



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Present: Councilors Auchincloss (Chair), Downs (Vice-Chair), Malakie, Lipof, Grossman, Markiewicz and Bowman

Absent: Councilor Ciccone

Also Present: Councilors Wright and Humphrey

City Staff: Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation; Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation Planning and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Others Present: NewTV

#329-20 Resolution to the DCR about establishing a shared street pilot for Quinobequin Road
COUNCILORS DOWNS, ACUCHINCLOSS, BOWMAN, HUMPHREY, NOEL, LAREDO LEARY AND CROSSLEY requesting a resolution to the Department of Conservation and Recreation about establishing a shared street pilot for Quinobequin Road.

Action: Public Safety & Transportation Approved 7-0

Note: On September 2, 2020, Councilor Crossley requested her name be added to this item as a co-docketer.

Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Vice-Chair Downs stated that a draft resolution was attached to the agenda and is attached to this report.

Mr. Yeo stated that at a prior meeting, this Committee determined that a resolution would be created requesting that DCR consider the City's request of a pilot to close Quinobequin Road or a portion of it. If City Council approves this item, the City would work with the DCR as Quinobequin Road is a DCR road. The DCR would conduct a public meeting with neighbors determining if they should move forward on making Quinobequin a shared street. The neighborhood has discussed this request and have different opinions with pros and cons.

Vice-Chair Downs stated that the Committee today, received emails and letters in support of approving this item, attached to this report. She then opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Ms. Maureen Reilly Meagher stated that she and the neighbors are in support of this resolution. Ms. Meagher said that she canvassed the neighbors over the holiday weekend, and although many were away, every single household who answered their door, signed the resolution in support. She does not know of any neighbors objecting this idea. She then asked what are the objections? Vice-Chair Downs answered that she has not heard of any objections and is hopeful DCR will begin the discussion, if this item is approved. Ms. Meagher then stated that there are no contiguous sidewalks and little distance between the stripes outer edge of the driving lane and edge of asphalt. Several years ago, the Executive Department and Representative Balser supported reducing the speed limit to 25 miles per hour on Quinobequin Road, which was approved but 25 miles per hour remains above the suggested required speed limit for completing shared street ideas. The shared street idea would be on the weekend and the neighbors would engage with the road and park on the weekend. Perhaps this item would help with how people think of the road and park. The resolution is a hopeful way to create a paved way to access destinations.

Mr. Sobel stated that the City could begin with an outreach to DCR to begin conversation. Mr. Sobel supports moving forward to engage conversation with the DCR.

Councilors questions and answers:

- Please define the potential opportunities. Would Quinobequin Road have a full road closure or a combination? Vice-Chair Downs answered that there are a number of driveways on Quinobequin Road, this docket item is an envision for a process of a shared street pilot. During the beginning of the pandemic there was little traffic volumes. The resolution would allow local traffic, but restricting Quinobequin Road to others. Quinobequin Road is used as a cut-through road for Routes 9, 128 and 16.

Councilors comments and suggestions:

- DCR would have to determine the days and hours, because it is their roadway. If approved, allow the DCR work out the fine details.
- It is hopeful, Committee members will support this docket item to expand options for access to really wonderful park space which is difficult now because of trail quality.
- A Councilor stated that the only objection heard was that Quinobequin Road is used to access the hospital or Route 9 in a “super-fast” way. The access to the park land should take precedence rather than how drivers drive especially during weekend closures. This docket item is a good choice to access public ways.

The discussion was closed. Vice-Chair Downs recited the resolution for Committee members and the public. Without further discussion, Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to approve this item. Committee members agreed 7-0.

#187-20 Requesting a discussion with the Administration about Vision Zero

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE requesting a discussion with the Administration about Vision Zero and whether it should be implemented in Newton as a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on Newton's streets and sidewalks moving towards safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 7-0**

Note: Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation; Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation, Planning and Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer joined the committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Yeo stated that no official decisions have been made about officially implementing Vision Zero in the City of Newton.

Ms. Freedman stated that discussions have taken place regarding Vision Zero in the City. Vision Zero has two parts. First, the adoption of a resolution including a target date and zero fatalities in a certain time period. Second, implementation to achieve the Vision Zero goal. Complete streets is quite similar to Vision Zero. The approach is data driven making Vision Zero unique and data driven including working with the Police Department. Priorities include analysis of crash locations and what happens with crashes.

Ms. Freedman then stated that she has spoken with Mr. Yeo regarding the opportunity to include a Vision Zero discussion when interviewing for the new Police Chief position. Mr. Yeo stated that the cooperation and the heavy involvement of the Police Department is critical. The Police Department has been working with the Executive, Planning and Department Public Works Departments with traffic and pedestrian safety. To implement Vision Zero or something similar would require a lot of work for these departments. This is an opportunity to raise Vision Zero in the Police Chief interview process with the candidate's knowledge, desire and interest for Vision Zero or something similar.

Mr. Yeo asked Mr. Sobel to describe high crash zones, what type of information is received on intersection issues and how does the City decide to intervene with traffic calming or specific pedestrian zone issues. Mr. Sobel answered that the traffic calming process reviews, evaluates and prioritizes the roads and is a good first step model that can be expanded. Traffic calming reviews crashes, speeds, traffic volumes, pedestrian volumes, generators, where the demand is and whether the location is close to schools or an MBTA station and other facilities. These measures have provided good framework for traffic calming. Ideas and data driven processes could be expanded to look at larger transportation systems and how traffic calming data is used to coordinate with the Police Department to identify high location areas, rather than just responding when instances occur would be the goal.

Ms. Freedman stated that if Vision Zero is implemented, the design would be the most proactive tool in the tool kit. Traffic calming is data driven. Vision Zero is a real goal to be proactive analyzing data and identifying hot spots including intersections and neighborhood roads.

There is also an element to review crashes on regular basis. Data is restored, retrieved and saved in the most useful type of format. All systems would be reviewed and adjusted.

Chair Auchincloss opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Mr. Mike Halle spoke on behalf of Newton Transportation Advisory Group (TAG). He stated that TAG proposed Vision Zero as a public safety transportation legislative priority. Vision Zero is an important priority, a multi-national effort to end tragedies on roadways and to improve people's lives. Vision Zero compliments the complete streets philosophy restoring street scape design. Vision Zero provides purpose, the most important reason is safety. When Vision Zero was discussed in February, we learned a vehicle killed a dog and three crashes involved pedestrians in cross walks. This caused outrage. The City benefits implementing Vision Zero which offers concern, outrage and accountability. If there is no response, people feel streets are not safe. Vision Zero may include some removal of parking spaces. Vision Zero should be framed in simple and understandable terms and hopefully leads to Federal and State funding to support Vision Zero.

Councilors questions and answers:

- How would Newton react to traffic cameras, is Newton committed to implementing traffic cameras and is funding available?
- Has the City considered lowering default speed limits throughout the City?
- Can data analysis be completed and implemented with the number of current staff?
- Do others find Vision Zero website difficult to understand?

A Councilor answered that the beauty of Vision Zero provides a goal and a clear process on addressing crashes when they occur. Newton is still working on how they respond. Those questions should be asked down the road, once a goal is established. We are in the beginning stages. The City would have to review funding and staffing. Yes, the Vision Zero website is difficult to understand. The Vision Zero coalition is helpful.

- It is frustrating not being able to obtain crash data. Can this issue be resolved? Is there a reason why the City cannot do it? Data and resources are necessary. Traffic calming is important. Mr. Sobel answered that he cannot speak for the Police Department. He has worked with the Police Department on improving access to individual crash records and reporting. He feels the City has relatively good access to crash records. The compiled map of the City's hot spots shows patterns and easily accessible on geographic locations.
- Please clarify what it means when data is lost at the end of year. Is there no record from one to two years ago? Data just doesn't evaporate. A Councilor answered that data does not evaporate. Data can be requested through the Police Department or the State. Unfortunately, there is a one to two-year delay with the current data. Data should be easily accessible and available. This problem should be resolved. Data provides individual crashes and how to prevent similar crashes. It was said that the data map on the Police Department website changes as the year changes.

Mr. Mike Halle stated that he has tried to do data mining on the reports unsuccessfully. Until recently, police reports were available by text. Mr. Halle would like the information to be

entered into the database allowing a person to use search engines, which is now impossible. Data has to be more systematic as it is important in long-term planning.

Councilors comments and suggestions:

- Many people want to defund the Newton Police Department, but Mr. Yeo said that the Newton Police Department would be greatly involved in Vision Zero.
- When this Committee discussed the West Newton design plan with the Newton Police and Fire Departments, it was stated that it is important to have sidewalks and bike lanes rather than 6 feet extra travel space to allow fire trucks to pass.
- Vision Zero is a comprehensive plan. In order to improve data, we should be able to request how many bicycle and pedestrian crashes have taken place over the past five years. Data should be available on locations and the reasons for these accidents. It is difficult to understand what is being looked at. Data is captured, but on January 1, or when a pedestrian is hit, that data is made difficult to find. The process of collecting data has to be done better.
- Vision Zero promotes safety and sets clear priorities making the City more bikeable and walkable.
- The City should be monitoring speed volumes and identifying locations with persistent speeding issues.
- It was stated that this administration has done a good job with adding traffic calming into the budget. Funding is necessary to get Vision Zero started.
- It is important to understand what happens in crashes and use that style of crash to prevent the same type of incident in the future.

Vice-Chair Downs provided a PowerPoint presentation, attached to this report. The PowerPoint depicted Vision Zero's progresses and challenges in the Cities of Somerville and Boston. Somerville included a one-year progress report. Boston included their experience over three years. The charts are an organized way to think about how to handle road safety and the beginning stages.

Councilor Bowman noted that she has a report from Portland, Oregon indicating that they had a discussion with the National Association City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and the Portland Fire Chief who adopted Vision Zero. The Fire Chief determined the important aspects for everyone's safety is to make roads safer for bicyclists, pedestrians including safer sidewalks and implementing slower speed limits. The Fire Chief's biggest concern is to get people exercising which would reduce their emergency calls and reduce the number of crashes. This report will be forwarded to Council members.

Mr. Yeo stated that on October 19, 2020, the Executive Department will be discussing a long-range forecast update with the City Council. Vision Zero requires resources, staff time and Police Department coordination. The Police Department has one software system that manages pieces of the department. The software system is not easy to tweak, but this does not mean the City cannot do a better job of collecting information.

Mr. Yeo asked Mr. Sobel what type of data he had for the past five years? Mr. Sobel answered that he has access to individual crash reports and data. It is difficult to identify trends and patterns the way data is currently presented.

A Councilor asked if the Committee could move forward docketing a resolution supportive of Vision Zero. Chair Auchincloss polled Committee members asking if they were favorable of a Vision Zero Resolution. Committee members agreed 7-0.

Committee members were provided with Newton Transportation Group (TAG), Bike Newton Steering Committee, Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force letters and constituent emails received in support of this item, attached to this report.

Without further discussion, Councilor Auchincloss made a motion to vote no action necessary. Committee members agreed 7-0.

Referred to Zoning & Planning and Public Safety Committees

#301-20 **Request for a discussion on the impact of outdoor fuel burning**
COUNCILORS KELLEY, CROSSLEY, LEARY, NORTON, WRIGHT, MALAKIE, DOWNS,
AND BOWMAN requesting a discussion with the Planning Department, Fire Department, and Sustainability Team on the impacts of fuel-burning outdoor fireplaces, chimneys, fire pits, pizza ovens, etc., including setback and maximum lot coverage requirements, air quality/pollution, and fire protection in relation to permitting, zoning enforcement, fire code, and Newton's Climate Action Plan.

Zoning & Planning voted No Action Necessary 8-0, on 08/13/20

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 7-0**

Note: Chair Auchincloss stated that at the request of several docketers, this item will be voted no action necessary.

Without discussion, Councilor Auchincloss made a motion to vote no action necessary. Committee members agreed 7-0.

At approximately 8:10 p.m., the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacob D. Auchincloss, Chair

Resolution to the Department of Recreation and Conservation to Pilot Shared Streets on Quinobequin Road

WHEREAS Quinobequin Road is a DCR parkway in the City of Newton running between Route 9 and Route 16, and

WHEREAS during the pandemic, Quinobequin park and road have been a popular destination for families walking, biking and enjoying the shade, and

WHEREAS the presence of speeding cars adds danger to the above activities, and

WHEREAS Quinobequin Road parallels Rt. 128/95, which is a speedier, motor-vehicle-only alternative, and

WHEREAS as the weather cools and the pandemic continues, more people will be seeking local recreation options in Newton, and

WHEREAS the primary function of DCR is for Conservation and Recreation, not Transportation, and

WHEREAS DCR is currently exploring better biking and walking options for the roadway and parkway, and

WHEREAS one side of the parkway is lined by residences that need vehicular access, and

WHEREAS these residents have expressed support for a shared roadway, and

WHEREAS a shared roadway would limit through traffic but allow local traffic

THEREFORE the City Council of Newton requests DCR to trial a weekend afternoon trial of a SHARED STREET for Quinobequin Road from Route 9 to Route 16 with temporary materials, and signs limiting traffic to Local Traffic Only.

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: Quinobequin Road and Vision Zero

From: Molly Schaeffer <
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:40 PM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Quinobequin Road and Vision Zero

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

Dear Newton Public Safety and Transportation Committee,
I have lived in Newton for over 20 years and support both Vision Zero and a shared street pilot on Quinobequin Road. Much as I would like to bicycle to do my errands, shopping and get exercise in Newton, there are few, if any, places where I can safely do so. Bicycling is active, zero-emission transportation and should be encouraged in Newton, not just tolerated. A shared street pilot on Quinobequin Rd. would make this lovely stretch of road much safer for bicycling.

Vision Zero provides a framework for actually achieving a safe walking and biking environment and should be adopted NOW so that safety of our vulnerable road users is permanent, city-wide, and included in every design project and renovation. All people (drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians) can make mistakes but mistakes should not be fatal or cause serious injury. For too long, Newton's policies have prioritized the convenience of motorists over the safety of people using other forms of transportation such as walking and biking. Newton has minimal bicycle infrastructure and has made no commitment to city-wide improvement of this situation. On-street parking interrupts the few bike lanes we do have and high speed limits deter adults and children from biking on routes that feel unsafe. These safety issues lead to more driving which increases traffic and pollution, thereby making it even less safe for those few who do walk or bike.

Vision Zero prioritizes the safety of everyone over other transportation considerations including traffic congestion, parking and traffic flow. It uses data to identify areas with the greatest safety needs to ensure equity, rather than focusing limited resources on the concerns that have the most vocal, organized, and well-connected citizens. It also emphasizes reducing speeds, because the faster a vehicle is traveling the more likely a person struck by it will be killed or seriously injured.

Please adopt both Vision Zero and the shared street pilot on Quinobequin Road.
Thank you for your consideration and for having the courage to do the right thing.
Sincerely,
Molly Schaeffer
[43 Gate House Road](#)
[Chestnut Hill, MA. 02467](#)

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 5:08 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: Resolution re Quinobequin Road

-----Original Message-----

From: Maureen Reilly Meagher <
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 5:05 PM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Resolution re Quinobequin Road

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

Dear Chair Auchincloss and committee,

I am writing to ask for an affirmative vote this evening on #329-20, docketed by Councilor Downs and others. I canvassed the neighbors over the holiday weekend, and although many were away, every single household who answered their door, gave me their signature of support, which I have forwarded to Danielle. I urge you to vote favorably on this resolution. I have lived here for 15 years and have this been alarmed and aggrieved at the lack of safe conditions for everyone using the road, and saddened by the neglect of the parkland outside of the most minimal of care. There are a lack of crosswalks, contiguous sidewalk , and the road needs a re-design which places a greater emphasis on safety for all users. This idea, at very little cost, might plant a seed which brings about a re- setting of expectations around the use of Quinobequin Road and parkland. I hope you might support this resolution. I thank Councilor Downs for docketing it. I believe that with more time I could submit many more signatures of support from my neighbors, based on the very positive responses I heard.

Sincerely

Maureen Reilly Meagher

Chris Meagher

342 Quinobequin Road

Waban

Sent from my

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: Quinobequin Road

From: Carole Grossman >
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 4:55 PM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Quinobequin Road

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

I am very much in favor of the trial posting of a sign closing Quinobequin Road to all but local traffic on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in the fall.

**Carole Grossman
556 Quinobequin Road**

Danielle Delaney

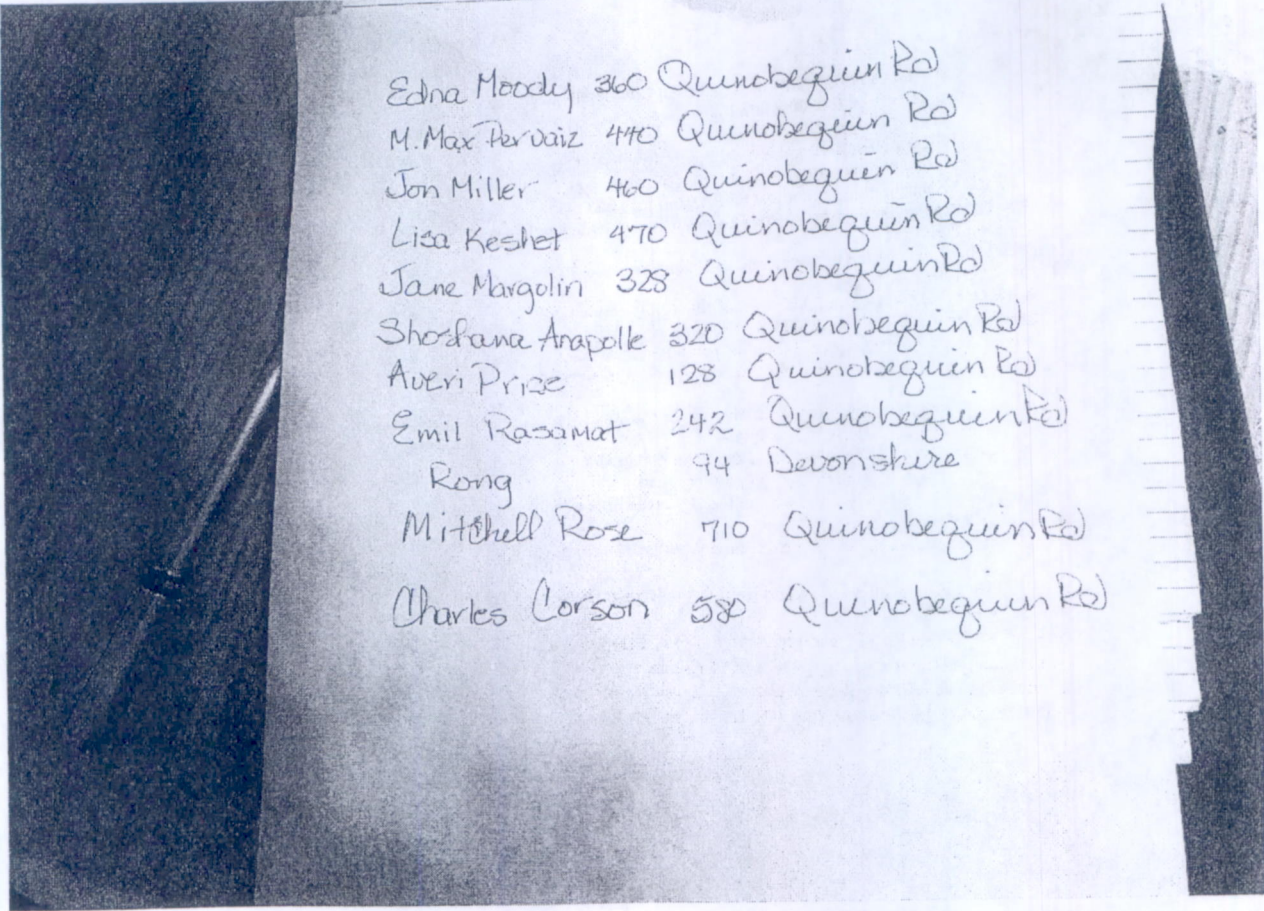
From: Maureen Reilly Meagher <mreillymeagher@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 4:48 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: #329-20

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

Hi Danielle,

I am hoping you will accept these Quinobeguin Rd. residents names and addresses, to be forwarded on to the committee. I collected them over the holiday weekend ahead of the meeting tonight. Some people included their email addresses so I could add them to the Friends list, and I didn't have their permission to share, thus my handwritten reproduction of their names and addresses. Please let me know if this suffices.

Thank you
Maureen

A photograph of a handwritten list of residents on Quinobeguin Rd. The list is written on a piece of paper with horizontal lines, which is placed on a dark surface. The handwriting is in cursive. The list includes names, addresses, and the street name 'Quinobeguin Rd' for most entries. The last entry, 'Charles Corson 580 Quinobeguin Rd', is written on a separate line. The paper is slightly crumpled and has some shadows on it.

Edna Moody 360 Quinobeguin Rd
M. Max Pervais 440 Quinobeguin Rd
Jon Miller 460 Quinobeguin Rd
Lisa Keshet 470 Quinobeguin Rd
Jane Margolin 328 Quinobeguin Rd
Shoshana Anapolk 320 Quinobeguin Rd
Averi Price 128 Quinobeguin Rd
Emil Rasamat 242 Quinobeguin Rd
Rong 94 Devonshire
Mitchell Rose 710 Quinobeguin Rd
Charles Corson 580 Quinobeguin Rd

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:38 AM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: petition for Quinobequin to be closed to traffic

From: ISABELLE ALBECK >
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 10:26 AM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>; Maureen RM <mreillymeagher@gmail.com>
Subject: petition for Quinobequin to be closed to traffic

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

Hi,
Please support the closure of Quinobequin Rd to all but local traffic. We all need a place to bike (away from all the roots on the trail), run and walk . We need to do it safely from traffic and have enough space to be 6ft apart.
Thank you,
Isabelle Albeck
240 Windsor Rd,
Waban
(Waban Area Councillor)

SOMERVILLE

Launched by Mayor Joseph Curtatone in September 2017, Vision Zero Somerville reaffirms the City's commitment to multi-modal road safety. The initiative takes a multi-department, data-driven approach to improving safety for all road users, whether on bicycles or on foot, in vehicles, or aboard public transit.



Progress

- Increased road safety awareness across municipal government departments
- Lowered speed limits citywide, with the additional goal of adding 65 new 20 mph safety zones near schools, senior centers, hospitals, and parks
- Improved infrastructure, including:
 - Parking-protected bike lanes on Washington Street
 - A mid-block crosswalk and flashing beacon at Union Square
 - A separated bike lane being added to Beacon Street during its reconstruction

Challenges

Somerville's Vision Zero work will need to center around aligning their transportation systems with other community-driven priorities, and continuing to advocate for Vision Zero within the context of large state-led projects like the Green Line Extension.



What's Next

Somerville is using data-driven technical planning and community input to create a plan of one-, three-, and five-year actionable goals around engineering, education, and enforcement efforts. They will release their first Action Plan in 2020.



Progress Report Scorecard -- Vision Zero Fundamentals

2018 VISION ZERO PROGRESS REPORT BOSTON: YEAR THREE SCORECARD



The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition is committed to annually reviewing the City of Boston's progress towards eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.

The following report assesses the City's progress in 2018 and provides recommendations for more rapid Vision Zero implementation moving forward.

KEY:



SHOWING
LEADERSHIP



MAKING
PROGRESS



NEEDS
IMPROVEMENT

VISION ZERO FUNDAMENTALS

Vision Zero Fundamentals are the core elements required to support systemic change on our streets. They allow municipalities to create goals that are concrete and action-driven, while being responsive to the context and needs of the community.

1. Build a Robust Data Framework

Showing
Leadership

Vision Zero is a data-driven approach.
A successful and equitable data-
driven plan requires collecting
data as well as robust



BOSTON

In March of 2015, Boston Mayor Martin Walsh announced that the City of Boston was joining cities and towns worldwide in adopting Vision Zero. Soon after, Mayor Walsh appointed a working Task Force comprised of representatives of several government agencies as well as local advocacy groups.

Several members of the Vision Zero Coalition participate on the City's Task Force, and the Coalition works closely with the Boston Transportation Department, Boston City Council, and other city leaders.



Progress

- The Citywide default **speed limit was lowered to 25 MPH.**
- With the introduction of the **Neighborhood Slow Streets** program, the City committed to reducing speeds on residential streets by changing the physical character of the streets with traffic calming devices.
- The City launched the "**Boston's Safest Driver**," a mobile app that provides feedback on one's driving behaviors and awards points for safe driving.
- The City released "**High Crash Network and High Crash Intersections 2015-2017**" data and maps.
- **The number of fatal crashes has measurably decreased** with 10 fatal crashes in 2019, down from 21 fatalities in 2016.



Challenges

More than four years after the City's initial commitment to Vision Zero, there are still clear gaps in the integration of Vision Zero across departments, and this is slowing down the City's ability to act swiftly and efficiently on its Vision Zero goals.

Despite the additional funding and staffing resources provided to the Transportation Department in Fiscal Year 2019, increased cohesion within the Transportation and Public Works departments, as well as across all relevant departments, is needed for these resources to be used effectively.



What's Next

- The City is working to add a network of protected bike lanes downtown.
- The City will begin construction on the Tremont Street redesign to improve pedestrian safety.
- The City has begun community outreach for South Mass Ave up to



September 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee,

The Bike Newton Steering Committee supports the resolution for the City of Newton to adopt the goal of Vision Zero. By adopting the goal of eliminating deaths or serious injuries due to traffic crashes, Newton can focus on changes to the city's streets that will make bicycling safer for everyone.

Newton has set forth goals as part of the Climate Action Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan to increase the amount of trips made by bike. In a survey we conducted this summer, the number one reason people stated for not using their bicycles more was "concerns about drivers."

For too long Newton has prioritized moving cars quickly through the city and providing street parking at the expense of safe cycling infrastructure. By adopting Vision Zero goals, Newton can focus on reducing vehicle speeds, trading street parking for protected bike lanes, and gathering data to determine where safety issues exist.

It is imperative that Newton work toward a goal that no one is seriously injured or killed on our streets. By adopting Vision Zero, Newton can demonstrate a serious commitment to a more sustainable, safer, and equitable city that values the safety and lives of its citizens over the convenience of drivers.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Bike Newton Steering Committee:

Brendan Keegan, President
Nathan Phillips
Molly Schaeffer
Srdjan Nedeljkovic
Nathan Aronow
Maria Beatriz Arvelo

Lois Levin
Helen Rittenberg
Bob Jampol
John Pelletier
Barbara Nestle
Jenn Martin
Tom Elkind



September 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee,

We, the citizen members of the Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force, urge PS&T to work with the Administration with a goal of the City of Newton committing to Vision Zero, a strategy to eliminate **all** traffic fatalities and severe injuries on Newton's streets and sidewalks.

This summer Traffic Council voted to allow temporary trial actions/changes within 1500 feet of any school in Newton, in order to improve safety, encourage more walking and biking to school, and reduce congestion around schools during arrival and dismissal periods. Principals, parents, and the Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force worked with the Complete Streets Working Group to identify these safety-focused changes.

This level of attention to the safety of our vulnerable residents needs to be permanent, city-wide, and included in every design project and renovation.

Newton's historical focus on vehicle throughput has resulted in unsafe routes that are a deterrent for parents allowing their children to walk and bike to their destinations. These safety concerns lead parents to drive their children, which increases both vehicular traffic and pollution, thereby making it even less safe for those who do walk or bike.

A commitment to Vision Zero includes:

- Focussing on reducing speeds, because the faster a vehicle is traveling the more likely a person struck by it will be killed or seriously injured.
- Using data to identify areas with the greatest safety needs to ensure equity, rather than focusing limited resources on the concerns that have the most vocal, organized, and well-connected citizens.
- Prioritizing the safety of everyone over all other transportation considerations including traffic congestion and traffic flow.

A broader vision is needed that accepts that children are still learning and sometimes make mistakes. **These mistakes should not be fatal.**

**We urge the Public Safety & Transportation Committee of the City of Newton to
move towards safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all by working on a
commitment to Vision Zero.**

#187-20

Sincerely,

The following citizen members of the Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force

Jennifer Martin
86 Allen Ave

John Pelletier
92 Central

Joana Canedo
55 Huntington Rd

James Farrow
11 Owaisa Road

Annette Nedeljkovic
414 Walnut Street

Karen Markson
150 Hunnewell Ave

Lucia Dolan
20 Devon Rd

Nathan Phillips
73 Charles Street

Barbara Nestle
78 Leeson Lane

Theresa Fitzpatrick
1935 Beacon Street

Allison Dunn
115 Harvard Street

Melanie Hildebrandt
34 Hereward Rd

Adam Peller
28 Daniel Street

Sarah Morton
161 Brookline St

Caitlin Cusick
50 Prentice Rd

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: Vision Zero

From: Scott Sanders <>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 11:09 AM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Vision Zero

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

Hello,

I am writing in support of implementing a Vision Zero plan. I lived in Cambridge when Vision Zero was implemented there after some notable, horrible cyclist deaths. My understanding is that changes from their work have made significant differences for cyclist and pedestrian safety.

When I moved here to Newton a few years ago, I was shocked at how poor the street infrastructure was by comparison, despite a much higher residential tax rate. Taking the step to adopt Vision Zero is a sensible plan that has many benefits.

I strongly believe that here in Newton, we too should benefit from the safety that comes with a plan like this. This type of planning and design should not be reserved only for cities like Cambridge.

Streets deserve to be shared by all users, and we all deserve to benefit from design that protects us all from death and injury.

Scott Sanders

Newton Transportation Advisory Group

To: Public Safety and Transportation Committee
Newton City Council

September 9, 2020

RE: TAG support for Vision Zero

Dear Councilors,

As Chair of Newton's Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), and speaking for its citizen members, I urge you to adopt a Vision Zero policy of safety-oriented transportation and streetscapes for Newton, paving the way for a comprehensive implementation plan.

We are proud that in February of this year, TAG proposed Vision Zero as a Public Safety and Transportation legislative priority. Allow me to quote from our February 18 letter, which was written in the context of at least three pedestrians being hit by motor vehicles in crosswalks near elementary schools in the past year:

The recent pedestrian-related crashes in Newton and the resulting public outcry demand a new safety focal point for our existing transportation, planning and public works efforts.

That focal point is Vision Zero, a multi-national effort to end tragedies on our roadways and improve people's lives.

"Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all."

- <https://visionzeronetwork.org/>
- <https://visionzeronetwork.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>

Newton should consider adoption a Vision Zero policy and plan that complement our existing Complete Streets effort. While the two efforts overlap in their general approach, Vision Zero adds an explicit safety emphasis and a clear goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries. It thus provides an understandable and universally appealing metric for safety. It provides a rallying point for a public that feels increasingly helpless and vulnerable when they hear about crashes in their community (particularly near school zones). It thus provides a constructive outlet for community anger and activism, while also providing a measure of accountability for making improvements.

Newton can adopt Vision Zero by approving a Vision Zero policy. A Newton Vision Zero policy could include several elements that go beyond the city's current Complete Streets policy:

- Proactive planning for lower speed routes and zones, including creation of a slow street network of universally accessible, pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly streets.

- More explicit involvement of Newton Police, Fire, and EMS in planning, crash evaluation, outreach, and enforcement.
- A clear public process for addressing crashes when they do occur,
- Clearer integration with Newton Public Schools regarding school zones, blue zones, Safe Routes to School, and education.
- Explicit public outreach and community engagement,
- Explicit statement of the importance of equity as part of transportation planning.

These additional elements are exceedingly important in building trust in government's ability to enhance public safety. Safe neighborhoods, neighborhood schools, local village centers, family friendliness, and community involvement are all deeply interwoven in Newton's civic identity. Vision Zero Newton knits them together with a common, equitable goal: travel in Newton should be safe for everyone.

Several local communities have already created their own plans that we can build upon:

- <https://www.boston.gov/transportation/vision-zero>
- <https://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/sustainabletransportation/visionzero>
- <https://www.somervillema.gov/visionzero>
- <https://www.visionzerocoalition.org/> (Massachusetts)

Newton's semi-suburban, human-scale, village-based character represents an opportunity for the city to become a regional leader in Vision Zero planning.

Such a plan would also allow Newton to be in line for possible future federal funds for Vision Zero programs:

<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/10/24/congress-sets-sights-on-vision-zero/>

We urge the City Council and City Administration to consider adoption of Vision Zero as city policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Halle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Halle
Chair, Newton Transportation Advisory Group

Danielle Delaney

From: Danielle Delaney
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Danielle Delaney
Subject: FW: Quinobequin Road and Vision Zero

From: Molly Schaeffer <
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:40 PM
To: Danielle Delaney <ddelaney@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Quinobequin Road and Vision Zero

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

Dear Newton Public Safety and Transportation Committee,
I have lived in Newton for over 20 years and support both Vision Zero and a shared street pilot on Quinobequin Road. Much as I would like to bicycle to do my errands, shopping and get exercise in Newton, there are few, if any, places where I can safely do so. Bicycling is active, zero-emission transportation and should be encouraged in Newton, not just tolerated. A shared street pilot on Quinobequin Rd. would make this lovely stretch of road much safer for bicycling.

Vision Zero provides a framework for actually achieving a safe walking and biking environment and should be adopted NOW so that safety of our vulnerable road users is permanent, city-wide, and included in every design project and renovation. All people (drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians) can make mistakes but mistakes should not be fatal or cause serious injury. For too long, Newton's policies have prioritized the convenience of motorists over the safety of people using other forms of transportation such as walking and biking. Newton has minimal bicycle infrastructure and has made no commitment to city-wide improvement of this situation. On-street parking interrupts the few bike lanes we do have and high speed limits deter adults and children from biking on routes that feel unsafe. These safety issues lead to more driving which increases traffic and pollution, thereby making it even less safe for those few who do walk or bike.

Vision Zero prioritizes the safety of everyone over other transportation considerations including traffic congestion, parking and traffic flow. It uses data to identify areas with the greatest safety needs to ensure equity, rather than focusing limited resources on the concerns that have the most vocal, organized, and well-connected citizens. It also emphasizes reducing speeds, because the faster a vehicle is traveling the more likely a person struck by it will be killed or seriously injured.

Please adopt both Vision Zero and the shared street pilot on Quinobequin Road.
Thank you for your consideration and for having the courage to do the right thing.
Sincerely,
Molly Schaeffer
[43 Gate House Road](#)
[Chestnut Hill, MA. 02467](#)