

Zach Bosch
Transportation Engineer
City of Newton Department of Public Works, Transportation Division,

September 7, 2014

Dear Zach:

Thank you for agreeing to speak at the Waban Area Council meeting this Thursday, September 11, at 7:30pm at the Waban Library Center. We would like to have you speak to three major areas of concern to the Council and to bring us information, possibly through Bill Paille or Larry Cash of DOT, on some aspects of the Add-A-Lane Project:

1. Beacon Street:

We understand that you will present the current plan choice for the Collins Road/Beacon Street intersection across from Angier School. We hope you will include in your presentation the alternative plans that were studied and the reasoning behind the elimination of those choices. In addition, we would like to see the Northeastern Student Study on the Waban business district along Beacon Street (that was presented last spring at City Hall) and hope that you will also share that with us. If there has been any thinking on traffic redesign along Beacon Street at any point through Waban, we would like to know what the possibilities are that are being considered. These points include (but are not limited to) Beacon at Chestnut St., Short St., Beethoven Ave., Woodward St., as well as Collins Rd.). Will you please also address a possible traffic fix (possibly a hawk light and brighter street crossing designation) for a visually impaired resident who needs to cross Beacon St. near the Waban T and who reports that the crossing is currently unsafe for her. A second area of concern to residents along Beacon Street, west of Collins Road at Manitoba, is that there is no safe crossing (with hawk light and street crossing designation) for residents needing to go to Angier from that southwest portion of Waban.

2. Parking along Beacon Street and in Waban Neighborhoods

Can you offer some suggestions for relief for the areas impacted by commuter parking along Beacon St. and its offshoots near the T during the day? We might be well served to begin to organize an acceptable parking plan for the Village center, even before we make changes to the roads, since commuter parking on side streets and on Beacon St. near Angier is becoming an increasing burden to our community. We would also like to address the subject of decorative barrier installations to block diagonally parked cars from slipping forward into pedestrians or storefronts in the Waban Business District along Beacon Street.

3. Transportation Division of the City - Update to Waban concerning Add-A-Lane Traffic Counts:

Will you please bring a handout that we may upload on to our website that indicates the dates, timing, duration and location of the sites where the City carried out traffic counts in Waban at the Waban Area Council's request? We would appreciate learning the results of these counts so that we may be able to document the baseline traffic volume before Add-A-Lane construction begins at the Rt9/128 intersection. We would also like the City to advise us of any new information on Add-A-Lane that might affect our residents as that information becomes known, perhaps in coordination with the goals expressed by Alderman Yates' recently docketed item before the Newton Board of Aldermen (See Docket Item #310-14).

4. Bill Paille had indicated that he would ask Larry Cash of DOT or another DOT representative to attend our Council meeting on September 11. These are the questions we currently have regarding the Add-A-Lane Project that we would like to have addressed. If a DOT representative is not scheduled to attend, would you (or Bill) please communicate with DOT to bring us answers to the following questions:

A. What is the most current scheduling of this latest phase of the Add-A-Lane Project? We have been told that the construction start has been delayed and we would like to know the current timeline? Even though construction has not yet technically begun, we have noticed during the summer that frequent late night work has been carried out at the Rt. 9/Rt.128 intersection. Will this work continue and be carried out during daylight hours also? Is this work being done in preparation for Add-A-Lane?

B. Please help us to understand and document on our website DOT's thinking that necessitates that the two new traffic lights be installed early in the construction timeline, well before the holding-left turning lanes are established and the old configuration is changed. Will these traffic lights be operating soon after they are installed or will they be "decorative" until the re-configuration of the intersection is complete? We are concerned that scheduling their early installation and use could cause unnecessary back-ups into our community and that the time gap between traffic light installation and reconfiguration appears to be scheduled to last up to two years.

C. McMahan Consultant, Bill Steffens, advised us at a recent WAC meeting to direct Waban residents to the DOT website with their construction concerns and questions. Bill Paille has suggested that we direct residents to address their questions to him at the City. We believe that it would best serve Waban to facilitate communication and redress issues by establishing a coordinated website and e-mail address that would inform the DOT, the City, and our Waban Area Council of residents' questions and concerns about the construction. Would the DOT IT Department be able to facilitate such a communication link, including web address, e-mail address and phone number and to assign a person to be responsible for answering our residents' needs if they are confronted by safety or traffic issues during construction? We ask that a specific DOT person be named as liaison for our community so that he/she may address problems as they arise.

We are looking forward to seeing you on September 11th and thank you for helping to guide us through the many traffic issues about to impact Waban.

Sallee Lipshutz
President, Waban Area Council