mr. Sobel answered that there are different ways to address traffic calming. The City can narrow lanes by striping the road. Some successful traffic calming can be removing the double yellow center line on those streets with fewer than 6,000 vehicles/day. On these streets, drivers have a tendency to drive in the center of the road, making speeding less likely. This is only appropriate on lower vehicle volume roads. It also helps to have adequate safe travel lanes for bicyclists.

Chair Downs asked Captain Boudreau to estimate the cost of directed police patrols? Captain Boudreau answered that directed patrols are conducted by on-duty officers as part of the minimum staffing requirement, on a daily basis. Therefore, directed patrols do not cost the department extra funding.

Chair Downs opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. Ms. McPherson and Ms. Tsuda provided a PowerPoint presentation for the City's consideration of a pilot program for speed cushions on Newtonville Avenue, attached. Ms. McPherson stated that the cost of a speed cushion is approximately \$3,500. Speed cushions do not significantly increase emergency response times, but they can decrease car speeds to 15-20 mph. Rubber speed cushions are more durable than asphalt speed bumps, speed cushions are less noisy, made from recycled materials, easily visible and removable. Ms. McPherson then explained the reason they chose Newtonville Avenue as a pilot program. Ms. Tsuda provided quantitative data, resident concerns and benchmarking.

Residents present expressed their concerns, questions and answers:

Concerns:

Speed humps deter speeders, making it safer.

It is necessary to increase the inadequate Traffic Calming Budget.

Lower speeds and traffic calming are necessary on all streets.

Roads should be closed using jersey barriers, a ¼ to ½ mile around school zones during drop-off and pick-up times.

It is concerning to hear the high cost of installing traffic calming measures.

Parents are afraid to let their children walk alone. Safe pedestrian and biking infrastructure is necessary.

It is important to implement traffic calming measures immediately, people are fearful.

Traffic calming measures should be implemented around all schools.

Additional engineering and traffic resources are necessary.

Safety is the number one priority.

Questions/Answers:

Will the City consider the use of installing speed cushions? Mr. Sobel answered that the City can consider and review the suggestion with the Fire Department.

What can residents do to assist with traffic calming?

Committee members received emails, attached.

Committee members thanked Mr. Sobel for his diligence and the difficult task of working with the inadequate Traffic Calming Budget of \$175,000. Committee members and residents stated that they support the pilot program proposed. Committee members thanked Ms. McPherson and Ms. Tsuda on their thorough PowerPoint presentation.

Councilor Norton said that she supports holding this item pending a response from Mr. Sobel regarding the suggested pilot program of installing speed cushions on Newtonville Avenue.

Without further discussion, Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to hold this item. Committee members agreed 8-0.

**Referred to Public Facilities and Public Safety & Transportation Committees**

**#81-20**

**Discussion on transportation priorities and public works**

**PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE, PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**AND COUNCILOR LEARY** requesting a discussion with the administration and school officials on transportation priorities and public works/streets/sidewalks etc.

**Public Safety & Transportation Held 5-0 on 01/22/20**

**Public Facilities Held 7-0, Councilor Kelley not voting on 01/22/20**

**Action:**

**Public Safety & Transportation Held 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting**

**Note:** Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation Operations, Department of Public Works; Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning, Planning & Development Department; Captain Jeffrey Boudreau, Newton Police Department and Councilor Wright joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chair Downs stated that she asked Mr. Sobel to provide an update on progress the City has made this year in terms of traffic calming around the City--both what was on his original to-do list, and what has been done because of the pandemic.

Mr. Sobel provided a PowerPoint presentation, attached.

Traffic calming locations in construction or in design: The City has been working on these locations and anticipate completing the remaining priority locations:

- Beethoven Ave / Puritan Road, Raised intersection
- Allen Ave at Pine Ridge Road and at Plainfield Street, Curb extensions, new crosswalks across Allen Ave for better access to Richardson Field
- Waltham St / Derby St / Fairway Drive. Curb extensions and median islands
- Lowell Street / Austin Street (in design), curb extensions and median islands
- Lowell Street / Hull Street (in design), curb extensions and reduced pedestrian crossing distances

COVID-19 response: Covid-19 response included working with the Complete Streets Working Group, School Committee members, City Councilors and School Principals. Last spring, each school was discussed before it was known if students would be learning hybrid, remote or in person. The City wanted to encourage biking and walking due to the limit on school buses and did not want school areas to be inundated with parents' cars. Temporary changes have been implemented at five schools. Traffic Council approved a wide-range trial allowing flexibility to City staff to quickly implement safety measures within 1500' of a school.

Safety Zone Speed Limits (20 mph): In 2016, Massachusetts State Law approved this measure, the same time the State allowed municipalities to implement reducing the speed limit on roads without regulatory speed limits to 25 mph. City Council also approved DPW to implement safety zones. The intent of safety zones is pretty similar to school zones, but broader. The guidance from Mass DOT is to implement these zones where vulnerable road users are likely to be present. Examples include parks, senior centers, preschools and high schools. School zones are only for K-8 schools. The City implemented the first safety zone speed limit on Albemarle Road. East Side Parkway, Brandeis Road and Walnut Street are pending installation of signs.

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements: The City has been working on these locations and anticipate completing the remaining locations.

- Parker Street (entire length), and Cypress Street / Centre Street up to Beacon St., bike lanes (parking restrictions, pending April 29 Traffic Council meeting vote)
- Beacon Street (Washington to Centre), bike lanes (parking restrictions already approved by Traffic Council, striping in Spring 2021)
- West Newton Square, bike lanes (some protected), shorter pedestrian crossings

- Newtonville Walnut Street, Austin Street, and Highland Avenue, shorter pedestrian crossings
- Crafts Street bike lane extension from North Street to Watertown Street
- Walnut Street, Homer Street to Forest Street, crosswalks across Walnut Street at every bus stop, including four new crosswalks, new RRFB to cross Walnut Street at Carthay Circle / Whole Foods
- Chestnut Street (Route 9 to Beacon Street), reduced corner radius at two intersections, new crosswalks across Chestnut Street at three locations
- Washington Street, Chestnut Street to Lowell Ave, implemented three new crosswalks in Fall 2020, restriping plan, possible protected bike lanes. Public input process starting in May 2021, pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (aka HAWK) controlled crosswalk and bump-outs proposed near Trader Joe's bus stop (developer mitigation)
- Watertown Street / Edinboro Street, new sidewalk bump-outs to fix ADA issues, and shorten pedestrian crossing
- Watertown Street / West Street, new sidewalk bump-outs to fix ADA issues, and shorten pedestrian crossing
- California Street / Los Angeles Street (developer mitigation), new bump-outs, new crosswalk across California Street, new RRFB
- Commonwealth Ave Carriage Lane, legal, two-way bicycle travel (in design)
- Commonwealth Ave Greenway, Marriot to Lyons Field (state, in design), proposed off-street two-way bike path, new sidewalks, and new crosswalks across Comm Ave
- Library Parking Lot (in design), Improved pedestrian access and circulation within the parking lot

Intersection improvements: The City has been working on these locations and anticipate completing the remaining locations.

- Walnut Street / Crafts Street (shovel ready)
- Waltham Street / River Street (shovel ready)
- Pettee Square (Oak Street / Chestnut Street) – in design
- Windsor Road / Kinmonth Rd

Committee members and Councilors comments, questions and answers.

Comments:

Happy to hear that the Walnut and Crafts Street intersection improvement is shovel ready.

Happy to hear that Walnut and Chestnut Streets will have additional crosswalks.

Thank you for the quick response on implementing safety measures within 1500' feet of schools.

Another protected bike lane on Walnut north of Washington and wider sidewalks at Walnut and Washington St. were developer-funded (Trio).



Questions/Answers:

Regarding the Washington Street, Chestnut Street to Lowell Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian improvement there are no traffic signals. Vehicles speed at this location. Will bike lanes be installed on both sides of Washington Street? Mr. Sobel answered the City's initial thought is to install protected bike lanes, both sides, one-direction each.

Since the trees have been removed on the southern side of Washington Street, can the City narrow Washington Street between Lowell Avenue and Chestnut Street and plant trees to deter noise, pollution and exhaust fumes from the Mass Pike?

Are the Walnut and Crafts Street and the Waltham and River Streets shovel ready intersection improvements budgeted for this year? Mr. Sobel answered that the Walnut and Crafts Street intersection was planned for last year and was pulled due to budget restraints. He will let Committee members know if funding is available and if so when this project will be rescheduled. Mr. Sobel did not have information available regarding the Waltham and River Streets intersection.

Has a lane width been determined for vehicles on Walnut Street? Mr. Sobel answered that the section between Homer and Forest Streets will be 10 ½' wide.

Many complaints have been received regarding speeding on Watertown Street. The additional crosswalks on Washington Street that lead to the bus stops are helpful. Could the City install additional crosswalks on Watertown street to deter speeders? Chair Downs stated that she submitted two emails to Mr. Sobel regarding Watertown and Eddy Streets and Elliot Street where there have been several crashes over the years and one just recently. Mr. Sobel answered that he was aware of these crashes. A couple of years ago, the City made some incremental improvements with striping to tighten the road width in the same area that the City is planning to install a crosswalk this year. Years ago, curb ramps were installed at Watertown and Eddy Streets. One of the challenges the City has with new crosswalk requests, is that the City is legally obligated to have accessible ramps on both sides.

Will the City install crosswalks at other locations on Watertown Street just like they are on Washington Street for the buses? Mr. Sobel answered the area of Eddie and Elliot Streets is what the City has received the most feedback and requests on. Mr. Sobel then said that he will review the bus stop locations.

Regarding the crosswalks on Watertown Street, will the City install any other treatments beyond the signs to make it safe for people crossing? Mr. Sobel answered yes, the City has crosswalk signs that say yield to paths that are placed right on the double yellow in the center. They do get hit often, staff is frequently going back to replace them and put them in the correct position. Other measures that could be considered at the Watertown and Eddie Street intersection is to tighten up the corner with paint. The City could consider placing flex posts there as well.

# Speed Cushions: Newtonville Ave. Test Case

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Public Safety & Transportation Committee

April 21, 2021



Amy Lankenau McPherson  
56 Newtonville Ave.



Jen Tsuda  
50 Newtonville Ave.

# Newtonville Avenue as Test Case for Speed Cushions

- We are proposing Newtonville Avenue as a test case for all of the City of Newton
- The way-over-the-speed-limit speeding is a characteristic shared by many streets in the City of Newton
- Newtonville Avenue is similar to many other neighborhoods with proximity to schools, mass transit, major highways, shopping, and a village center
- If we can be successful on Newtonville Avenue in ending dangerous and noisy speeding, then we can be successful throughout the City of Newton

## Why Speed Cushions?

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- Do not significantly increase Fire Department, Police Department or Ambulance response times
- Decrease cars street speed to approximately 15-20 mph
- Rubber speed cushions are significantly more durable than asphalt speed bumps – as well as less noisy
- Green solution – made from recycled materials
- Easily visible from several yards away to allow car traffic to reduce speed appropriately
- [Click for a short video about Speed Cushions](#)



# Why Newtonville Avenue?

- Distributed 200 postcards from Walnut Street to Centre Street and received a nearly 20% response rate
- 5 signed neighborhood petitions – 2 successfully approved traffic calming measures (stop sign and crosswalk at Newtonville Avenue and Mt. Ida Street)
- Task force comprised of 6 residents
- Coordination with Safe Routes to School and 5 additional traffic safety community advocates
- Working closely with the City of Newton to ensure taking advantage of their experience and expertise in traffic calming measures
- Newtonville Avenue faces many of the same challenges that other streets face in the City of Newton

# Why Newtonville Avenue?

Strictly by the numbers in the Traffic Calming Evaluation, Newtonville Ave. is not a priority. Anecdotally, others (i.e., residents on Newtonville Ave.) may argue otherwise.

## Quantitative Data

(from City of Newton's 2019 Traffic Calming Evaluation and Prioritization)\*

Study Location	Newtonville Ave	Newtonville Ave	Newtonville Ave
Study Area Limits	Harvard St/Lewis Ter	Lewis Ter/Centre St	Walnut St/Harvard St
Rank	66	42	34
Score	33	44	48
School	x	x	x
Village	x	x	VC
Park	MP	MP	x
Transit	x	x	TS
Vehicle Volume	4001-5000	2001-3000	2001-3000
Num. of Crashes	0	3	5
Crash Rate	0	2.86	11.73
Speed Limit	25	25	25
MPH Over	7	8	2

*Side Question: Newtonville Ave. is segmented into 3 sections in the study. Waverly is the only other street that is segmented into 3 sections (and only 9 streets are segmented into 2 sections) while the remaining 88 are only listed as one segment. Is this repetition accounted for in calculating the Score and Rank?*

Source: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/public-works/transportation-division/traffic-improvement-projects/traffic-calming-projects>

## Qualitative Data (from Newtonville Avenue residents)

- Resident concerns (summarized)
  - **Concern for pedestrian safety** (including kids walking to/from school) due to combination of speeding, traffic, large trucks
- Other Aspects of the Street
  - **Geography** – hill, cars generally speed up to get up the hill and naturally speed up coming down (on each side)
  - **Sidewalk** - lacks sidewalk on the top of the hill without safe crosswalks to get to the other side (in particular, Summit, Oakland, Newtonville)
  - **Resident density** – unsure of how Newtonville Ave. resident density compares to other streets in Newton, but possibly a consideration when thinking about impact
  - **Proximity to Pike** – unsure if “transit” includes proximity to major thoroughfares. The top two repeated segments in the study are Newtonville Ave. and Waverly – both are in close proximity to the Pike and have traffic travelling to/from the Pike
  - **Cut-through street**
    - Alternative to Washington Street on the way to/from Pike
    - Common alternate route to avoid the “circle of death”
    - Waze commonly reroutes cars/trucks from Washington Street onto Newtonville Ave. during busy hours

# Benchmarking: City of Sacramento, CA

- Video call with King Tunson, Program Specialist, Fire Planning Entitlements/Administration, Sacramento Fire Department
- Key Takeaways:
  - Essential for DPW and Fire Department to closely and successfully collaborate around the installation of speed humps
  - Speed cushions increase safety for cars, pedestrians, and bike traffic
  - Speed cushions do NOT increase emergency response times
- [Recorded video call can be accessed here.](#)

# Benchmarking: Braintree, MA

- Speed cushion testing as a cost-effective pilot
- Neighborhoods interested in this solution would receive speed cushions for an initial one-year test, the Town would then host a neighborhood meeting to discuss their effectiveness before permanently installing speed humps in their place.

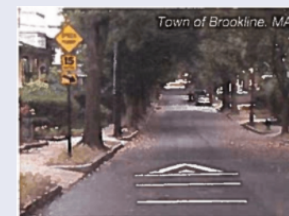
## Speed Cushions or Humps

### Overview

Speed cushions and humps have been proven effective in reducing speeds.

A **speed cushion** is rubber raised surface, typically 3" tall, 6' long x 7' wide. They are temporary installations that reduce speed and accommodate emergency vehicles, needing to be removed for winter months.

A **speed hump** is a permanently installed rounded, raised area of the street, typically 4" tall and 12 to 14 feet long. Neither of these are like the speed bumps you encounter in a parking lot.



Both solutions are designed to be comfortable for drivers going 20 to 25 MPH. The tapered edges minimize jarring. When built with the proper profile, speed cushions or humps are also easily traversable by bicyclists.

Speed cushions or humps are a type of "spot" measure that must be spaced so that drivers go a constant, but lower, speed. As they go over a speed cushion or hump, drivers should be able to see the next one ahead. This spacing encourages drivers to maintain consistent and safe speeds. Without proper spacing, drivers may rapidly accelerate and decelerate at the speed cushion or humps.

Neighborhoods interested in this solution would receive speed cushions for an initial one-year test, the Town would then host a neighborhood meeting to discuss their effectiveness before permanently installing speed humps in their place. Streets with speed cushions already deployed will also have the option of permanently installing speed humps.

### Benefits

- Very effective at slowing speeds
- Relatively inexpensive
- No impact on drainage
- No impact to on-street parking

[Click here to access Braintree's Speed Cushion program website](#)



# Why Now?

- Significantly greater walking traffic due to re-opening of elementary schools on Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and middle schools/NNHS on Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>
- Completion of major construction projects on Newtonville Avenue – Cradles to Crayons and Cube Smart
- Significant and strong sentiments from over 35 residents on Newtonville Avenue that: “enough is enough”
- Mandate to act quickly to reduce crash incidents
- Shared community tremendous fear that it is only a matter of time before a resident/child is involved in a fatal or catastrophic crash

# Newtonville Avenue as Pilot for City

- Newtonville Avenue offers a unique opportunity to “pilot” traffic calming strategies to benefit other similar streets in Newton
- Our grassroots effort involving over 35 Newton residents sets an example for other communities
- Newtonville Avenue has children walking to Underwood Elementary School, Cabot Elementary School, Bigelow Middle School, and Newton North High School – lessons learned can benefit other communities with high density school traffic
- Intersection of Lewis Terrace and Newtonville is a “high crash incident intersection” – metric of reducing crash frequency due to speed cushions – could also help other busy intersections in Newton

# Proposed Plan for Newtonville Avenue Pilot

- Install one speed cushion as a test case between Centre Street and Harvard Street
- Re-paint double yellow line to narrow street
- Consider installing a second crosswalk at the corner of Mt. Ida Street and Newtonville Avenue
- Assess overall traffic strategy at intersection of Oakland Street, Summit Street, and Newtonville Avenue
- Install one “Your speed” monitoring devices between Centre Street and Harvard Street on Newtonville Avenue
- Reduce speed limit to 20 mph

**Danielle Delaney**

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**From:** Danielle Delaney  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021 2:54 PM  
**To:** Danielle Delaney  
**Subject:** #108-21FW: Comment for tonight's PS&T meeting

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**From:** Rebecca Evans <>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021 12:06 PM  
**To:** Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>  
**Cc:** Julia Malakie <malakieward3@gmail.com>; Danielle Bäck <danielleback@gmail.com>; Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>; bgmathewson@aol.com  
**Subject:** Comment for tonight's PS&T meeting

**[DO NOT OPEN links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe. ]**

**Dear PS&T Committee,**

**Per your discussion tonight on the use of speed humps to reduce speeding in Newton, I hope the conversation will include the use of modern signage with solar-powered flashing lights for related and unrelated "speed limit," "stop," and "dangerous intersection ahead" signs as well as blinking signs for crosswalks. Such signs would be a cheap and quick solution to creating safer intersections throughout the city such as the Eddy St/WatertownSt/Eliot Ave intersection in West Newton which has had a string of severe crashes endangering drivers, bikers, homeowners and pedestrians alike.**

**Speed humps would definitely be a welcome easement to speeding problems on Eliot Ave and Eddy St but what we need to make safer intersections right now is simple, affordable blinking signage. Such signs on Watertown St. warning of "dangerous intersection ahead" would be so much more effective than current signs that don't blink, have no words and have a strange graphic that is hard for drivers to interpret. A blinking crosswalk would also make it safer for pedestrians crossing the busy intersection and would also reduce speeding and make Watertown St drivers aware of foot and car traffic crossing the intersection. Blinking red stop signs on Eliot and Eddy would also alert drivers to the dangerous nature of the intersection and encourage a complete stop rather than a rolling stop through a crosswalk so they can get visibility enough for crossing Watertown St in the Russian roulette scenario that I have brought up numerous times to the Mayor's office and at the last in-person Public Transportation public hearing in February 2020 before the pandemic hit.**

**Thank you for your attention to these matters and the work you are doing to try to make our city streets safer for all.**

**Sincerely,**

**Rebecca Evans  
Owner, resident  
15-17 Eliot Ave  
West Newton**

**Danielle Delaney**

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**From:** Danielle Delaney  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021 2:53 PM  
**To:** Danielle Delaney  
**Subject:** #108-21 FW: Public Safety & Transportation Meeting 4/21

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**From:** Danielle Bäck <>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021 2:15 PM  
**To:** Danielle Delaney <danelaney@newtonma.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>  
**Cc:** Rebecca Evans <revans17@yahoo.com>; Sharon <srackow@hotmail.com>  
**Subject:** Public Safety & Transportation Meeting 4/21

**[DO NOT OPEN links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe. ]**

Dear Newton City Council,

I am writing to share my support for speed bumps/humps/tables in Newton, specifically along Watertown Street and Eddy/Eliot. I moved to West Newton from Boston during the pandemic, and was shocked to learn that there have been at least 11 accidents at the Edy/Eliot intersection since 2018, including many that have gone onto the public sidewalks. I know that the number of accidents factors into which intersections are prioritized, but it seems that the accidents at this intersection are particularly severe.

For example, in February 2021, I saw a truck speeding along Watertown Street collide with a SUV that attempted to traverse from Eddy to Eliot. This pushed the SUV onto a neighbor's lawn and in doing so, almost collided with my neighbor's nanny who was walking on the sidewalk with their dog. An ambulance was called to bring the traffic accident victims to the hospital. This is just one example of many, and as COVID restrictions ease, I worry there will be more accidents.

I believe that speed humps/bumps/tables should be installed along Watertown and Eliot/Eddy for the safety of our neighborhood. As it stands, it is only a matter of time until there is a more serious accident, as almost no one follows the speed limits on any of these roads. I also would support other traffic calming measures, such as lowering the speed limit and possibly installing more cross walks/four-way stops along the stretch of Watertown street from Albemarle to West Newton Square to ensure safer roadways.

Best,

Danielle Bäck  
803 Watertown Street  
West Newton

# **Public Safety & Transportation**

**April 21, 2021**

**#81-20 Discussion on transportation  
priorities and public works**

# Traffic Calming

## Locations in construction or design

- Beethoven Ave / Puritan Road
  - Raised table intersection
- Allen Ave at Pine Ridge Road and at Plainfield Street
  - Curb bump-outs
  - new crosswalks across Allen Ave for better access to Richardson Field
- Waltham St / Derby St / Fairway Drive
  - Bump-outs and median islands
- Lowell Street / Austin Street (in design)
  - Bump-outs and median islands
- Lowell Street / Hull Street (in design)
  - Bump-outs and reduced pedestrian crossing distances

## Remaining Priority Locations

- Pearl Street
  - between Watertown St and Centre St
- Webster Street
  - between Cherry St and Rowe St
- Elliot Street
  - between Linden St and Circuit Ave
- Lexington Street
  - between River St and Auburndale Ave
- California Street
  - between Bridge St and Dalby St
- Adams Street
  - between Lincoln Rd and Quirk Ct
- Grant Avenue
  - between Commonwealth Ave and Beacon St
- Beacon Street
  - Hammond St and Hammond Pond Pkwy

# COVID-19 Response

- Complete Streets Working Group discussions for each school
- Temporary changes implemented at five schools
  - Newton North High School
    - Restrict Access on Tiger Drive and Elm Road
    - Pick-up & drop-off areas on Lowell Ave, between Hull Street and Elm Road
    - Some TIGER permit parking shifted to Austin Street municipal lot
  - Newton South High School
    - Extended No Parking zone on south side of Brandeis Rd to Adeline Rd
    - Implemented contra-flow bike lane on Hagen Rd
  - Bigelow Middle School
    - Created new Live Parking area and shifted blue zone
    - Spread students out to different doors to reduce crowding at start/end of day



# COVID-19 Response (continued)

- Complete Streets Working Group discussions for each school
- Temporary changes implemented at five schools
  - F.A. Day Middle School
    - Safety Zone Speed Limit (20 MPH) on Albemarle Rd
    - Close a portion of Albemarle Rd between Crafts Street and North Street
    - New pick-up/drop-off zone on Watertown Street
    - No Turn On Red implemented at six nearby signalized intersections
  - Memorial Spaulding Elementary School
    - New pick-up / drop-off zone on Clifton Road
  - Zervas School
    - Adjust area of blue zone on Beethoven
    - Restrict parking in vicinity of intersections to improve sight lines and safety
  - Safety Zone Speed Limits (20 MPH)
    - East Side Parkway
    - Brandeis Road
    - Walnut Street (pending installation of signs)

# Bicycle & Ped Improvements

- Parker Street (entire length), and Cypress Street / Centre Street up to Beacon St
  - bike lanes (parking restrictions, pending April 29 Traffic Council meeting vote)
- Beacon Street (Washington to Centre)
  - bike lanes (parking restrictions already approved by Traffic Council, striping in Spring 2021)
- West Newton Square
  - bike lanes
  - shorter pedestrian crossings
- Newtonville Walnut Street, Austin Street, and Highland Avenue
  - shorter pedestrian crossings
- Crafts Street bike lane extension from North Street to Watertown Street
- Walnut Street, Homer Street to Forest Street
  - Crosswalks across Walnut Street at every bus stop, including four new crosswalks
  - New RRFB to cross Walnut Street at Carthay Circle / Whole Foods
- Chestnut Street (Route 9 to Beacon Street)
  - Reduced corner radius at two intersections
  - New crosswalks across Chestnut Street at three locations

## Bicycle & Ped Improvements (continued)

- Washington Street, Chestnut Street to Lowell Ave
  - Implemented three new crosswalks in Fall 2020
  - Restriping plan, possible protected bike lanes. Public input process starting in May 2021
  - Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (aka HAWK) controlled crosswalk and bump-outs proposed near Trader Joe's bus stop (developer mitigation)
- Watertown Street / Edinboro Street
  - New sidewalk bump-outs to fix ADA issues, and shorten pedestrian crossing
- Watertown Street / West Street
  - New sidewalk bump-outs to fix ADA issues, and shorten pedestrian crossing
- California Street / Los Angeles Street (developer mitigation)
  - New bump-outs, new crosswalk across California Street, new RRFB
- Commonwealth Ave Carriage Lane
  - Legal, two-way bicycle travel (in design)
- Commonwealth Ave Greenway, Marriot to Lyons Field (in design)
  - Proposed off-street two-way bike path, new sidewalks, and new crosswalks across Comm Ave
- Library Parking Lot (in design)
  - Improved pedestrian access and circulation within the parking lot

# Intersection Improvements

- Walnut Street / Crafts Street (shovel ready)
  - Eliminates high-speed soft right-turn
  - Creates new crosswalks across Walnut Street and across Crafts Street
- Waltham Street / River Street (shovel ready)
  - Reduces wide pavement area
  - Eliminates median island, and shortens crosswalk distance
  - Creates new crosswalk across Waltham Street
- Pettee Square (Oak Street / Chestnut Street) – in design
  - Raised table intersection design, includes Upper Falls Greenway crossing as part of raised table intersection
  - Placement making project to enhance Pettee Square
- Windsor Road / Kinmonth Rd (developer mitigation)
  - Creates typical T-intersection
  - Significantly reduces crossing distance across Kinmonth Road for pedestrians on Windsor Road

# Questions and Discussion

Chair Downs opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. Residents present expressed their comments, questions, answers and suggestions.

Comments:

The list of projects is both good news and bad news. The list shows what the City can and should do. For example, on Chestnut alone there are at least seven intersections that should have been redesigned because they are too wide. The City must focus on pedestrian safety when designing intersections as part of repaving projects. Over the past year or two, the use of flex posts and jersey barriers have worked well. In the area of Newton South High School, the flex post narrows the intersections, and tightens up curb radii and the City should install more.

Questions/Answers:

Several years ago, legislation said, statutory speed limits could be lowered from 30 or 35 mph to 25 mph. Perhaps MassDOT would agree if any of the City's regulatory speeds are lowered to 25 mph without the typical process to lower speed limits. There are many regulatory 30 mph across the City. Could the City request MassDOT to allow the lowering of 35 mph to 30 mph or 25 mph?

Suggestions:

The Parker Street bike lanes should be extended to include Wheeler Avenue and advisory lanes from Parker Street to the school.

Committee members and residents thanked Mr. Sobel for his comprehensive report.

Without further discussion, Councilor Bowman made a motion to hold this item. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

At approximately 9:22 p.m., Councilor Bowman made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 7-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Andreae Downs, Chair**