

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

Traffic Committee Meeting
May 16, 2017
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Lt. Dennis Aniunas, Tim Filasky, Marvin Howard, Tom Parkins

Absent: DC Mark Farrall
Andrew Haines
Tom Coleman
Dave Gula

Guests: Sgt. Curtis Davis, Newark Police Department
Mary Ellen Gray, Planning & Development
Jerry Clifton, Councilmember, District 2
Matt Buckley, Delaware Department of Transportation
Mark Deshon, BikeNewark
Susan Grasso, BikeNewark

1. Discuss the request to remove the special residential parking on the outside radius of Thompson Circle.

Mr. Filasky said Thompson Circle is a one-way street with parking on both sides of the street in certain areas. Mr. Filasky said this configuration makes it difficult to pick up the refuse. Mr. Filasky said residents were notified that the city was considering restricting parking on the inside radius of the street. Mr. Filasky said Mr. Schmalhoffer, Newark landlord suggested restricting parking on the outside radius. Mr. Filasky said upon further review he would request restricting parking on the outside radius between the hours of 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mr. Filasky said the residents on the inside radius of Thompson Circle were notified and have agreed to placing refuse carts on the outside radius to make trash collection operations more efficient.

Mr. Parkins asked if there was any pushback from residents that live on the outside radius. Mr. Filasky said all residents were notified and haven't they received any feedback.

Mr. Clifton asked if the parking restriction would be imposed every day or only on refuse collection days. Mr. Filasky said his recommendation would be to restrict parking only on weekdays.

Motion by Mr. Filasky, seconded by Mr. Howard, to remove special residential parking permits on the outside radius of Thompson Circle between the hours of 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 4 to 0

2. Request a contraflow lane on Main Street (between N. College Avenue and S. College Avenue).

Mr. Deshon said back in September 2016, the University of Delaware installed a sign at Main Street and N. College Avenue that bicyclists must walk their bike without providing any natural alternative for bicyclists heading south. As a result, BikeNewark began reviewing this intersection and discussed how to best accommodate bicyclists without having them dismount. Mr. Deshon said BikeNewark came up with an idea for a small contraflow lane on Main Street on the south side between N. College and S. College Avenues. Mr. Deshon said this option would essentially legitimize behavior that is already occurring at this intersection.

Mr. Deshon said a meeting was held in early March with the BikeNewark, University of Delaware, Delaware Department of Transportation, to discuss a workable option. Due to a funeral, the Newark Police Department was unable to attend. Mr. Deshon said at the conclusion of the meeting, it was approved to forward Option 1 to the Traffic Committee for review and approval.

Lt. Aniunas asked what would be the safest way to get bicyclists to make the left turn from College Avenue onto Main Street safely. Mr. Buckley said the safest option would be to eliminate the bike lane entirely and for bikes and cars to mix. Mr. Buckley said another option would be to maintain the bike lane and convert it to a right turn bike only lane and provide warning to motorists that left turning bicyclists will be in the lane.

Lt. Aniunas asked it is realistic to think when the College Avenue light is queued up that bicyclists will wait. Mr. Buckley said the confident rider will work their way into the traffic. Mr. Deshon said or they will wait for the scramble phase. Ms. Grasso said her understanding is that bicyclists would wait in the bicycle lane and will proceed on the scramble phase.

Mr. Parkins asked if bicyclists are coming across during the scramble phase are they riding or walking their bike. Mr. Buckley said they could be doing both. Mr. Parkins said he feels the best option would be to stay in the cycle lane until the scramble phase and then proceed.

Mr. Buckley said DelDOT could post a sign to try to keep bicyclists in the lane until the scramble phase occurs. Mr. Parkins said this is what they should be doing now.

Lt. Aniunas said he is concerned with safety if we encouraged bicyclists to ride contraflow to traffic.

Mr. Deshon asked Mr. Buckley to provide more detail regarding the proposed striping, signage and changes to the scramble phase to help visualize the concept. Mr. Buckley said step one would be to leave N. College Avenue alone, extend the crosswalk markings (scramble crosswalk) further east to access the bike lane. The only time bicyclists should be in the lane is when there is no traffic moving westbound.

Mr. Parkins said his issue is not with the contraflow, however he is concerned with the crossover into the left turn lane. He would prefer signage for bicyclists to stay in the bike lane and cross during the scramble phase. Mr. Buckley said if that is the main concern he would recommend that bicyclists must wait for walk light.

Sgt. Davis finds it contradictory that University of Delaware is not permitting bicyclists through a pedestrian area, however the current recommendation is to permit bicyclists in the pedestrian area. Sgt. Davis said the Delaware law states that if you're in the bike lane you must stay in the bike lane and doesn't believe bicyclists turning right will be patient and wait if left turning bicyclists are stopped in front of them. Sgt. Davis said he disagrees that bicyclists won't use the sidewalk. Sgt. Davis said he isn't comfortable with performing non-traditional traffic movements when there is an opportunity for a conflict to occur. Sgt. Davis said he doesn't have an issue with the contraflow, and agrees the challenge is getting bicyclists there safely.

Mr. Deshon said one of the original options that was discussed with DelDOT was adding a bike box that would put bicyclists ahead of the cars. Mr. Deshon said DelDOT's concern was this would create greater backups on N. College Avenue.

Lt. Aniunas asked if there was any further discussion on the model being presented. Mr. Buckley said the most logical option would to add a sign that bicyclists must cross or turn left only during the scramble phase and the current bike lane needs to be indicative of bikes right turn only. Lt. Aniunas suggested a sign that reads "Bikes left turn on walk only".

Mr. Buckley said rather than over engineering with improvements, he recommended to begin by installing the scramble signage first and if it doesn't work move forward with other options. Mr. Buckley said he would suggest starting with option 1. Mr. Buckley said during green right turn arrow phase a bicyclist is prohibited by turning left and must wait for the scramble phase.

Mr. Parkins asked what would be done to educate the public. Mr. Deshon said during the summer months he would use a Go Pro to mimic traffic movements. Ms. Grasso said they have been working with Student Government Association to include bicycle safety education as part of the new student orientation.

Mr. Parkins asked if there is a possibility for BikeNewark to be at the intersection to help educate the students. Mr. Deshon said that would be a possibility.

Motion by Mr. Deshon, seconded by Mr. Parkins, for DelDOT to move forward with option 1 recommendation and re-evaluate April of 2018.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 4 to 0

Mr. Parkins inquired as to the timeframe when DelDOT could perform the improvements. Mr. Buckley said the goal would be to have this completed prior to the fall semester. There will be lead time for the signs and will add to the work performed by the striping crew. Mr. Buckley recommended the Traffic Committee reconvene on the improvements this time next year to review.

Ms. Grasso recommended that BikeNewark reach out to the engineering students to collect data.

3. Discuss a temporary mock-up for a mini roundabout on Orchard Road.

Ms. Grasso said the BikeNewark engineering committee is looking to create a low stress high comfort bicycle network to get north and south throughout the city. Ms. Grasso said BikeNewark identified a couple of locations within the Old Newark neighborhood. Mr. Deshon said the goal is to replace four-way stop intersections with mini circles. Ms. Grasso said this would help to slow traffic in neighborhoods. The goal is to perform a temporary mock-up and pilot program on Sunset and Orchard Roads and obtain feedback from the community.

Lt. Aniunas asked how they would create the temporary mock-ups. Mr. Deshon said they would rely on Public Works to help set this up. Mr. Filasky said the intent was to use spare tires and signage to create the mini roundabout. Ms. Grasso said if there was enough notice the goal would be to engage the community in the design of the mini circles.

Mr. Parkins asked how they would evaluate the test. Mr. Filasky said they would ask the police to install the speed sign.

Lt. Aniunas asked what the overall goal is of the project. Ms. Grasso said the goal is to continue to encourage slow moving traffic through the neighborhood and to give bicyclists an easier way to maneuver by providing a route that is safe, comfortable and convenient.

Lt. Aniunas said one concern he has in a design that could potentially obstruct view or line of sight. Lt. Aniunas said another concern he has is the movability of a tire. Ms. Grasso said like the pop up demonstration that was completed on Casho Mill Road.

Ms. Grasso said if they receive approval to move forward with this project they would work with DelDOT on a design to bring back to the committee for review and approval. Mr. Parkins said he would like to see more public outreach, education, evaluation conducted prior to Traffic Committee review.

Ms. Gray said her thought would be to utilize the model for Casho Mill Road pop-up and to perform a mock up and design, education for these locations. Mr. Filasky said they surveyed these locations and have determined it will work from an engineering standpoint. Ms. Gray would recommend using a similar type model for outreach, education and come back to the committee.

Mr. Parkins said he would recommend tabling this item until further research and questions can be answered. Lt. Aniunas recommended BikeNewark provide notification to the residents in the community.

Ms. Grasso asked if BikeNewark could partner with the city on this project. Ms. Gray said she would be happy to help and assistance with the project.

Motion by Mr. Parkins, seconded by Mr. Howard, for BikeNewark to move forward in the planning and design and table this item for a future Traffic Committee meeting.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 4 to 0

4. Request for a no u-turn restriction heading west on S. Main Street at Amstel Avenue.

Lt. Aniunas said this was brought to his attention by a fire police officer. Sgt. Davis said his understanding is the concern seems to be there is an insufficient turning radius for vehicles to make the U-turn.

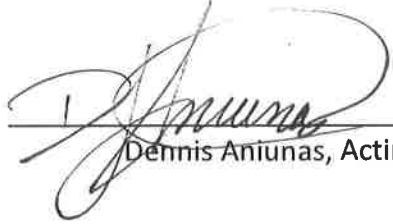
Lt. Aniunas said he would recommend reviewing if a U-turn could be made safely and table the items for a future Traffic Committee meeting.

Motion by Sgt. Davis seconded Mr. Parkins, by to review the U-turn and table this item for a future Traffic Committee meeting.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 7 to 0

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Dennis Aniunas, Acting Chairman

Any supporting documents pertaining to this meeting will be held on file at the police department.