



## **Public Safety & Transportation Committee Agenda**

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

**Wednesday, February 7, 2018**

**7:00 PM**  
**Room 205**

#### **Items Scheduled for Discussion:**

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

- #51-18      West Newton Square Enhancements Project**  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT and COUNCILORS COTE, KELLEY, & BROUSAL-GLASER requesting approval pursuant to §26-51 of the City of Newton Ordinances for the West Newton Square Enhancements Project on Washington Street running approximately from Chestnut Street to Lucas Court.  
**PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 5-0-3 Gentile, Laredo and Lappin abstaining on 01/17/18**
- #81-18      Discussion regarding preparedness for automated, electric and shared vehicles**  
COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT, COTE AND DOWNS, requesting a discussion with the Director of Transportation for Planning regarding Newton's preparedness for automated vehicles, electric vehicles and shared vehicles to serve the needs of Newton's residents.

---

The location of this meeting is accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [jfairley@newtonma.gov](mailto:jfairley@newtonma.gov) or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

**#80-18**

**Discussion on the ability to test and implement self-driving vehicles in Newton**

COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT, COTE AND DOWNS, requesting the Director of Transportation for Planning create the ability to test and implement self-driving vehicles in Newton by the following: The Transportation division is requested to lead the oversight of testing and implementation of autonomous vehicles in Newton by 1) publishing guidelines for testing autonomous vehicles in Newton which may limit, the time, place and manner of the testing giving greater latitude to potential partners as their performance justifies, 2) provide regular public reporting of autonomous vehicle testing, 3) create policy recommendations with respect to autonomous vehicle technology, business models, and effect on street regulation and design, if any, 4) create policies that ensure equitable access to opportunities for those least well served by existing transportation options, including seniors, youth and those with physical disabilities, 5) provide solutions to the "last mile" problems rampant in Newton by policy that support access by all to public transportation, 6) support open data standards and API's that allow easier coordination of schedules, trip planning, and payment across public and private transportation services, 7) create policies that reinforce and prioritize walking, biking, and mass transit and lead to reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

All other items before the Committee will be held without discussion.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chair**



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath  
Director

---

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 2, 2018

**TO:** Councilor Ciccone, Chairman  
Members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works  
Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
Lou Taverna, City Engineer  
Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning  
Rachel Blatt, Long Range Planner

**RE:** **#51-18 West Newton Square Enhancements Project**  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT and  
COUNCILORS COTE, KELLEY, & BROUSAL-GLASER requesting approval pursuant to  
§26-51 of the City of Newton Ordinances for the West Newton Square  
Enhancements Project on Washington Street running approximately from Chestnut  
Street to Lucas Court.

**MEETING:** February 7, 2018

**CC:** Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer  
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

---

The West Newton Square Enhancements Project is the City's first complete streets village enhancements project, and puts into practice the Complete Streets Policy and Newton-in-Motion, the Transportation Strategy.

Attached please find the following items:

- 1) Original design plan with accompanying memo— presented on Nov 29, 2017 to PS&T and PF and Jan 12, 2018 to PF
- 2) NEW – updated island configuration at Washington St @ Waltham St based on PF Request
- 3) NEW – Proposed two-lane trial design for Washington St @ Elm St based on PF Request

### Island Design Alternative

At Public Facilities there was a request to do more to physically limit drivers from making illegal left hand turns out of Waltham Street. The highlighted area in Attachment 3 shows an alternative idea for islands at the intersection of Washington Street @ Waltham Street. The proposed design continues to allow Fire Department apparatus to turn left into Waltham St in emergencies.

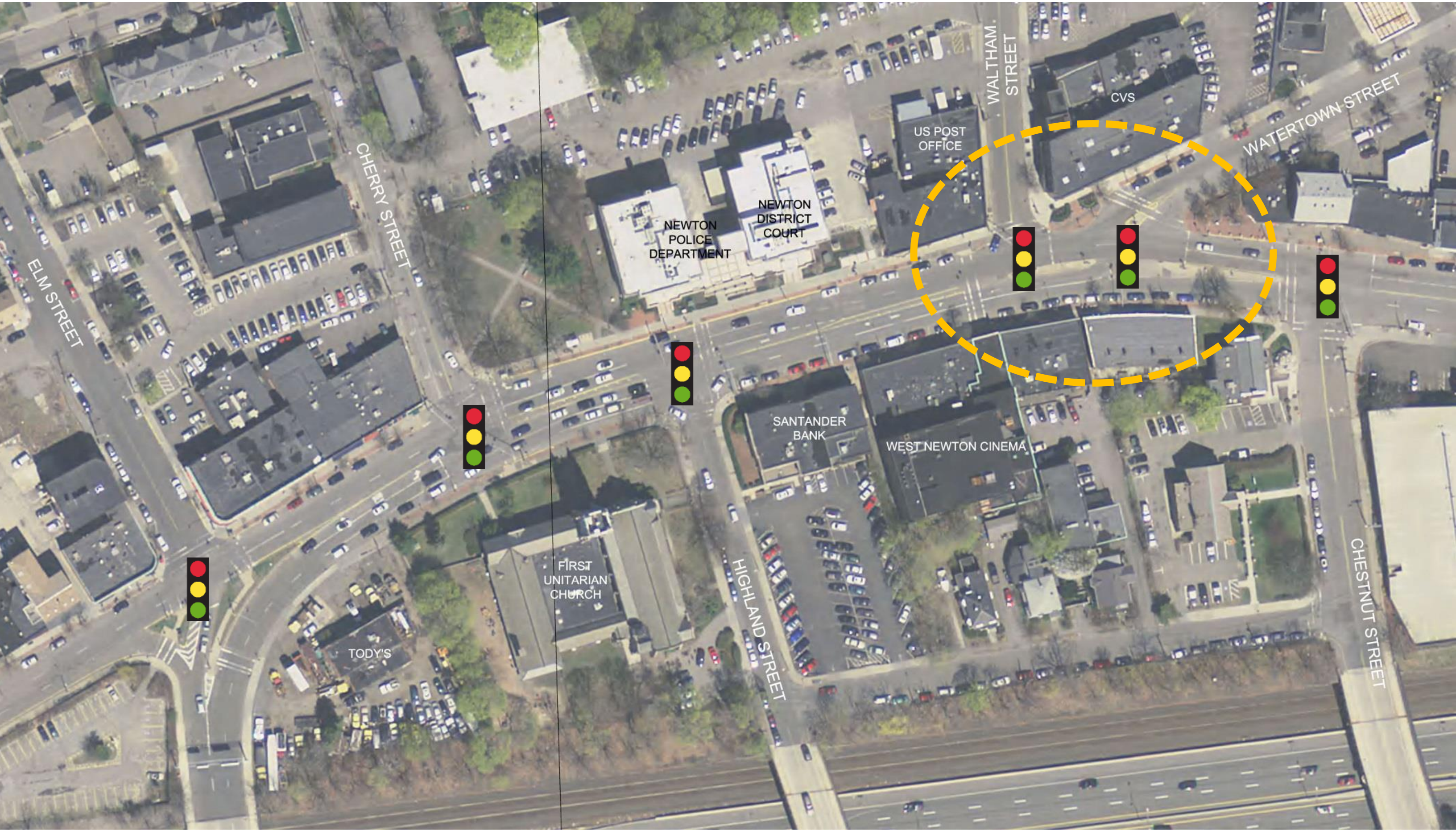
### Two-lane Trial at Washington St @ Elm St

This arises from an interest in having to potentially address queueing on the bridge as traffic enters the square. The graphic in Attachment 4 shows what the two-lane trial would look like at the turn from the Washington Street bridge to Washington Street eastbound at the Elm Street intersection. While the engineering team assures that one lane will be sufficient to manage traffic coming into West Newton Square from the bridge even if traffic increases in the future, the engineering team has also shown that two lanes can fit in this same space.

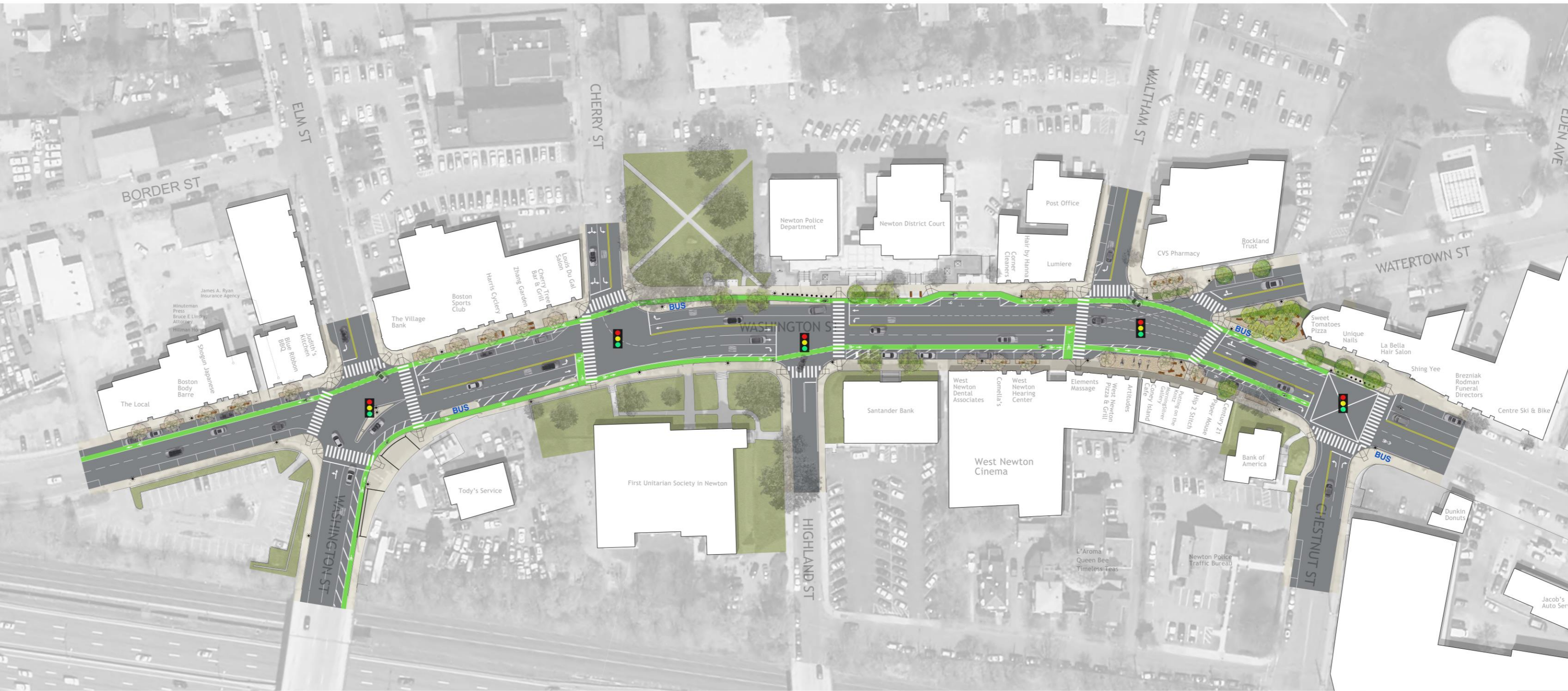
The recommendation from staff is to trial both layouts once the island has been reduced in size. This would mean after the physical construction, but before final striping and timing.

### Emergency Pre-emption Trial

The Transportation Division of Public Works is working to develop the Emergency Pre-emption Trial to advance ahead of the West Newton Square Enhancements Project. At this time, they are investigating the existing traffic control cabinets' capacity to support the trial of the GPS-based Opticom system.



West Newton Square today



West Newton Square Enhancements Project



West Newton Square Enhancements Project



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath  
Director

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 12, 2018

**TO:** Councilor Deborah Crossley, Chairman  
Members of the Public Facilities Committee

**FROM:** James McGonagle, Commissioner of Public Works  
Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
Lou Taverna, City Engineer  
Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning  
Rachel Blatt, Long Range Planner

**RE:** **#51-18 West Newton Square Enhancements Project**  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT and COUNCILORS COTE, KELLEY, & BROUSAL-GLASER requesting approval pursuant to §26-51 of the City of Newton Ordinances for the West Newton Square Enhancements Project on Washington Street running approximately from Chestnut Street to Lucas Court.

**MEETING:** January 17, 2018

**CC:** Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer  
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

The West Newton Square Enhancements Project is the second village enhancements project, after Auburndale Square, and **the first to be completed in conjunction with the Complete Streets Policy and Newton-in-Motion, the Transportation Strategy**. The 20<sup>th</sup> century paradigm in street design was to move cars as fast as possible above all considerations. The Complete Streets approach means to consider the full spectrum and complexity of demands placed upon a street. Newton is one of 142 communities in Massachusetts to adopt a complete streets policy and reframe conversations about street design in this multifaceted framework. The West Newton Square Enhancements Project is the first major street design project completed within this framework.

This project is a joint effort between the Public Works and Planning Departments, with involvement from Parks and Recreation, the Accessibility Coordinator, Police, and Fire Departments, and the leadership of the consulting teams at HDR, Inc. and Klopfer Martin Design Group.

The project team is confident in this project and that the plan presented fulfills the project goals. It has been well tested through a year and a half of community engagement and it provides a diversity of benefits for the breadth of constituencies in West Newton Square. This project is on track now to begin in 2018 and be completed in 2019, but there is a critical window to keeping this project on that schedule. The team looks forward to meeting with you to discuss this project at the Public Facilities meeting.

### **Project Goals**

From the outset, the project has had the following goals:

- Maximize safety and convenience for all travel modes
- Enhance Pedestrian Experience / Village Character / Business Climate
- Benefit the Environment

**Safety** is the first and foremost concern for this project. West Newton is a crash hotspot, particularly for crashes involving people walking or biking.

We heard time and again that West Newton Square feels like a highway on-ramp, when it is in fact **a vibrant village center** and a regional destination for arts, culture, dining, and business.

West Newton lacks the robust **tree canopy** that it once had - since trees were last planted in the Square decades ago – 80 of those 88 trees have been removed or are in decay.

It is important for us to be upfront that it has never been a goal of this project to make driving through West Newton faster than it is today, but it has been a goal to improve the experience and the safety of driving through the square.

### **Community Engagement: a year and a half of collaboration**

The plan before you has developed with robust input from the West Newton community and businesses along with the guidance of the three Ward 3 Councilors in 2016-2017. There have been four phases of public involvement.

- **Phase 1 - What do we need to know?** (June-August 2016)  
The project team heard about inspiration places, ideas for West Newton's future, and experiences with West Newton Square.
- **Phase 2 - What do you think of the options?** (Sept-Oct 2016)  
The project team presented two concept plans and received substantial feedback in the public meeting and via email. Overwhelmingly there was support for one option, with protected bike facilities, that we then built upon.
- **Phase 3 – Recommended Concept** (Nov 2016-Jan 2017)  
The project team presented the recommended concept to the West Newton community and businesses in both an evening and morning meeting. In these meetings we have heard overwhelmingly positive feedback and excitement. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 we presented the same recommended concept to the Council at a committee of the whole.
- **Phase 4 – Detailed Design Plan** (Jan-Nov 2017)

For most of 2017 the project team focused on detailing out the recommended concept with the requisite engineering focus. During this period, the team worked across all City departments, and with businesses and residents to discuss refinements. **Adjustments were made as a result of these discussions, reflecting the importance of balancing the needs of many users and activities in a lively destination like West Newton Square.**

### Diverse Project Benefits

There is consistent agreement that West Newton Square is ready for investment. This project offers improvements in a broad range of areas to support the vibrancy of the village.

- Replacement of outdated, unsynchronized traffic signals with the latest signal technology.
  - Wireless Opticom preemption for emergency vehicles,
  - Accessible pedestrian signals
  - Pedestrian countdown signals
  - Dedicated bike signals
- Simplified and better directed traffic patterns
  - The complex double intersections at Washington St @ Watertown St and Washington St @ Waltham St are being combined into a single signalized intersection.
  - Reorganizing the signals at Cherry St and Highland St to work together to provide smoother north/south travel through the square.
  - More efficient bus stops from minor relocations and design changes
  - Two missing crosswalks at major desired routes are being added – Washington St @ Elm St, Washington @ Watertown St.
  - All new street lighting with highlighted crosswalks and generally even lighting throughout the square
- Approx. 20 new parking spaces
  - Added parking at both the east and west ends of the square
  - Additional accessible spaces
- Connected bike facilities
  - A combination of buffered and protected bike lanes in both the East and West directions
  - Newton's first parking-protected bike lane
  - Bike parking on each block
  - Space ready for bike share
- Pleasant sidewalks for days and evenings, winter and summer
  - Expanded sidewalks in key locations
  - 40 new trees planted with modern approaches to maximize tree health.

- Lighting not only for the streets but the sidewalks too
- Lamp posts that are ready for twinkle lighting and decorative banners
- New furniture – benches and artistic seating arranged for conversation
- Expanded and improved plaza
  - Artistic seating adds color and creates conversation areas
  - Space reserved for future arts and culture programming

### **Critical Timeline**

This project is currently on track for construction starting in 2018. However, the project is also at risk of missing the construction season entirely. If Council discussions on the layout continue past February, we are very likely looking at a 2019 start to the construction.

**Below is the critical path timeline:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Approx. Date</b>
Council approval of design layout	Feb 2018
Construction documents, bidding & contract award	June 2018 <i>16 week min period</i>
Council approval of project budget	May 2018 <i>Occurs near end of bidding phase</i>
Construction management plan and materials ordering following a notice to proceed	Aug 2018
Start of Work	Aug/Sept 2018

**Project Website:** [www.newtonma.gov/westnewtonsq](http://www.newtonma.gov/westnewtonsq)

This project has generated several presentations and other materials, all of which can be reviewed on the project webpage.

## Notes on Ongoing Additional Coordination

### Coordinated Utility Investments

The City has also been working with our internal and external utility partners to ensure that any work that would involve surface disruptions is completed in advance.

- **Gas:** National Grid worked through summer/fall 2017 to install a new gas main through the project scope area. At the completion of this work in late winter, the old line will be capped and abandoned.
- **Water:** Two fire hydrants are being moved to locations that allow for more efficient parking layouts. The water main has been reviewed by engineering division, and cleaning and lining in the out years is the only expected future work (which does not involve major disruption to the roadbed).
- **Sewer:** Cleaning and lining of the sewer main may be performed in the future, which would involve manhole to manhole work, not roadway excavation.
- **Stormwater:** The storm drain system has been reviewed and, as part of this project, the bricked-in-place catch basins will be replaced with more effective deep sump pre-cast concrete catch basins.

### Coordinated Approval with MassDOT

On November 29, 2017, the project team presented this project to a joint meeting of Public Facilities and Public Safety and Transportation. There was a question at the time about the role of MassDOT in reviewing this project. We have new material with regard to this, summarized below.

In the 1986, the City of Newton accepted federal funds through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) for streetscape improvements in West Newton Square and in doing so, accepted a provision that would allow the MassDOT to review street design projects in the same geography in perpetuity.

After much discussion with the MassDOT staff, we can now report the following:

1. MassDOT is no longer making agreements with the right to review “in perpetuity”
2. The MassDOT legal team and the City of Newton Law Department are prepared to work together to obviate the necessity for future MassDOT review of projects in West Newton Square
3. MassDOT has submitted a draft letter that they will sign once the plans are fully approved by the City of Newton, including approval by the City Council. (Draft Letter Attached)
4. MassDOT has stated in an email that they are comfortable with the plans available to date, and are prepared to approve if approved by the City Council. (Email exchange attached)

