

September 23, 2020

TAG Comments on Chestnut / Oak Intersection

Dear Newton Traffic Officials,

As Chair of Newton's Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), and speaking for its citizen members, we would like to thank the City for its efforts to improve the intersection of Chestnut and Oak for the safety of all road users. We strongly support this effort. In particular, a raised crossing is a welcome addition to Newton's traffic calming toolbox.

Discussion with TAG members have yielded several questions and suggestions:

- Raised crossings often result in the ability to remove traffic signals. Is a traffic signal necessary at this location? Could an "all stop" configuration be accommodated/trialed with or without signals?
- Could the plan accommodate protected bicycle right turns, such as connecting to a buffered bike lane on Oak?
- Can the crosswalks be pushed closer to the straight-through pedestrian desire lines?
- This intersection is close to the pedestrian crossing of the Upper Falls Greenway, and that crossing appears to be within the scope of work. Can this crossing be made safer and more visible?
 - "Shark's teeth" yield markers that exist today are not indicated on the plans
 - The sidewalk has no extensions or other markings (any extensions should be designed considering bicyclists on Oak).
- If signals are maintained, how would the pedestrian movements be phased? Exclusive, or concurrent with leading pedestrian intervals? Raised crossings reduce turning vehicle speeds and improve the safety of concurrent intersections. If concurrent phasing is used, consider "No Turn On Red" to keep crosswalks clear of vehicles.
- If signals are maintained, the installation of a new mast arm offers the opportunity to improve the street and sidewalk lighting at this location, which appears to be lit by a single street light at the current time. Additional street lights would improve pedestrian safety at night. Ideally, these lights would be pedestrian level and illuminate all crosswalks.

We look forward to providing more feedback about this important and exciting project as planning progresses.

Sincerely,
Michael Halle
Chair, Newton Transportation Advisory Group, for its citizen members

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