



# **Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report**

## **City of Newton** **In City Council**

**Wednesday, February 22, 2023**

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

Absent: Councilors Grossman and Malakie

Also Present: Councilors Albright, Kelley, Humphrey, Greenberg, Norton, Gentile and Wright

City Staff: Superintendent George R. McMains, Newton Police Department; Chief Greg Gentile and Assistant Chief Michael Bianchi, Newton Fire Department; Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle, Director of Transportation Planning Joshua Ostroff and Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo

Others Present: NewTV

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: <https://newtv.org/recent-video/107-committee-meetings-and-public-hearings/7918-public-safety-transportation-committee-february-22-2023>

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

**#526-22**      **Requesting a discussion and ordinance creation that would limit the winter parking ban**

COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT AND KELLEY requesting a discussion and creation of an ordinance that would limit the winter parking ban either through a pilot program in Wards 2 and 3 or a permit program that would apply across the City based on established criteria or some other option as derived at through the discussion. The desired outcome is to remove the burden on residents with no place to park their cars during the current ban period.

**Action:**      **Public Safety & Transportation Held 6-0**

**Note:**      Superintendent McMains, Chief Gentile, Assistant Chief Bianchi, Commissioner McGonagle, and Mr. Yeo joined the Committee.

Chair Downs stated that tonight public comment would not be accepted. Emails from the public have been read and recorded. When a draft ordinance is available, the committee will hold a public hearing, and further public comment via email is welcome.

President Albright stated this item was docketed after she was contacted by a constituent who bought a house without a driveway and had no place to park their car during the winter parking ban.

During the COVID emergency, Mayor Fuller, using one-time emergency powers, did away with the overnight parking ban to accommodate college students returning home, etc. After those emergency powers were lifted, Fuller included in her newsletter a request to email the City Council about the parking ban. Council received over 500 emails on the subject. Councilor Kelley and President Albright hired a student intern who prepared a report and summary analysis of those emails. That analysis, the *Overnight Winter Parking Ban Report*, is attached.

Residents stated several reasons for wanting to maintain the overnight parking ban, including 1) public safety in the winter, when with snow and parked cars, some streets will be impassable for emergency vehicles. 2) aesthetics: they don't want to see cars on the street all year long. 3) [college] students might park up the streets and 4) multi-family developments with limited parking, who without the overnight parking ban might purchase & park additional cars in the neighborhood.

We want to think about ways to work through the issues process of students and apartment-dwellers parking up the streets. Narrow streets are an issue, particularly in Ward One. Councilor Kelley and President Albright had conversations with Chief Carmichael. He told them some cities have alternate side street parking on narrow streets.

Neighboring cities have overnight parking bans and snow emergency parking bans but make their municipal lots available during snow emergencies. What types of parking programs could we create?

Councilor Kelley stated she heard from people pre-COVID about how the winter parking ban is impacting them. The issues got better during COVID, because the ban was removed. People are being inconvenienced and worse by the disparity and the inequity of the winter parking ban. The number one priority is safety. It is necessary to have clear streets so that emergency vehicles can pass. COVID provided an unofficial pilot experience with what it was like to lift the ban, when in fact there were more cars at home and there were no major concerns that arose.

As we continue to hear from the over 500 people who think we should lift the ban because they feel the impact are unfair. There is more of an impact in crowded, denser parts of the city. Some people who live in the more crowded, dense part of the city oppose the ban. The ban affects homeowners and renters. I do hear from some who don't care about the impact to renters. We want to take care of Newton, where a quarter of our residents are renters. I also heard from people new to the city who say that they rented a place not knowing that limited parking was available and thought they would be able to park on the streets. When winter arrived, they had nowhere to park.

How can we ensure safety in the winter during snow emergency cleanup? How do we ensure that Police, Fire, DPW and towing companies have access? What are the overall impacts in terms of economic and equitable disparity? Neighbors are concerned about college students taking over their streets or people living in abutting cities that have a winter parking ban. We've been grappling for years with how to get the word out and how to apply this fairly when our street system is so inconsistent. Some roads are narrow, others curvy, some have one side parking, etc. Could we run a pilot in certain areas to gather data? Some streets allow parking on one side all the time making alternate sides difficult. It's a complicated situation. Keeping it simple may be hard.

If the overnight parking ban is not a blanket policy that can apply to everyone, how do we get the word out? How do we make communication clear without putting up additional signs?

Tonight, we would like to hear from the departments that are impacted and the Executive Department. It may be beneficial to have a public hearing to hear from residents and then share the results of the Newton Overnight Winter Parking Ban Report.

Mr. Yeo stated that the executive is ready to work with you on this request as you examine different options or pilots. The COVID experience was a bit of a pilot. There were no issues with people parking on the streets in the wintertime. There are concerns with bordering communities.

Commissioner McGonagle stated that DPW does not have an issue with this request and is able to work with Fire and Police in snow emergencies. In an average winter, we have less than 10 major plow level events. A storm with cold temperatures following is where we'd like to be able to plow to the curb as much as possible, that is one reason why we want to be able to declare a snow emergency. DPW is not impacted by anything you'd be looking to do with this docket item.

Chief Gentile stated that he agrees with Commissioner McGonagle. It would be necessary to coordinate with the DPW and the Police to ensure that a parking ban is in place before a storm and that it last until we are certain emergency vehicles have access. Removing the parking ban during COVID did not pose a problem. We don't feel if there would be any issues with this docket item. A pilot program would provide additional data. Fire and Police work closely on a daily basis on certain streets in certain areas of the city, which are narrower, or where parking is allowed on both sides. We will continue to do this. We don't see this as being a problem for our operations.

Superintendent McMains stated he agrees with Commissioner McGonagle and Chief Gentile. We don't specifically have any concerns about allowing overnight parking in the city during the wintertime. A concern is permitting. How will permitting be accomplished? I would assume Police would be responsible for issuing permits and enforcement. Our concern would be the

staff workload. We all work together on removing cars that need to be removed and securing parking lots.

Mr. Yeo stated that we are concerned overall about Police administrative burden. I prefer not to get into anything that's too complicated for the Police to manage. Let's try to keep it straightforward.

Councilor Kelley stated that the issue of permitting and enforcement will need thought. What is the burden on staff?

Chair Downs stated that the last time this was discussed, Chief McDonald was adamant that Police were not going to scrape windshields to see if there was a permit. Without license plate reader technology, it made little sense to put in a system that couldn't be enforced.

Councilor Kelley stated that she appreciates Police, Fire and DPW support and their ability to continue conversations amongst themselves, it makes me feel this is doable; we just have to figure out how to make it doable. It is important to think about locations where people could be allowed to park. Sometimes municipal lots are one mile away. Could the City designate places where residents could move their cars during that declared snow emergency?

Chair Downs suggested creating a working group to sort out the details for future discussions including what towns border Newton have parking bans that might cause spillover parking. It may be necessary to have a tool to deal with student parking. The Municipal Modernization Act allows us to charge variable pricing for parking to manage parking demand. Does the Act apply to overnight parking and permit situations? This is a question for our Law Department.

Committee members comments, questions and answers:

Please explain the permitting process. Superintendent McMains answered that we don't yet have a permit program or a pilot program. He would be concerned about such a program, due to staffing issues and how would we process all those permits and enforce them. Would we have to get out and scrape off somebody's car window or license plate to find out if they have a permit? This would be a challenge.

In 2015, we received 110" inches of snow. How did the city handle snow removal? Commissioner McGonagle answered that we shouldn't base anything on 2015. That was not the norm. None of the surrounding communities, including Newton, are prepared for that kind of snowfall. Our average snowfall is about 54" per year which we are very capable of handling. If a 2015 storm happens again, it's going to be a similar situation. We base our operations on the average year.

If we move forward to eliminate the overnight parking ban, have you considered the impact on neighborhoods? How difficult it would be to implement a citywide parking ban, given all the unique streets? Councilor Kelley answered that we are trying to look at an overlay on what are

the difficult streets and how GIS could help. The more complicated it gets, the more difficult it would be to implement. A simple plan that applies everywhere would be best. We want to begin with a pilot in order to collect data.

There are approximately 100 different parking regulations in the City. People may choose a ticket, rather than hunting for parking.

If a resident receives a permit, will their overnight guests be able to receive a permit? It may get complex pretty quickly. People with parking permits complain that their contractor cannot park, or they'll receive a ticket. How will we deal with the exceptions?

The question of whether we tow or not, is a safety question. Odd geometry streets will be a challenge.

The 500 emails we received has prompted us to rethink the parking ban. Some people have temporary solutions when additional parking is necessary. I am concerned about opening up the streets for more parking which will have the effect of adding more vehicles to the city. Parked cars make it difficult to drive, walk, cross a street and bike. Many people feel inconvenienced if they have to shuffle cars.

I'm glad that there's a commitment to do a working group and to think through solutions. I'm not sure we're going to be able to come up with a solution that works on every street, everywhere in the city. I think we should think about what happens in areas where there are many multifamily houses.

Some emails received stated residents have a hardship. I don't consider a hardship to be someone who purchased a house with one parking spot, or no driveway, at a discount.

A pilot program would collect actual data. It would be necessary to include the right streets within the right neighborhoods. I don't think that a universal lift of the ban across all streets in the city would make sense.

If we open it up for everyone who has a critical need, well as the people who just don't want to be inconvenienced to swap out their cars, we could end up with streets that are very clogged making it difficult to manage, regardless of how you're getting around.

There's a good portion of the City who sees no issues with removing the parking ban because no one ever parks on their street.

Councilors comments, questions and answers:

I am concerned about the impact of drivers deciding to park in Newton from neighboring communities who have an overnight parking ban.

I used to support eliminating the parking ban but since there are many developments, I no longer support it. We've approved 1000s of new housing units, near public transportation and told people that new residents are going to take the "T". Now we don't want to make it easier for people in those units to bring cars because this would affect everybody. One of the biggest complaints we receive is on traffic.

I have concerns especially in village centers eliminating the overnight parking ban. Mark Development has been discussing a trial. Parking is allowed underground, but you have to pay. Mark Development was finding that their residents were parking on the surface lots, and there wasn't parking for customers. They began ticketing and threatened towing to get people to move their cars underground and pay for that parking. It took a couple of months, but it worked. It will become an issue if we eliminate the parking ban on streets near village centers.

I support the parking ban. There are many hardship cases, where people cannot find a place to park and have small children, disabled family member, etc. We could allow people who have permits to park at locations designated. Where will people park during a snow emergency?

In Manhattan, businesses share parking with people who don't have enough parking. Review of this option could be possible with Newton businesses offering parking for residents.

Needham has a parking plan where owners of private lots share with others. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) helped them with that, and they may help Newton as well.

In closing, President Albright thanked everyone for their comments, questions, answers and identifications of the problems we know we will face. We managed to work it out from April through November with the overnight parking. I am hopeful we can figure it out for the other three months. The email report is not a scientific sample. The purpose of it is to flesh out the issues, what people are saying is the problem, the ones who don't like the ban, and the ones that like the ban. It will take time to determine the best outcome.

Without further discussion, Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to hold. Committee members agreed 6-0.

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

**#78-22**      **Discussion on transportation priorities and public works**  
**PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE, PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION**  
**COMMITTEE, AND COUNCILORS LEARY AND BOWMAN** requesting a discussion  
with the administration and school officials on transportation priorities and  
public works/streets/sidewalks etc.  
**Public Facilities voted No Action Necessary 5-0 on 10/19/22**  
**Action:**      **Public Safety & Transportation Held 5-0, Councilor Lipof not voting**

**Note:** Tonight's discussion focused on the bike/pedestrian/access network plan and several other pending road safety changes.

Mr. Ostroff joined the Committee and provided a PowerPoint, attached.

Mr. Ostroff provided an update on the new bicycle pedestrian network plan, Washington Street pilot, Washington Street vision, Albemarle traffic calming and Parker Street/Route 9 Safe Routes to Schools Grant.

#### Bike/Pedestrian Network Plan

The bike/ped network plan will provide an action-oriented road map to making Newton more safe, enjoyable, and accessible for all. We want to focus on safety using protected bike lanes, shared use paths, bike lanes, speed reduction, slow zones and focus on accessibility. The plan is intended to complement Newton's ambitious climate equity and economic development work. An Advisory Committee was created with members of the Council, stakeholders, Council on Aging, Youth Commission, etc. Their role will be to assist with outreach, engagement and provide oversight supported by \$80,000 in ARPA funding. The project will last approximately one year. The city is working with Kittelson & Associates. The next several months will be spent assessing existing conditions of roads, sidewalks, curb ramps, identifying trouble spots and pleasure points around the City for biking, walking and accessibility. In April 2023, we are scheduled to do a site visit to identify locations where we want people to get to and from by walking and biking and prioritizing elements. In the future, there will be online public input and two public meetings. Over the coming weeks Kittelson & Associates will do something called a story map providing a visual geographic tool providing geography, text and images to really give people a sense of what we're doing, why we're doing it and where we're doing it.

#### Washington Street Pilot

The Washington Street Pilot is the outcome of lots of work over decades, including the Washington Street Vision Plan. The pilot will extend from Chestnut Street to Lowell Avenue; we're looking at right-sizing the street. We're planning to put structures in the roadway for bike lanes and bump outs, we are laying the groundwork, we hope, for a much bigger vision for economic and environmental vitality along that corridor. We reviewed the four-lane street that is unfriendly and unwelcoming. Students bike and nearby residents travel to and from their destinations now. These trips should be safe. Consulting partner Howard Stein Hudson will complete this work. They are collecting data and it will be followed by a preliminary design. The project is supported with HCA and ARPA funding. Public meetings will be held in the future.

The Washington Street Vision table shows supportive and non-supportive design elements. The supportive design elements include trees, green spaces, well-managed parking and wide sidewalks with lights and benches.

Albemarle Traffic Calming

Albemarle Road connects Washington Street to the Charles River bike paths. There are many schools, after school programs, recreation destinations, etc. along Albemarle. Albemarle Road has been the subject of many studies including master planning. We are beginning two big projects in the coming years focusing on surface treatments like speed humps, signage, and paint. We are anticipating a design in March 2023 which will be reviewed at a Complete Streets Working Group meeting. We anticipate holding a public hearing at the end of March 2023 and then will advertise for construction. This project is funded through a MassDOT Safe Routes grant.

Parker Street/Route 9 Safe Routes to Schools Grant

The city received a Safe Routes to School Grant award from MassDOT on February 1, 2023. The focus will be Parker Street/Route 9 with signalization, surface/signage improvements and nearby road network so that students can safely walk and bike across the overpass of Route 9 at Parker.

Committee members comments, questions and answers:

This is long overdue. Newton is the last major community in the area that does not have a Bicycle-Pedestrian plan. It is needed for safety changes for bikers, walkers and people with disabilities.

Is there a City DPW storm water vacancy? Mr. Yeo answered that they are interviewing now for this position.

Regarding the Washington Street corridor, a MassDOT contractor cut many trees along the south side of Washington Street making the Mass Pike very visible. It must be unhealthy for Washington Street residents to inhale car debris and fumes. Since we are redesigning Washington Street is it possible to widen the berm to plant trees for protection? Mr. Ostroff answered that the way the Mass Pike was designed and built is profound injustice and it's something that we're trying to repair decades later because it should be a livable and enjoyable street without pollution. Mr. Yeo added that the city will explore using sound barriers. When MassDOT cut the trees, the city was reimbursed and planted some new trees.

All the projects heard tonight will be huge improvements.

Council members comments, questions and answers:

Will green stormwater infrastructure become part of the Washington Street project? It is a lost opportunity every time we redo a road, It would be a benefit to residents if we look ahead on the water quality benefits and the flooding mitigation.

Regarding the Albemarle Road project, will there be wayfaring signs to the Charles River? This was a recommendation made in the Washington Street discussions. It would be a nice element to add signs. People who are new to the area would actually learn. Mr. Ostroff answered that



the Complete Streets Working Group will be discussing the wayfinding signs, stormwater and greenery. I don't know if we will be able to touch the stormwater system within the scope of the work for Washington Street.

I hope that Councilors will be included in the working group and invited to meetings. Mr. Ostroff stated we're still in the beginning stages of making sure they have the resources they need to begin this work. We will make sure you're advised of meetings. When we are ready to hold public neighborhood meeting, we will ask you to be honorary hosts.

Will the City be able to get what we think we're getting out of these projects or will it be necessary to potentially reduce the scope or get more funding? Mr. Yeo answered that for Washington Street, there's \$500,000 for the initial work from the HCA funds, and \$3 million from ARPA. The whole project, in the long run could be 10s of millions of dollars.

Without further discussion, Councilor Bowman made a motion to hold. Committee members agreed 5-0, Councilor Lipof not voting.

The Committee adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Andreae Downs, Chair**

Newton Overnight Winter Parking Ban - Report

Written by Haruka Nabeshima (NNHS '23)

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With Newton City Councilors:

Susan Albright (Ward 2) & Andrea Kelley (Ward 3)

January 2022

[Link to Spreadsheet](#)

## **Overview**

I was connected with City Councilors Susan Albright (Ward 2) and Andrea Kelley (Ward 3) to work on sorting constituent emails about the Newton overnight winter parking ban in December 2021. Over the span of a month, I logged 492 entries into a spreadsheet that noted name, address, opinion on lifting the ban, and reasoning from emails sent to Mayor Fuller and other Newton City Councilors. Doug Greenfield (GIS) found the corresponding ward and precinct of each entry based on the address (to see if there was any correlation of opinion on lifting the ban with the area of Newton the constituent lived in.) With all the information gathered, I then wrote this report outlining my main findings and possible proposed solutions.

## **Introduction & Background**

The overnight winter parking ban in Newton lasts from December 1st to March 31st each year with residents prohibited from parking their vehicles on city streets from 2:00am to 6:00am. The main reasoning behind the ban is to keep the streets clear for snow removal and plowing to promote driver, biker, and pedestrian safety within the city (especially given the narrow nature of some Newton streets). On the other hand, many Newton-residents do not have adequate on-site parking accommodations associated with their homes. This becomes a question of equity as less affluent residents—especially those living in denser parts of the City, on smaller lots—tend to be the residents with inadequate parking space.

For the winter of 2020-2021, Mayor Fuller lifted the ban to ease the burden on Newton families who had college students and other family members home during the COVID-19 State of Emergency declared by Governor Baker. The parking ban has returned for the winter of 2021-2022, but in the Nov 18, 2021 - Mayor's Update, Mayor Fuller asked for feedback on lifting the ban. Constituents sent in emails to Mayor Fuller and their various city councilors voicing their opinions on the ban.

## **Collecting Email Data**

### **General Process**

I sorted the data by using Google Spreadsheets. There were columns for basic information (name, address, voting to lift/alter the ban or keep) and then columns for different reasons respondents had to support their opinion. I read

through all the responses in the compiled list of constituent emails and accordingly marked each entry in the spreadsheet.

Email Collection

Mayor Fuller asked for opinion in her Nov 18, 2021 Mayor’s Update. Constituents sent emails to her and the City Councilors, which Susan Albright compiled into one list. I logged the emails that were contained in this list.

Category Selection

We had some categories in the spreadsheet before I began logging the entries based on our prior knowledge of some reasons that influenced how constituents felt about the parking ban. However, I soon saw new categories of reasons (for example, having less cars be in Newton for climate goals) which I added to the spreadsheet as I went along the process.

Snow removal	Less cars	No driveway	Limited driveway or garage / tandem
x			
		x	
			x
		x	x
		x	
		x	
			x
x			
		x	x
			x

Addresses

Although some emails noted the respondent’s address, most did not. I used the DNC VoteBuilder program to find the addresses of these constituents with their name. Sometimes it was not clear which address was the respondent’s (if there were multiple people in Newton with the same name or no one recorded in Newton with their name), in which case I did not write an address. There were 26 respondents I could not find the addresses of.

Results & Conclusions

Summary Statistics

A total of 492 emails were entered into the spreadsheet. Approximately 63% of respondents supported LIFTING the ban or changing it in some capacity from its current form.

- 311 emails asked to lift the ban.
- 178 emails asked to keep the ban.
- 3 emails did not express a strong opinion for either lifting/keeping (only offered input on different aspects of the ban).

Reasons to LIFT:

- 3.9% (19) responses named having no driveway
- 16.1% (79) responses named limited driveway space
- 8.5% (42) responses named visiting family/college students

- 41.9% (206) responses named only in snow emergencies
- 10.6% (52) responses named equity

Reasons to KEEP:

- 11.8% (58) responses named narrow streets
- 14.0% (69) responses named safety
- 15.9% (78) responses named snow removal
- 3.3% (16) responses named less cars (environmental goals)

Ward Statistics

\*blue = in favor of removing/altering the ban

\*red = in favor of keeping the ban

Ward 1 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 64
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (24)
  - Limited driveway space (15)
  - Snow removal (14)
- ❖ 60.9% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 25 opt to keep the ban
  - 39 opt to lift/alter the ban

Ward 2 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 94
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (29)
  - Snow removal (28)
  - Safety (22)
- ❖ 45.7% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 51 opt to keep the ban
  - 43 opt to lift/alter the ban

Ward 3 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 92
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (35)
  - Limited driveway space (14)
  - Snow removal (13)
- ❖ 59.8% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 37 opt to keep the ban
  - 55 opt to lift/alter the ban

Ward 4 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 56
  - 31 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ 55.4% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 25 opt to keep the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:

- Only in snow emergencies (19)
- Safety (8)
- Narrow streets (8)

Ward 5 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 37
- ❖ 83.8% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 6 opt to keep the ban
  - 31 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (25)
  - Visiting family (7)
  - Limited driveway space (7)

Ward 6 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 64
- ❖ 81.3% opted to lift/alter the ban
  - 12 opt to keep the ban
  - 52 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (36)
  - Limited driveway space (14)
  - Equity (12)

Ward 7 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 35
- ❖ 74.3% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 9 opt to keep the ban
  - 26 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (17)
  - Limited driveway space (8)
  - Safety (6)

Ward 8 \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 22
- ❖ 59.1% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 9 opt to keep the ban
  - 13 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (10)
  - Safety (5)
  - Snow removal (13)

Respondents without found address/ward \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Total responses: 26
- ❖ 84.65% opt to lift/alter the ban
  - 4 opt to keep the ban
  - 22 opt to lift/alter the ban
- ❖ Top 3 reasons to support opinion:
  - Only in snow emergencies (12)
  - Equity (6)
  - Limited driveway space (4)

All wards except Ward 2 had a majority percentage of emails voting to lift the ban (Ward 2 indicated 45.7% yes). Ward 1, 3, 4, and 8 had smaller margins indicating to lift/alter the ban with 60.9%, 59.8%, 55.4%, and 59.1% (respectively) opting yes. Ward 5, 6, and 7 had the highest rates of asking to lift/alter the

ban with 83.8%, 81.3%, and 74.3% (respectively) opting for yes. The responses from Ward 2, 5, 6, and 7 indicate a strong correlation between opinion on the parking ban and where in Newton the resident lives. However, it is important to note councilors of different wards sent out different messages that may have elicited different responses.

Precinct Statistics

PRECINCT	LIFT BAN	KEEP BAN	% VOTING TO LIFT
1-1	12	5	70.6%
1-2	11	3	78.6%
1-3	9	8	52.9%
1-4	9	7	56.3%
2-1	16	24	40.0%
2-2	8	5	61.5%
2-3	10	13	43.5%
2-4	9	9	50.0%
3-1	14	10	58.3%
3-2	9	9	50.0%
3-3	15	13	53.6%
3-4	17	5	77.3%
4-1	8	4	66.7%
4-2	7	5	58.3%
4-3	2	8	20.0%
4-4	14	8	63.6%
5-1	5	1	83.3%
5-2	8	2	80.0%
5-3	15	0	100.0%

5-4	3	3	50.0%
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6-1	10	1	90.9%
6-2	13	5	72.2%
6-3	10	3	76.9%
6-4	19	3	86.4%
7-1	4	0	100.0%
7-2	15	6	71.4%
7-3	4	0	100.0%
7-4	3	3	50.0%
8-1	2	2	50.0%
8-2	6	3	66.7%
8-3	2	1	66.7%
8-4	3	3	50.0%

Even within some wards, there was variation of support for lifting the ban between precincts. For example 4-1 had 66.7% support to lift the ban while 4-3 had 20.0% support to lift the ban. However, it is important to note how the smaller number of responses we received from some precincts could affect how the percentages appear.

**Safety**

Safety was one of the most fundamental scopes respondents shared their opinions through. Issues of safety were brought up on both sides of the issue:

For those who wanted to keep the ban in place, respondents cited driver, pedestrian, and biker danger from cars exacerbating the issues of narrow streets and obscured vision. Access for emergency vehicles and proper plowing were also safety concerns raised.

For those who wanted to lift/alter the ban, respondents cited that they own driveways that are more perilous to their health (than parking on the street) as the driveways freeze over and are narrow or very steep in nature. Other respondents mentioned that parking in municipal lots was not only inconvenient but



dangerous for numerous reasons like slipping on ice or walking home alone at night. Single parents would be forced to leave young children at home alone while they drove to and walked back from municipal lots. Another observation some respondents made was that the parking ban caused drivers to slow down on narrow streets.

In many ways, opinions on both sides of the ban came from a shared agreement of a priority on safety. While many cited safety as a reason to keep the ban entirely, most respondents who wanted to lift the ban wanted to do so with the exception of keeping the ban during declared snow emergencies. Both sides generally noted safety as a priority and that cars should be off the street during snow emergencies. The discrepancy was in whether or not this ban would blanket the months of December to March or if this ban would only be in place when there was an actual snow emergency.

#### New Developments

Some respondents who wanted to keep the ban mentioned that lifting the ban would encourage development and wanted to use the ban as a way to prevent further development. Among these respondents there seemed to be an association between inadequate parking/local congestion and new developments. Some felt developers and landlords would provide less of their own parking to their residents and many residents would opt to park in the street. Others also felt that the parking ban did not align with climate goals as there would be little incentive for residents to not purchase more cars if there was unrestricted parking.

#### Neighboring Town Policies

##### BROOKLINE

Overnight parking is **banned year-around** in Brookline from 2AM to 6AM. Residents with permits to park overnight in Brookline-owned lots are not required to move their vehicles until 9am after the parking ban is lifted.

##### CAMBRIDGE

Parking bans are **only put in place during snow emergencies**. The city calls a snow emergency parking ban by notifying residents through email, text message, and/or phone announcement on streets signed "No Parking during Snow Emergency".

##### NEEDHAM

Parking bans are **only put in place during snow emergencies**. Needham provides municipal and school parking lots to be used during emergencies.

##### WALTHAM

Parking bans are [only put in place during snow emergencies](#). Waltham posts their parking bans through their Winter Weather Alert Center. Waltham provides municipal lots to be used during emergencies.

#### WATERTOWN

From **November to April, overnight parking is banned** in Watertown from 1AM to 6AM for any time period longer than one hour. Watertown provides for temporary parking at any municipal parking lot and other locations to be used during emergencies.

#### Ideas Suggested by Respondents for Solutions:

##### ONLY IN SNOW EMERGENCIES (NO BLANKET BAN)

With more than 40% of ALL respondents (and more than 66% of all respondents voting to lift/alter the ban) mentioning the use of snow emergencies over a blanket ban, this possibility should be considered with priority. As the main reason to keep the ban would be over safety concerns in plowing during snow emergencies, a parking ban during snow emergencies would still align with the concerns of most respondents who want to keep the ban.

##### STREET AND/OR NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS

The different areas of Newton face different problems. Therefore, it may be effective to consider if specific areas should have stricter parking policies (for example, college areas) instead of creating a blanket policy for all of Newton. To combat narrower streets, one-side only parking (maybe alternating every other year) could also be employed.

##### ENSURING STREETS ARE CLEARED IN EMERGENCIES

Some respondents who wanted to switch to a parking ban only during emergencies noted that with this switch, there should be significant incentive (like a high fine or being towed) for owners to actually move their vehicles off the streets during snow emergencies to ensure safety on the roads.

##### SHORTENING THE BAN PERIOD

Many respondents noted that the ban from December 1st to March 31st was too long, citing that snow rarely fell in the later weeks of the ban. Suggested time frames were often shortened to the January-February period. Analyzing Newton weather patterns would be helpful in deciding how long a blanket ban (if kept in place) should be.

##### MUNICIPAL LOTS DURING EMERGENCIES

In general, most municipal lots are banned to use in snow emergencies which presents a clear problem as those who do not have adequate parking can no longer park on their street OR in a

municipal lot. The city could attempt to open more parking for residents during snow emergencies.

More Information on Parking Ban Policies:

“Overnight Parking Ban Dec. 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.” City of Newton, MA, 1 Dec.

2021, <https://www.newtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/34/15>.

“Parking Options during a Snow Emergency / Parking Ban.” Waltham, MA,

<https://www.city.waltham.ma.us/home/pages/parking-options-during-a-snow-emergency-parking-ban>.

“Parking Regulations.” Watertown Police, MA, <https://www.watertownpd.org/193/Parking-Regulations>.

“Parking.” Brookline, MA - Official Website, <https://www.brooklinema.gov/149/Parking>.

“Snow Center.” City of Cambridge, 8 Jan. 2022, <https://www.cambridgema.gov/snow>.

“Winter Storm Information.” City of Newton, MA,

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/public-works/winter-storm-information>.

“Winter Weather Alert Center.” Waltham, MA,

<https://www.city.waltham.ma.us/home/pages/winter-weather-alert-center-0>.

# ***Bicycle/Pedestrian Network Plan***

**Public Safety and Transportation Committee**

**February 22, 2023**

**Josh Ostroff, Director of Transportation Planning**



## ***Plan Objectives***

The Bike/Ped Network Plan will provide an action-oriented road map to make Newton more safe, enjoyable, and accessible for everyone to get around on two feet, two wheels, or using any mobility device.

- **Implementation-focused: elevate projects we can deliver**
- **Address safety concerns of pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities**
- **Support Safe routes to schools, recreation facilities, civic institutions, transit stops, village centers and other high-traffic destinations**
- **Core network of protected bike lanes, shared use paths, Neighborways and bike lanes**
- **Implement speed reduction projects to improve safety**
- **Ensure streets + sidewalks are accessible for users of all ages / abilities**
- **Improve off-road trail segments for bicycle/pedestrian transportation**



# Acknowledgements

Years of engagement by councilors, advocates and city staff.

Complements our transportation, climate, equity and economic development efforts.

Supported by ARPA funding (\$80,000).

Guided by a diverse stakeholder group through an Advisory Committee:

Mayor's Office

Planning

Public Works

Police Dept

Newton Public Schools

ADA Coordinator

Commission on Disability

City Council

Council on Aging

Transportation Advisory  
Group

Bike Newton

Newton Youth Commission

Business Community

Safe Routes to Schools

Parks, Recreation and  
Culture



# Advisory Committee role

The advisory committee will include local advocates and community leaders who will advance the project by...

- Spreading awareness of the project and engagement opportunities
- Leverage local knowledge by providing input, highlighting issues, sharing opportunities
- Review draft plan and project prioritization criteria.



# Network Plan Consulting Partner

Kittelson & Associates engaged following an RFQ process (June-August 2022)

- National firm with offices in 25 cities
- Transportation research, policy, planning, design, and operations services to government sectors and private organizations
- Biweekly staff meetings to guide the plan
- See [Kittelson.com](http://Kittelson.com) for more information

Spring 2023



## Existing Conditions Assessment

Gathering data, confirming existing conditions, and conducting analysis to understand issues and opportunities.



## Online Public Input

Learn about the Plan's purpose, goals, and expected outcomes. Help us pinpoint challenges you face and opportunities you see.

Summer 2023



## Network Identification

Developing recommendations for comprehensive walking and biking networks in Newton.



## Public Meeting #1

Learn about the Plan's purpose, goals, and expected outcomes and provide feedback on challenges and opportunities.

Fall 2023



## Prioritization and Capital Improvement Recommendations

Evaluating project ideas so there is a path towards implementation.



## Public Meeting #2

Provide feedback on the draft Bike and Pedestrian Network and inform the selection of prioritization criteria.

Winter 2023-2024



## Plan Development and Documentation

Developing the final Bicycle & Pedestrian Network Plan.



## Online Plan

Interact with the Plan online!

## **Existing Conditions: data**

- Schools and Safe Routes to Schools maps - walking and bus routes
- RRFB Prioritization list
- ADA Transition Plan
- Sidewalk Condition inventory
- Curb Ramp Inventory
- Complete Streets Policy (2016)
- Transportation Strategy (2017), including Active Transportation Map.
- Newton's Street Design Guide (2018)
- Climate Action Plan (2019)
- Washington Street Vision Plan (2109)
- Needham Street Vision Plan (2018)
- Riverside Vision Plan (2019)
- Road Paving List (2022/2023)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan (2020)
- Traffic Calming Prioritization List (2021)
- DPW Construction Schedule and maps
- Sidewalk snow clearance routes
- MAPC Trail Network Maps (Landline)
- MassDOT Crash Portal

## **Existing Conditions: site visit and public input**

- Consulting team will be on site with Advisory Committee April 2023 to review representative trouble spots and successes
- We will design and launch a public input process to invite ideas, concerns and examples



## ***Network Plan communications***

- See [Network Plan web page](#) on city web site
- Kittelson will develop a storymap to provide a visual tool for public communication
- We will seek input from a wide variety of stakeholders with a range of communication methods
- We will deploy social media and other channels to promote engagement



## ***Comments and questions***



# Washington Street Pilot

- Outcome of the Washington Street Vision Plan, a 2014 Boston MPO study, a Northeastern University student design project, and staff work over the last ten years
- Project area: Chestnut Street to Lowell Avenue
- Help support a future larger-scale Washington Street MassDOT project



# Washington Street Pilot

- Key route to NNHS
- Design and construct a right-sized roadway to provide a safe, welcoming and enjoyable travel corridor
- Project supported with HCA and ARPA funding
- Data collection > Preliminary Design > Public input
- Consulting partner: Howard Stein Hudson
- Consultant check-in March 7



# Washington Street Vision

Supportive Design Elements	Not Supportive Design Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wide sidewalks with trees, lights, and benches to enable people to enjoy the street</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide roads that can't be crossed, contribute to speeding and are dangerous for pedestrians</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Efficiently managed street parking in village centers to facilitate thriving businesses and slow vehicles</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sea of parking lots that make uninteresting and unsafe walking environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Narrowed and/or reduced number of travel lanes, crosswalks, bumpouts and/or signal equipment to increase safety and enable safe street crossings</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal trees and greenery, adds to the heat island effect and polluted air</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bike, pedestrian and transit-friendly design to reduce vehicle trips</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic calming on residential side streets to discourage cut throughs and speeding</li> </ul>	



# Albemarle Traffic Calming

- Key N-S greenway connecting Washington St to the Charles River bike path
- Serves multiple schools, after school programs, recreation destinations
- Subject of several studies, a master plan, extensive input
- Public process to develop the current project, with primarily surface treatments, signage, paint.
  - + Design anticipated late February
  - + Complete Streets Working Group review 3/16
  - + Public meeting estimated 3/27
  - + Advertise for construction by August/September
- Crafts intersection is a related, but distinct MassDOT project





## Parker/Route 9 Safe Routes to Schools Grant

- Grant awarded February 1
- Road Safety Audit and MassDOT design process pending
- Construction anticipated Spring 2024
- Focus is Parker/9 with signalization and surface/signage improvements, and nearby road network
- Strong city and community support, including families at...
  - + Oak Hill and Brown Middle Schools
  - + Bowen Elementary
  - + Newton South High School

