

6/1/2014

Add-a-Lane

Summary:

Dept of Transportation plans to eliminate 2 of the cloverleaf on ramps from route 9 to 128. These will be replaced with stop lights which will stop all traffic to allow left turns. Since this area currently suffers from traffic jams at rush hour, we are concerned this will increase the problem and habitual drivers of this route will learn to avoid it by taking various side streets in Waban including, Quinobequin, Chestnut, Beacon, Woodward, etc. Bill Pailey, Director of Newton Transportation (formerly of DOT) presented to the WAC a computer simulation (still from meeting in photo section) created by the contractor which shows traffic flowing well in 2030 and he is convinced this will improve the situation. We requested traffic counts to be conducted include streets Wabanites are concerned about and they have agreed and we are waiting the complete results. At the April WAC meeting, the contractor pointed out that the new traffic configuration with a dedicated south turn lane and red light would positively impact the safety for route 9 merging traffic from William street (the last entrance before 128) and Quinobequin.

Body:

UPDATE:

Info as of March 13, 2014, from Mass Department of Transportation regarding anticipated start of construction on phase of Add-A-Lane that includes the Rt. 9/Rt.128 intersection:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **William Paille** <wpaille@newtonma.gov>
Date: Fri, Mar 14, 2014 at 7:07 AM
Subject: FW: Add-a-Lane Project
To: lipshutz sallee <rcexec@gmail.com>

Sallee,

This is the response I received from Larry Cash, the project manager for the Add-a-Lane project. Looks like a fall construction start...

Bill

From: Cash, Lawrence (DOT) [mailto:lawrence.cash@state.ma.us]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 4:47 PM
To: 'William Paille'
Cc: paillew1019@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Add-a-Lane Project

Hi Bill, the project is currently over at the Construction Contracts Office for almost a month now. Final Plans have been submitted and we should have a draft blue book prepared by the end of next week. We plan to issue the contract CD out the first week in April and have a scheduled bid opening after Memorial Day weekend, either June 10th or 17th. The contractor will need a minimum 6-8 weeks to review the 1300-1400 design plan sheets and special provisions.

I anticipate a Contract NTP in early August.

Please let me know if you have any further questions,

Thanks, Larry

The traffic counts made by MA Dept. of Transportation for reference by them and Newton before construction of Add-A-Lane begins have just arrived. We have asked for an explanation of exactly where some of these counts in Waban were done and will report when explanations are made. ([Click here to see Traffic Counts - document archive](#))

TRAFFIC COUNTS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY DOT OCTOBER 22 and 23

In order to monitor traffic changes in Waban resulting from the proposed reconfiguration of the Route 128/Route 9 intersection for possible mitigation, the MA Department of Transportation will be collecting traffic data along Quinobequin Road, Larkspur Road, Chestnut Street (near Route 9) and the Route 9 on-ramp between Chestnut and Quinobequin Roads.

This traffic monitoring by DOT to collect baseline data will occur, October 22 and Wednesday, October 23. Although the WAC has repeatedly asked for the Route 9 westbound off-ramp to Chestnut Street and for Tamworth/Radcliff Road to also be monitored, we are not confident that DOT has agreed to do so.

48 Hour ATRs (automated)

- Quinobequin Road – east of I-95/Route 128 overpass
- Quinobequin Road – north of Route 9
- Chestnut Street – north of Route 9
- Kendrick Street – east of I-95/ Route 128 overpass
- Kendrick Street – west of Dedham Street

Manual Turning Movement Counts (7AM-9AM and 4PM-6PM)

- Nahanton Street at Wells Avenue/Nahanton Park
- Nahanton Street at Winchester Street
- Nahanton Street at Dedham Street
- Quinobequin Road at Lakespur Road

They propose to conduct this count program during the weekdays from Tuesday, October 22, 2013 to Thursday, October 24, 2013. Once the count program has been conducted, they will summarize the counts in a brief memo as documentation of the completed of the baseline counts.

On Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at 6:10PM, Chris Steele, Maureen Reilly-Meagher and Sallee Lipshutz, as representatives of the "proto" Waban Area Council, met with Mayor Setti Warren in his office at City Hall to discuss the Waban issues of concern about the DOT Route 9/128 interchange raised in the letter delivered to him on April 23, 2013. In addition to the Mayor, Sallee, Maureen and Chris, City of Newton Chief Operating Officer Robert Rooney and Citizen Assistance Officer Aaron Goldman were in attendance.

Discussion which was a short and clear statement from the Mayor in which he indicated that he was not in a position to change the plans of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation with regard to the intersection. He indicated that the "horse had left the barn" and the "train had left the station," indicating that the project was much too far along for him to have any influence on changing the proposal. He assured us that he would take the issue of mitigation very seriously and would have his administration monitor the vehicle count process, looking to Bob Rooney to oversee this aspect to make certain that it is done well. Bob Rooney also indicated that he would push for drawings that lay people could easily visualize of the Quinobequin Road on-ramp/Wellesley Office Park portion of the plan so that we could study them more reasonably for safety issues. Mr. Rooney also shared that he believed the VISSIM software was

limited to the bias flaw of “garbage in/garbage out.” Although items such as an extension of the sound barrier wall and other specific traffic calming ideas we had taken up with Bill Paille, Director of Transportation, were not discussed with Mayor Warren, they are on the table with DOT, as is continuing to pursue better engagement with the DCR. We will continue to advocate for them.

As the meeting was concluding, we raised the issue of Engine 6 and the fact that there is substantial fear for neighborhood safety as well as distrust of the selection process of prospective clients/tenants as being benign. The Mayor told us that he had, in fact, received many negative letters that we wouldn't believe. Mayor Warren did not dismiss those concerns off-handedly, but allowed that there is much irony in our raising them. There are, he averred, already people living among us in “affordable housing” in Newton who are not vetted at all. The Engine 6 program would scrutinize the tenants very closely and reject the ones who didn't fit the selection criteria, while the housing already available to them in Newton doesn't select or deselect tenants for these same characteristics. He showed definite visceral support for Newton's promoting this program. He listened to our complaint that the purchase of the property and the City approvals had slipped in under the radar and that people felt “under the gun” with a July 2 deadline for community response. He allowed that he and Candace Haven (Planning Department) have the final say on funding and that the July 2 deadline was under his (and Candace's) control and was not written in stone. He also indicated that he would not sign off on the project if the community did not embrace it.

Take Action:

Please take action by contacting our elected representatives. We have provided texts you can cut and paste and alter as you wish.

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Governor Deval Patrick e-mail to his office at: <http://www.mass.gov/governor/constituentservices/contact/>.

That e-mail address will bring up a form from the Governor's Office that requires your Name, Address, State, City, Zip, Phone and e-mail information and offers a box for your comments. Please enter your information in the required fields and then copy and paste the following letter in the Comment box.

COPY BELOW AND PASTE

We are writing as residents of the City of Newton in support of the Mass Department of Transportation's Add-A-Lane Project, which we believe will benefit all drivers in the Commonwealth who use Rt. 95/ Rt. 128. The DOT has designed and is constructing an exemplary highway that will foster economic development along throughout the Rt. 128 corridor while eliminating the necessity for daily breakdown lane use as a traveled roadway during periods of heavy traffic.

However, Our concerns, which we have brought to the attention of the Mass Department of Transportation, with no satisfactory response, are with the proposed re-design of the intersection of Rt. 128 with Rt. 9. The DOT is suggesting that the four-leaf clover leaf be reconfigured to a two-leaf clover leaf requiring two additional traffic lights to the nearby already existing light at the intersection near Sun-Life and Harvard Vanguard Office Parks. Eastbound Rt. 9 drivers wishing to go north on Rt. 128 and westbound Rt. 9 drivers wishing to go south on Rt. 128 would each be required to wait in left-turn lanes for access to 128 across Rt. 9 traffic controlled by two independent traffic lights. The proposed two-leaf cloverleaf has not been used as a replacement for a four-leaf design anywhere else by DOT, providing Rt. 9, Newton's major east-west arterial highway, as a test case.

To complicate matters, there is a side entrance to the intersection along Rt. 9 near the Wellesley Office Park that carries injects local traffic from that Park as well as local Newton traffic from multiple local arterials. Drivers from our community as well as those leaving the Office Park will be inserted into high speed traffic and presented with the challenge of crossing three lanes to access left turn lanes to enter Rt. 128 southbound. All the while these drivers will be dodging high-speed westbound Rt. 9 through-traffic and drivers who wish to go northward on Rt. 128. The Route 9 implications for this design cannot be justified, as proposed, to be a safe design.

In addition to this enormous safety concern, we believe that it is imperative to consider the entire corridor along Rt. 9 as a transportation “system” through our City and the surrounding communities when planning roadway development. Although Rt. 9 is under the auspices of DOT as a State controlled roadway and the only major arterial highway running east-west through Newton, DOT's narrow focus on the Rt 128 Add-A-Lane project will clearly lead to

unintended negative impacts on Newton. Not only will we have traffic escaping into our neighborhoods, we will be reducing the chances for local future economic development in Newton in the current commercial areas along Rt 9. This design is neither prudent nor desirable.

We urge you to act to separate the Rt 9/128 interchange from the current add-a-lane project and direct MassDOT to redesign this interchange to address these grievous safety, weave, and through flow issues for route 9. We further urge MassDOT to include this interchange in a more thorough plan for addressing the regional Route 9 system as a cohesive whole. We are calling on you to bring all the resources of your Executive Office to bear to help us with this deep concern of the citizens of our community. We greatly appreciate your consideration in this matter.

The e-mail addresses below will bring up a form that requires your Name, Address, State, City, Zip, Phone and e-mail information and offers a box for your comments. Please enter your information in the required fields and then copy and paste the following letter in the Comment box.

Senator Elizabeth Warren http://www.warren.senate.gov/?p=email_senator

Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III <https://kennedy.house.gov/contact/email-me>

COPY BELOW AND PASTE

We are writing as residents of the City of Newton in support of the Mass. Department of Transportation's Add-A-Lane Project, which we believe will benefit all drivers in the Commonwealth who use Rt. 95/ Rt. 128. The DOT has designed and is constructing an exemplary highway that will foster economic development along the rim of the Rt. 128 wheel while eliminating the necessity for daily breakdown lane use as a traveled roadway during periods of heavy traffic.

Our concerns, which we have brought to the attention of the Mass. Department of Transportation, with no satisfactory response, are with the proposed re-design of the intersection of Rt. 128 with Rt. 9. The DOT is suggesting that the four-leaf cloverleaf be reconfigured to a two-leaf cloverleaf requiring two additional traffic lights close to the existing light at the intersection near Sun-Life and Harvard Vanguard Office Parks. Eastbound Rt. 9 drivers wishing to go north on Rt. 128 and westbound Rt. 9 drivers wishing to go south on Rt. 128 would each be required to wait in left-turn lanes for access to 128 across Rt. 9 traffic controlled by two independent traffic lights. The proposed two-leaf cloverleaf has not been used as a replacement for a four-leaf design anywhere else by DOT, making Rt. 9, Newton's only major east-west arterial highway, an unsuitably risky test case.

To complicate matters, there is a side entrance to the intersection along Rt. 9 near the Wellesley Office Park that injects traffic from that Park as well as local Newton traffic from multiple local arterials onto Rt. 9. Drivers from our community as well as those leaving the Office Park will be inserted into high speed traffic and presented with the challenge of crossing three lanes to access left turn lanes to enter Rt. 128 southbound. All the while these drivers will be dodging westbound Rt. 9 through-traffic as well as drivers who wish to go northward on Rt. 128. This "weave" design cannot be justified as being a safe design. In fact, this particular DOT proposed design removes just such a dangerous weave from Rt. 128. The cure for one roadway should not be the cause of harm to the other.

In addition to this enormous safety concern, we believe that it is imperative to consider the entire corridor along Rt. 9 as a transportation "system" through our City and the surrounding communities when planning roadway development. Rt. 9 is a State controlled roadway and the only major arterial highway running east-west through Newton. Although Rt. 9 is under the auspices of DOT, the department's narrow focus on the Rt. 128 aspect of the Add-A-Lane Project will clearly lead to unintended negative impacts on Newton. Not only will the inevitable slowing of Rt. 9 traffic at this intersection drive vehicles into residential neighborhoods, but the degradation of traffic flow on Rt. 9 will also reduce the chances for future economic development in Newton in the current commercial areas along the Rt. 9 corridor. The outcome of implementing this design is neither prudent nor desirable.

We urge you to act to separate the Rt. 9/128 interchange from the current Add-A-Lane Project and direct MassDOT to redesign this interchange to address these grievous safety, weave and through-flow issues for Route 9. We further urge you to direct MassDOT to include this interchange in a more thorough plan that addresses the regional Route 9 system as a cohesive whole.

We are calling on you to bring all the resources of your office to bear to help us with this deep concern of the citizens of our community. We greatly appreciate your consideration in this matter.