

November 5, 2010

Transportation Advisory Committee Response to Recommendations

1. Policies & Programs

- **Policies:**
 - a. Roadway markings- The Department of Public Works currently has a Crosswalk Policy (Attachment A), which will be reviewed with the TAC. The expansion of this policy to cover all street markings will be explored by the Department this winter so as to be able to implement any changes for the next construction season.
 - b. Sidewalk Snow Ordinance- A revised Ordinance requiring owners to clear sidewalks in front of their homes and businesses (as well as the City clearing in front of all public land where there is a sidewalk), has been docketed with the Board of Aldermen for their approval. It is the hope of the Administration that it be implemented this winter.
 - c. Directive to Employees on safety- The City Vehicle Policy was revised this past month (Attachment B) which amplifies safe driving requirements that ensure the safety of the public. Review of this policy by the TAC will help inform the Administration on future suggestions on this topic.
- **Governance:**
 - a. Transparent Process for citizen complaints- The Administration is currently in development of an electronic reporting system that will allow residents to report problems in the transportation network and create a record for follow-up and response. It is

hoped that this will go 'live' in January 2011. In addition, the Traffic Council provides a public forum to discuss traffic concerns, as did the Safety Sub-Committee of the TAC. It is the intention that if there are Bicycle-Pedestrian issues, the newly created coordinator position in the Planning Department (see next item) will be able to vet these issues in the appropriate forum and provide summary feedback to the public on-line. Further, traffic/parking-related complaints, both to the Engineering Division of Public Works and the Traffic Bureau of the Police Department will be discussed at a weekly Public Safety Cluster Meeting formed this summer.

- b. Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator- A coordinator position has been established in the Planning Department as an addition to the job description of the Transportation Planner, which is currently held by David Koses. This will help bridge departments and negotiate the internal bureaucracy for input from various departments to realize answers to complaints and recommendations.
 - c. In addition, commencing the week of November 15th, 2010 representatives from each of the traffic/transportation entities in the City (Highway Division, Planning, Engineering, Police) will meet weekly to address common issues and work to streamline the process of attending to the planning, design, construction, and enforcement of transportation infrastructure and/or policy.
- Data Collection:
 - a. Traffic accidents (motorists, pedestrians & cyclists)- Starting immediately, the Police Department will present data on traffic accidents for both vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclists on a map of Newton. Importantly, the cause for each corresponding accident is also provided for evaluation. This information is

shared with other departments at the Public Safety Cluster to evaluate changes in policy or infrastructure improvements to decrease the likelihood of repeat accidents at each location. This will provide the forum to prioritize locations for redesign and the follow-up of statistics after the safety improvements have been made.

- b. Create web-based system for public reporting- The Administration is currently in final design of such a public-facing reporting system (call Web-QA) whereby issues raised by the public can be entered on-line and responses from the appropriate personnel posted. This will roll-out with a couple of the departments (Public Works, Parks & Recreation) that receive the highest volume of citizen requests before expanding City-wide.
- c. Accident data to public and analyzed by staff- the data collected at each reported accident is now shared weekly with the Executive Office, and bi-weekly in the Public Safety Cluster which involves other departments involved with safety of our residents and the public. Perhaps the TAC can recommend whether the newly created Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator Position could assist in bringing this same information to the TAC Safety Sub-Committee and other venues for public access.

2. Infrastructure for Safe Travel

- Safety related work prioritized for maintenance:
 - a. Commencing this fall, the capital work plan for the Department of Public Works for 2011 included a review of not only the streets that were in the worst condition, but an overlay of the accidents reported by the Police Department. If infrastructure improvements need to take place on these roadways, the process

allows time to vet this with the community and complete design before the construction season next year.

b. The recommendations by the TAC for 'safety-first' improvements led to an effort to repaint all crosswalks in the City. While this work is weather-dependent, it is the intent to accomplish this as soon as possible.

- Pilot projects for bicycle roadway markings:

a. The streets recommended by the TAC for bicycle markings have been taken under advisement and prioritized where the most bicycle accidents have occurred over the past year. Thus, with weather permitting, roadway markings will be started this fall on:

1. Beacon Street between Walnut and Beethoven: will coordinate with parking for Cold Spring Park with the intent to establish bicycle lanes
2. College Road between Beacon and Commonwealth: establish bicycle lane northbound
3. Langley between Centre and Beacon: establish one eastbound bicycle lane
4. Chestnut between Beacon and Commonwealth: add signage to alert motorists to share the roadway
5. Hammond Street between Commonwealth and Beacon: establish one southbound bicycle lane
6. Hammond Street south of Beacon: due to the geometry, will investigate the best markings or signage to facilitate a sharing of the roadway

- b. In the design of those streets listed above, updates to the TAC will provide status and any concerns that may arise around implementation.
- Retime traffic signals-
 - a. Monies were authorized (\$200k) for expenditure by the Board of Aldermen this month to conduct a City-wide signalization evaluation and re-timing of those signals which can be accomplished without significant capital improvement. This is anticipated to be performed over the next year.
 - b. Signals that require significant new technology for investment, will be prioritized for future appropriations.
- On-line project tracking system-
 - a. The Department of Public Works is working this fall to upload all projects on-line with schedules and contacts for particular information in preview of next year's construction schedule.
- "Adopt a Sidewalk/Crosswalk" program-
 - a. The Department of Parks and Recreation currently manage an "Adopt-a-Space" program where the public can adopt traffic islands or street corners. The department would like to meet with the TAC to more fully understand the vision for the expansion of this program to sidewalks and crosswalks.

3. Education and Outreach

- One hour of in-school safety program
 - a. The Mayor has spoken with the Superintendent around the strategy of curriculum development knowing how crowded the requirements are for students.

- b. The School Department will work with elementary and secondary principals in conjunction with curriculum coordinators to explore areas to incorporate grade appropriate pedestrian/bicycle/driving safety into existing curricular recommendations, with particular focus on Health, Wellness, and Physical Education for the FY12 school year.
- Review student transportation policies
 - a. School principals will review student travel to school procedures through site-based school councils and parent-teacher organizations, with emphasis on minimizing vehicle use at drop off and pick up times.
- Education campaign around new texting law
 - a. The police department is currently assessing the implementation of the new law and seeking clarification from the State's Executive Office of Public Safety. Subsequent to this, they will develop the education component to accompany those developed policies.
- City-wide campaign for culture of "safety first"
 - a. The first step in this implementation is the execution of a Community Meeting scheduled for October 27, 2010
 - b. Through the Mayor's Office, venues to integrate this culture in the Community will be explored during Town Hall and Neighborhood Association meetings
 - c. The Mayor's office would like to work further with the TAC to explore the best options for implementation to include funding and tie in with the education campaign
- Continue and expand "Safe Routes to School" (SRTS)
 - a. The City recently applied for funding from MassDOT to implement a new crosswalk signal on Parker Street under the Safe Routes to School program
 - b. Further discussion with the TAC on this issue will help to evaluate whether the reinstatement of the citywide SRTS coordinator function would be useful

- Working group to evaluate driver's education
 - a. This recommendation may be combined in concert with the educational program and policy review
 - b. This topic should be discussed at future TAC meetings to further define the composition and implementation of this group
- Regularly deploy "speed boards"-
 - a. The Police Department will discuss at the weekly Public Safety Cluster, the deployment prioritization locations for "speed boards" to ensure maximum utilization and effectiveness. This information can be shared with the TAC as requested.
- Convene a "Safety Summit" to eliminate fatalities-
 - a. A "Safety Summit" was held on October 27th in the Newton North High School involving the public and Board of Aldermen which promoted discussions around safety on our streets and actions toward eliminating fatalities.

4. Enforcement

- Program of targeted moving violations-
 - a. A program of "sting operations" has been formatted in the Police Department. Locations such as crosswalks will be advertised in the local paper ahead of time to improve awareness and achieve the intended results. Statistics of violations over subsequent months will be maintained to review with the TAC
 - b. On a weekly basis, the operations division of the Police Department through COMPSTAT, review accident locations through and high potential areas for violations and target them for increased patrols. This information will be summarized and provided to TAC.

- Parking violations where unsafe-
 - a. In the next two months, automated plate readers will be installed in police vehicles to alert to violations on a drive-by basis. This will substantially increase the coverage across the City that limited personnel can accomplish, and will focus on those areas where congestion results in unsafe parking violations.
- Enforcement of text-messaging ban-
 - a. The enforcement of this new law will be evaluated by the Police Department as the officers are trained and a protocol set up.
- Issue training memo to police officers to clarify expectation of driver & bicycle behavior-
 - a. The Traffic Bureau within the police department who oversee specific regulations and code of conduct of bicyclists on the road. These personnel will brief the operations division on expected conformance of bicyclists to roadway regulations. Where roadways are marked for the use by bicycles, the protocols for drivers allowing for roadway sharing with bicyclists is underscored with enforcement officers.