



Public Facilities Committee Agenda

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

7:00 PM

Room 204

The Public Facilities Committee will hold this meeting as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 7:00PM that the public may access in-person or virtually via Zoom. To view this meeting using Zoom use this link: <https://newtonma.gov.zoom.us/j/84810085677> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use the following Meeting ID: 848 1008 5677.

Items Scheduled for Discussion:

- #41-26** **Request for periodic updates on data collected on the Washington Street Pilot**
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, KRINTZMAN, KELLEY, LEARY, BIXBY, KALIS, BLOCK, WRIGHT, GREENBERG, GORDON, and CHARM requesting updates on the Washington Street Pilot redesign including a presentation and reminder on baseline data collected, periodic updates as data is collected during the term of the pilot, reports on changes made during the pilot period with reasons for them, and reports on snow clearing during the winter snow plowing season (180 Days: 07/19/2026).
- #43-26** **Request for a discussion and ordinance change to only require a new sidewalk installation if the existing sidewalk is damaged during construction**
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, KALIS, and LEARY requesting a discussion and ordinance change regarding Chapter 29 Sections 157-166 of the Revised Ordinances' requirement to install a sidewalk when renovations exceed 50% of house costs. The homeowner typically learns at the end of a long renovation project that a new sidewalk will be required at a cost of between twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) depending on sidewalk configuration. The ordinance change would only require a new sidewalk installation if the existing sidewalk was damaged during construction (180 Days: 07/19/2026).

The location of this meeting is accessible, and reasonable accommodation will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator at least two business days in advance of the meeting: ADACoordinator@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.

**Respectfully submitted,
David Kalis, Chair of the Public Facilities Committee**



Marc C. Laredo
Mayor

City of Newton
Department of Planning & Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459
(617) 796-1120 | newtonma.gov/planning

#41-26

Katie Whewell
Acting Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 29, 2026

TO: City Council

FROM: Katie Whewell, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Development
Lara Kritzer, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Planning Development
Jenn Martin, Director of Transportation Planning
Hannah Sternburg, Outreach Coordinator

RE: **#41-26 Request for periodic updates on data collected on the Washington Street Pilot**
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, KRINTZMAN, KELLEY, LEARY, BIXBY, KALIS, BLOCK, WRIGHT, GREENBERG, GORDON, and CHARM requesting updates on the Washington Street Pilot redesign including a presentation and reminder on baseline data collected, periodic updates as data is collected during the term of the pilot, reports on changes made during the pilot period with reasons for them, and reports on snow clearing during the winter snow plowing season (180 Days: 07/19/2026).

MEETING: February 4, 2026

CC: Josh Morse, Chief Operating Officer
Shawna Sullivan, Commissioner of Public Works
Ned Codd, Director of Transportation Operations

Overview

Originating from the City-Council approved 2019 Washington Street Vision Plan, the Washington Street Pilot aims to improve safety and accessibility for everyone traveling on Washington Street, whether walking, rolling, biking, riding transit, or driving. The Pilot corridor extends from Lowell Avenue to Chestnut Street and includes a two-way shared use path on the south side of the corridor, safer crossings, accessible bus stops, extensive plantings, a two-lane street layout with turn pockets along the central part of the corridor, and the use of low-cost flexible

materials so the City can test the configuration before investing in permanent design and construction.

Project design was funded through HCA funds (\$500,000). Construction funding and data collection are ARPA-funded (\$2.2 million) with a state earmark for additional landscaping (\$50,000) and Newton Crossing mitigation funds for hand- and lean-rails at the modular bus stop platforms (\$50,000).

Project Implementation and Communication

The Pilot was implemented on schedule and within budget by contractor I.W. Harding. The construction period took place during May to August 2025. Plant maintenance, watering, and replacement will continue through June 2027.

Prior to construction, the City mailed postcards to nearby residents and previewed the implementation in the Mayor's newsletter. Large signs were placed throughout the corridor and variable message boards were deployed. City staff received feedback via phone, Newton 311, and emails to the Mayor, City Council, and the project email address. The project newsletter grew to an audience of approximately 840 subscribers with an average open rate of 80%, and all updates were also posted on the City website. Staff canvassed corridor businesses on multiple occasions throughout implementation.

Pilot Adjustments

The Washington Street Pilot uses flexible materials, allowing the City to evaluate operations and make targeted adjustments in response to observed conditions and stakeholder feedback. Since implementation, the City has made a small number of modifications intended to clarify operations, improve sight lines, respond to emergency access needs, and improve low-light visibility of fixed features.

The City will continue to monitor performance of the Pilot and review feedback from corridor users and stakeholders. Additional targeted adjustments may be made as needed to support safe and predictable operations.

Adjustments Implemented August 2025

The first set of modifications were identified in July 2025 and implemented in August 2025 while the project was still under contract with I.W. Harding:

1. Dashed lane markings through the Lowell Avenue intersection

Reason: Residents and corridor users reported uncertainty about lane alignment through the intersection, and staff observed inconsistent driver positioning with underutilization of the northernmost eastbound through/turn lane.

Change: Added dashed lane markings to reinforce the intended alignment of the eastbound travel lanes.

Purpose: Improve driver clarity through the intersection and support consistent lane use.

2. Removed one westbound parking space (north side) immediately west of Lowell Avenue

Reason: Staff observed that the first space west of Lowell Avenue constrained turning movements for vehicles turning from Lowell Avenue onto Washington Street, resulting in encroachment into the westbound through/left turn lane and less predictable turning behavior.

Change: Eliminated the first westbound parking space west of Lowell Avenue.

Purpose: Improve turning geometry and reduce conflicts at the intersection.

3. Removed one westbound parking space (north side) immediately east of the Trader Joe's driveway

Reason: Feedback from corridor users indicated reduced sight lines for drivers exiting the Trader Joe's driveway, particularly when the first parking stall was occupied.

Change: Eliminated the first westbound parking space east of the driveway exit.

Purpose: Improve driveway exit sight distance to reduce the potential for vehicle conflicts when exiting.

4. Adjusted eastbound lane width and parking placement near Jacob's Gas Station / Armory Street area

Reason: The Newton Fire Department raised concerns regarding operating width in certain segments.

Change: Widened the eastbound travel lane, shifted eastbound parking stalls closer to the shared-use path buffer and added a painted edge line in the vicinity of Armory Street. Tapered the westbound turn lane in front of Jacob's Gas Station to provide a wider eastbound travel lane.

Purpose: Provide more operating width for emergency response and improve lane clarity and driver comfort. The edge line and shifted parking away from the travel lane

near Armory Street secondarily addressed expressed driver concern about comfortably exiting their parked vehicles.

5. Minor sign and pavement marking adjustments

Reason: Following initial implementation, staff observed several locations where signage and pavement markings could better match field conditions or improve legibility for drivers.

Change: Implemented minor sign/pavement marking adjustments based on field review and resident feedback.

Purpose: Improve wayfinding, reduce confusion, and reinforce intended traffic operations.

Additional Signage Installed Winter 2025–2026

Additional signage was installed during winter 2025–2026 to address visibility and corridor safety:

6. Object marker signs for planters

Reason: Drivers reported difficulty seeing planters in low-light and inclement weather conditions, raising concerns about fixed-object collisions.

Change: Installed retroreflective object marker signs at each planter.

Purpose: Increase visibility of fixed features adjacent to the travel ways and improve nighttime and low-light delineation.

7. In-crosswalk pedestrian signs at median islands

Reason: During implementation, it was decided that paddle-mounted in-crosswalk signage on the median islands was more appropriate for the nature of the Pilot than the planned post-mounted crosswalk signs.

Change: Installed paddle-mounted in-crosswalk signs at median island pedestrian crossings.

Purpose: Reinforce pedestrian priority at marked crossings and improve driver compliance.

Baseline and Post-Implementation Data Collection

At the request of City Council, the City undertook extensive baseline data collection in Fall 2024 and repeated that data collection effort in Fall 2025. The Fall 2024 and Fall 2025 technical

analysis reports prepared by consultant Howard Stein Hudson are posted on the Washington Street website, newtonma.gov/washingtonstreet, under “Data Collection and Evaluation”.

Snow Removal

The City has a contract for winter snow operations along Washington Street. Services include plowing and shoveling of the shared use path, crosswalks, and ADA ramps; removal of snow completely from raised bus platforms; plowing of Washington Street from Chestnut Street to Lowell Avenue; and salting of all areas shoveled or plowed by the contractor.

to which they apply.

(h) **Criminal Penalty:** Any person who violates any provision of this article, the regulations promulgated hereunder, or an order or written approval issued hereunder, shall be subject to a written warning for the first offense, and shall be subject to a fine of (\$300.00) for subsequent offense. Each day or part thereof that such violation occurs or continues shall constitute a separate offense. Violations may result in the revocation of city licenses.

(i) **Non-Criminal Disposition:** As an alternative to criminal prosecution or civil action, the city may elect to utilize the non-criminal disposition procedure set forth in G.L. c. 40, §21D.

(j) **Appeals:** The decisions or orders of the commissioner shall be final. Further relief shall be to a court of competent jurisdiction.

(k) **Remedies Not Exclusive:** The remedies listed in this section are not exclusive of any other remedies available under any applicable federal, state or local law. (Ord. No. A-108, 04-18-17)

Sec. 29-147. Severability.

The provisions of this article are severable. If any provision, paragraph, sentence, or clause, of this article or the application thereof to any person, establishment, or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or application of this article. (Ord. No. A-108, 04-18-17)

Secs. 29-148—29-156. Reserved.

**ARTICLE VI.
REQUIRED REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF BUILDING SEWER,
WATER SERVICE PIPES AND SIDEWALKS**

Sec. 29-157. Definitions.

Unless the context specifically indicates otherwise, the meaning of terms used in this article shall be as follows:

Building sewer pipe: The sewer pipe which connects a building's sewer system to the public sewer main.

CCTV inspection: A closed circuit television inspection.

Commissioner: The commissioner of public works of the City of Newton or his authorized deputy, agent or representative.

Substantially remodeled or rehabilitated: When a dwelling or building is (1) renovated and/or gutted more than fifty percent (50%) or (2) an addition to a building is constructed that increases the footprint by more than 1,000 square feet, or increases the total square footage more than 1,000 square feet.

Water service pipe: The water pipe which connects a building's plumbing system to the nearest water gate valve serving the building. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-158. Updates to building sewer, water service pipes and sidewalks.

(a) When a dwelling or building is demolished and a new building is constructed, or when a building is substantially remodeled or rehabilitated, the following shall be removed and replaced, or installed at the owner's expense:

- (1) The building sewer pipe(s) to the public sewer main;
- (2) The water service pipe(s) to the water valve; and
- (3) The sidewalk and curbing across the entire public way frontage of the lot(s) the dwelling or structure is located on.

(b) The existing building sewer pipe(s), water service pipe(s), and sidewalk and curbing shall be removed and replaced, or installed in accordance with the provisions of this article and shall conform to the requirements of the State Building and Plumbing Codes, any standards and specifications established by the city engineer, and any other applicable federal, state, and city laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-159. Building sewer pipe removal and replacement procedure.

When removing and replacing building sewer pipe(s) under this article, the owner shall comply with the procedures and standards set forth in sections 29-60 and 29-61 of article III, which includes the approval of materials by the commissioner of public works. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-160. Building sewer pipe exemption.

The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that a building sewer pipe(s) is not required to be removed and replaced if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) the existing building sewer pipe(s) is less than twenty (20) years old;
- (2) the owner obtains a CCTV inspection of the interior of the existing building sewer pipe(s) by an entity licensed to conduct such an inspection and submits with the building permit application a copy of the CCTV inspection along with a signed statement from the inspector attesting to the date of the inspection and the address of the property inspected; and
- (3) the commissioner makes a determination, based on the material and manner of construction of the building sewer pipe(s) and the CCTV inspection, that the existing building sewer pipe(s) has the ability to be adequately reused without replacement. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-161. Water service pipe update procedure.

When removing and replacing water service pipe(s) under this article, the owner shall comply with the procedures and standards set forth in section 29-27 of article II, which includes the approval of materials by the commissioner of public works. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-162. Water service pipe exemption.

The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that the water service pipe(s) is not required to be removed and replaced if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) the existing water service pipe(s) is less than twenty (20) years old; and
- (2) the commissioner makes a determination, based on the material and manner of construction of the water service pipe(s), that the existing water service pipe(s) has the ability to be adequately reused without replacement. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-163. Adjoining sidewalks and access curb cuts.

Replacement or installation of sidewalk and curbing under this article shall include appropriate transition to adjoining curbing and walkways, including accessible curb cuts and other access as required. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-164. Sidewalk exemption.

(a) The commissioner, upon request from an applicant, may determine that the sidewalk and/or curbing across the entire frontage of a lot is not required to be replaced, or installed under this article at those locations where the commissioner determines that either:

- (1) the existing sidewalk complies with the current applicable codes, standards and specifications and is in good condition;
- (2) the lack of existing sidewalk and/or curbing is consistent with the current or future nature of the neighborhood; or
- (3) such updates are not feasible due to public safety, site constraints, or conflicts with future plans for the area. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19, Ord. No C-56, 01-06-2025)

Sec. 29-165 Compliance.

The city engineer shall certify to the commissioner of inspectional services when the provisions of this article have been complied with. The commissioner of inspectional services shall not issue a certificate of occupancy for any property subject to this article prior to receipt of such certification. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Sec. 29-166. Severability.

The provisions of this article are severable. If any provision, paragraph, sentence, or clause, of this article or the application thereof to any person, establishment, or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or application of this article. (Ord. No. B-42, 10-07-19)

Article VII INFILTRATION AND INFLOW MITIGATION

Sec. 29-167. Definitions.

For purposes of this article, the meaning of the terms used shall be as follows:

Infiltration: Water other than wastewater that enters the sewer system (including sewer service connections and foundation drains) from the ground through means which include, but are not limited to, defective pipes, pipe joints, connections, or manholes. Infiltration does not include, and is distinguished from, inflow.

Infiltration/Inflow: The quantity of water from both infiltration and inflow without distinguishing the source.

Inflow: Water other than sanitary flow that enters the sewer system (including sewer service connections) from sources which include, but are not limited to, roof leaders, cellar drains, yard drains, area rains, drains from springs and swampy areas, manhole covers, cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers, catch basins, cooling towers, storm waters, surface runoff, street wash waters, or drainage. Inflow does not include, and is distinguished from, infiltration. (Ord. No. B-45, 11-04-19)