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To: Newton City Council

From: Jenn Martin, Director of Transportation Planning  
Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development

Date: August 1, 2025

Subject: Washington Street Pilot Update

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## Overview

We are pleased that implementation of the Washington Street Pilot Project is progressing. This memo outlines the final steps ahead for construction, the planned refinements in response to community and Councilor feedback and City staff observations. This memo also provides answers to some of the questions we are hearing.

## Upcoming Construction (August Work Plan)

Our contractor is scheduled in August to complete the following elements of the pilot installation:

- Raised bus boarding platforms on the south side at Armory Street, Eddy Street, and Lowell Avenue
- Painted crosswalks at Armory Street, Cross Street, Eddy Street, Brookside Avenue, and Walker Street to connect people to the south side parking, shared use path, and accessible bus stops
- Pedestrian refuge islands at each crosswalk to allow pedestrians to cross one lane of traffic at a time
- Vertical flexposts to better delineate the shared-use path
- Additional planned signage
- Pavement marking refinements, as outlined below

## Pavement Marking and Design Refinements

We appreciate the feedback from Councilors and the residents who have walked, rolled, biked, and driven through the corridor as well as the input of City staff from a number of departments. One purpose of the pilot is to test temporary features before committing to more permanent infrastructure changes. As a result of input and field observations, the following refinements are being made:

- **Eastbound lane guidance at Lowell Street:** Dashed lane lines will be added through the intersection to help drivers better align with the receiving lane.

- **Lowell Avenue left-turn clearance:** The first westbound parking space west of Lowell will be removed to improve turn radius and visibility for left-turning vehicles.
- **Trader Joe's driveway visibility:** The first westbound parking space east of the driveway exit is being removed to improve sight lines for drivers exiting the lot.
- **Emergency response coordination:** Following a site visit with the Newton Fire Department this week, a number of pavement markings will be adjusted to facilitate emergency vehicle operations.

## Parking Management During Construction

- Earlier phases required blanket parking restrictions to allow for efficient construction access. These are being eased.
- Localized restrictions may continue during installation of median islands and platforms but are not expected to be widespread.

## Landscaping and Plantings

- All perennials, shrubs, and trees are protected by a two-year guarantee and will be replaced if they fail during this period.
- Plants are being watered to provide proper establishment and health.

## Trader Joe's Driveway Visibility

- Vehicles were parked in front of Trader Joe's during an earlier phase of construction, which made it challenging for drivers exiting the driveway to see approaching vehicles. This was an interim condition and this area is now designated, as planned, for MBTA pick-up/drop-off, marked "BUS," and will be signed "No Parking" between the driveway exit and Armory St.
- Additionally, one parking space to the east of the driveway is being removed to further improve visibility for drivers exiting the Trader Joe's driveway.

## Parking Meters

We are not proposing to add more metered spaces than were originally along the corridor. The metered spaces are in front of the businesses at the West Newton end of the corridor and are a mix of 2-hr and long-term parking. We are not currently adding any meters in front of the Armory or Trader Joe's.

## Bus Stop Updates and Accessibility

In coordination with the MBTA and consistent with the **MBTA Bus Stop Design Guide (2025)**, the bus stops in this corridor are designed to allow for more efficient, safer, and accessible bus service. The following bus stop locations are included in the Pilot:

### Eastbound (West Newton to Newtonville):

- **Chestnut Street:** Existing curbside stop remains, now marked "BUS."
- **Armory & Eddy Streets:** New raised platforms between the travel lane and shared-use path with pedestrian refuge islands and crosswalks.
- **Lowell Avenue:** Raised platform with bike lane crossing, sidewalk access, and shelter.
- **Walker Street and Cross Street:** These stops are being consolidated with others to provide more efficient bus operations. Riders should walk or roll to a nearby stop to board.

### Westbound (Newtonville to West Newton):

- **Lowell Avenue:** No change.

- **Eddy & Armory Streets:** New landing areas and pavement markings (“BUS”) for improved accessibility.
- **Watertown Street:** No change.
- **Walker Street and Cross Street:** These stops are being consolidated with others to provide more efficient bus operations. Riders should walk or roll to a nearby stop to board.

#### **During Construction:**

- Bus operators are actively looking for passengers at both temporary and original locations.
- Signage is being installed to indicate new stop locations.
- Bus platforms, median islands, and crosswalks will be installed in August.

## **Data Collection**

We will be collecting and sharing traffic counts, including speed, volume, and turning movements along the corridor at regular intervals.

## **Opportunities for feedback**

We will be sharing another online feedback tool to collect suggestions and comments in the fall. We also welcome emails to the project account at [washingtonstreet@newtonma.gov](mailto:washingtonstreet@newtonma.gov) at all times.

## **Additional Information**

Some have asked about the Lowell Street intersection and traffic signal as well as the parallel parking operations along the corridor.

### **Lowell Street Intersection and Traffic Signal**

- DPW, Newton Police, Planning, and Ward 2 Councilors heard from residents that turning left onto Lowell Avenue from both directions of Washington Street had been challenging. Councilors worked with DPW to have a new traffic signal at Lowell Avenue and Washington Street, funded by TRIO mitigation funds.
- Features include:
  - **Westbound:** Dedicated left-turn lane and signal phase to allow protected turns onto southbound Lowell Avenue
  - **Eastbound:** Trailing left-turn phase to allow protected turns onto northbound Lowell Avenue

### **Parallel Parking Operations**

- Parallel parking on the corridor follows typical on-street parking design.
- Drivers are expected to signal, maneuver into the space, and other vehicles will wait or pass when safe. Drivers should wait for a safe gap in traffic before opening doors.
- Once the crosswalks are painted, drivers parking on the south side are encouraged to use the shared use path to walk over to the nearest crosswalk to cross to the north side.
- Prior to the pilot, parallel parking was available on both sides of the corridor adjacent to two lanes of faster traffic.
- On the south side, a buffer zone between parked vehicles and the shared-use path provides additional clearance. Passengers should still check for approaching pedestrians and cyclists before opening doors.

For continued updates and detailed information, please visit: [www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet](http://www.newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet)