



CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



Mr. Robert Airasian, Chair
Justin Hanrahan, Police Chief
Ryan Nicholson, Fire Chief
Thomas Brady, Director of Public Works
Steven Magoon, Community Development and Planning
Tyler Glode, City Engineer
Ms. Kelly Gallagher
Mr. Daniel Grieneisen
Mr. Ryan McMorrow

September 24, 2025 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Robert Airasian, Justin Hanrahan, Ryan Nicholson, Tyler Glode, Daniel Grieneisen, Ryan McMorrow

The Traffic Commission addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Chief Nicholson made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2025 Commission meeting; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Nick Shoelson of Beechwood Ave for the installation of Slow Down signage in each direction on Beechwood Ave.

Sgt. Sampson reported that Mr. Shoelson was concerned about the frequency of motorists cutting through the area at high speeds and felt that this was a dangerous situation due to Beechwood Avenue abutting the Perkins School property. Mr. Shoelson would like cautionary slow signs. Sgt. Sampson noted that the Department posted an electronic speed feedback sign on Beechwood Avenue; the sign was used in display and non-display modes. Overall speeds in both modes were reasonable. The vast majority of high speeds recorded by the speed sign were caused by other factors such as lawn equipment.

Chief Hanrahan felt that the recorded speeds were reasonable for the area.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to deny the request for Slow Down signage in each direction on Beechwood Ave; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by Lowell Avenue area neighbors for safety improvements at the intersection of Lowell Avenue at Carroll Street.

Ms. Lim of Carroll Street reported that she notices many younger adults drive through the area on scooters, etc. without taking proper precautions and sees many near collisions. She finds this dangerous because she feels that cars on Carroll Street are traveling too fast and the area is congested with parked cars. Ms. Lim would also like the police department to consider bicycle safety training for students. Ms. Lim would appreciate other measures such as signage or speed bumps.

Ms. Rebecca Cassler of York Ave shared Ms. Lim's concerns and felt that similar conditions can be found at the intersections of Carroll Street at Harnden Avenue, and Hovey Street at Harden Avenue. Many neighbors share the same concerns in the area. Ms. Cassler would appreciate Stop signs at the

intersection of Carroll Street at Lowell Avenue.

Ms. Anna Scherling of Waverley Avenue is the parent of a third grader; her child could walk to school but Ms. Scherling is not comfortable with the current conditions at the Lowell Avenue at Carroll Street intersection. During drop-off and pick-up times, many parents park in this area and make the intersection very difficult to cross. Other northbound motorists drive quickly in order to travel to York Avenue to get in the drop-and-go line. The students are smaller and there are no reminders that students are in the area, and there is no way for students to signal that they are crossing.

Mr. Kevin Donahue of Lowell Ave also believes similar conditions exist at the intersection of Hovey Street at Lowell Avenue and requested improvements at this intersection as well.

Senior Transportation Planner Mr. Zeke Mermell reported the State Safe Routes to School Program helps find ways to make it safer for students to walk or bike to school. The Planning Department plans to work with other City departments and Watertown Public Schools to consider education and awareness programs and infrastructure improvements around the schools. Mr. Mermell invited the neighborhood residents to work with him in efforts that may benefit the Lowell School area.

District C Councilor Vincent Piccirilli lives in the area and notices many vehicles parking illegally at this intersection. When vehicles park in the area it is impossible to see children standing on the sidewalk. He felt signage would help the situation.

Mr. Airasian assessed the area and agrees that it is difficult to see the intersection as he drives through the area. He believes vegetation near the intersection also contributes to the problem.

Sgt. Sampson reported that he assessed the area at the beginning of the school year, and traffic safety issues were immediately apparent. Line of sight issues exist at every leg of the intersection; this is due to the geometry of the intersection as well as cars parking in the area. Sgt. Sampson met on-site with City Engineer Mr. Glode who agreed that improvements were needed. To immediately begin to address the issues, No Parking Here to Corner signage was placed 20' from the crosswalks on the east side of Carroll Street, the south side of Lowell Avenue west of Carroll Street, and the north side of Lowell Avenue east of Carroll Street. This signage complies with the City's Traffic Rules and Orders and was posted as an interim measure until full approval could be obtained by the Traffic Commission. The signage seemed to alleviate some of the parking issues at the intersection. Sgt. Sampson suggested that the Commission also consider restricting parking on both sides of the street at the distances noted for the existing signs.

Mr. Glode agreed with the recommendations noted by Sgt. Sampson. Mr. Glode reported that it is difficult to deter families from parking in this area, and conducted an All-Way Stop evaluation for the intersection. Traffic counts did not meet the requirements for an All-Way Stop, but the intersection meets the exceptions because it is a high volume pedestrian area. Based on the exceptions, being in a school zone, and being a primary access to the school, Mr. Glode felt the intersection would meet the intent for an All-Way Stop control.

Chief Nicholson felt it would be helpful to have parking restrictions on the opposite sides of the streets as well.

Chief Hanrahan reported that from an enforcement standpoint, posted signage is helpful.

Mr. Grieneisen agreed that it is a problem when vehicles are parked too closely to the intersection.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to:

- a. Restrict parking on both sides of Lowell Ave, from a point 44' west of Carroll Street to Carroll Street
- b. Restrict parking on both sides of Lowell Ave, from a point 29' east of Carroll Street to Carroll Street
- c. Restrict parking on both sides of Carroll Street, from a point 41' south of Lowell Ave. to Lowell Ave
- d. Install an All-Way Stop control at the intersection of Lowell Avenue at Carroll Street

The motion was seconded by Chief Hanrahan. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Airasian asked Sgt. Sampson to notify Zoning about possible vegetation issues at the intersection.

Item 4 – The Commission reviewed a request by Piper Hadley of Belmont Street for the installation of a pedestrian crossing signal on Belmont Street at Duff Street.

Sgt. Sampson reported that the Commission approved the crosswalk in 2013, and Ms. Hadley is concerned about the lack of compliance by motorists at the crosswalk. Sgt. Sampson noted that the roadway is straight, and vehicles can travel at high speeds though the area.

Chief Nicholson noted that a rapid flashing beacon was approved closer to Beacon High School at 917 Belmont Street.

Mr. Glode reported that a rapid flashing beacon was not warranted in this area due to the proximity to the existing beacon at 917 Belmont Street. The area was reviewed several times since, and the crosswalk would meet the intent for a rapid flashing beacon. There are other crosswalks in the area with similar processes, so installation could go either way.

Mr. Airasian noted that this is another circumstance where the pedestrian sign eastbound seems blocked by vegetation. Sgt. Sampson will reach out the Zoning on this matter as well.

Chief Nicholson asked whether an in-street sign could be an option.

Mr. Glode stated that an in-street sign is an option but is not typically done as part of their standards; The Engineering Department likes rapid flashing beacons but cautioned that they are quite costly. Cost could make beacons restrictive.

Chief Hanrahan noted that from a traffic perspective, the beacons are helpful to have. If it's just a matter of cost, it shouldn't trump safety.

Mr. Glode noted that beacons are an option to look into through the Safe Routes to School program.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to install a rapid flashing beacon at the crosswalk on Belmont Street at Duff Street; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. John Clinton of Fayette Street to upgrade the existing traditional Stop signs on both sides of Pearl Street at Fayette Street to LED Stop signs. Mr. Clinton has lived on Fayette Street for 32 years and has witnessed many crashes, occasions where poles have been hit, signs have been knocked down, and motorists have not stopped for the Stop signs on Pearl Street. This is a daily issue. There are numerous children walking to various schools in the area. Mr. Clinton requested LED Stop signs at this location.

Sgt. Sampson provided crash data for the area. While assessing the data, it seemed that many crashes

involved vehicles traveling southbound on Pearl Street. Pearl Street is very small, it could be a matter of people not noticing the intersection.

Mr. Glode noted that significant utility work has been performed in the area, forcing many motorists not familiar with the area through the neighborhoods. He also noted that LED signs are typically not posted in residential areas – They can be a nuisance because they are very bright. Engineering is currently performing an internal review of Stop signs in the City.

Mr. Airasian noted that the current presence of construction equipment and a porta-potty near the corner may be contributing to the problem. Mr. Airasian asked if the contractor could have the equipment removed from the corner.

In response to a question by Sgt. Sampson, Mr. Glode reported that he would not be opposed to installing supplemental “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” warning plaques to the current Stop sign postings on Pearl Street. The signs could be installed on a test basis to determine whether they help the issue.

Chief Hanrahan made a motion to install supplemental “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” warning plaques to the Stop signs on Pearl Street.; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

[Note: Zoning was contacted and asked to assess possible vegetation issues on Belmont Street at Duff Street, on Fayette Street at Pearl Street, and on Lowell Avenue at Carroll Street]

Item 6 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Noreen Lombard of Sycamore Street for traffic calming and the installation of crosswalks on Sycamore Street. Ms. Lombard reported that speeding vehicles have always been an issue on Sycamore Street. She felt that enforcement may be difficult in this area due to the street’s proximity to the Belmont and Waltham jurisdictions.

The only crosswalks in the area are Belmont Street in Watertown and Lexington Street in Belmont.

Chief Nicholson questioned whether there was a safe area to accommodate a crosswalk.

Mr. Glode reported that Belmont Street has been studied a number of times, but that the study area could be expanded to determine whether a crosswalk could be installed on Sycamore Street. There are a number of small side streets that could impact the ability to install a crosswalk.

Mr. Grieneisen made a motion to conduct a traffic study of Sycamore Street; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Tingting Yu of Repton Place to conduct a traffic study on Watertown Street near Casey Playground and consider installing speed bumps or similar measures to reduce vehicle speeds. Ms. Yu reported that her daughter attends the daycare at 51 Watertown Street. When weather permits, the daycare brings the children to Casey Playground. She felt that motorists travel too fast and often fail to yield to pedestrians. She felt that vehicles traveling east or west suddenly get open road and drive at higher speeds in this area.

Ms. Yue Huang of Hall Avenue also has a daughter that attends the pre-school; Ms. Huang echoed Ms. Yu’s concerns. She noted that the pre-school uses the crosswalk one or two times each day. In the early evening the street is very busy, and motorists often park too closely to the crosswalk.

Senior Transportation Planner Mr. Zeke Mermell reported that Watertown Street is included in the City’s Safe Streets for All grant program. Although the grant has not yet started, the corridor will be studied to ensure vehicle speeds and safety for cyclists and pedestrians are addressed. The presence of the MBTA Route 59 bus on the street makes speed humps a challenge on Watertown Street. There may be other

“quick build” projects that may help calm traffic. Mr. Mermell welcomed Ms. Yu’s and Ms. Huang’s comments as the grant progresses.

Mr. Airasian pointed out that this crosswalk is fairly new and is equipped with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon. He noted that the crosswalk signage is blocked by a City owned tree.

Mr. Glode stated that more research is needed to determine whether additional measures are needed.

Chief Hanrahan made a motion for the DPW to continue to study the area for possible improvements; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Elizabeth McLaughlin of Ralph Piteri Terrace to remove the Handicap Only parking space in front of 19/21 Ralph Piteri Terrace. Sgt. Sampson reported that the Commission approved an HP Only parking space in front of this residence in October, 2013. Sgt. Sampson confirmed with Ms. McLaughlin that she is the new owner of this residence and the former owners who needed the HP space no longer live there.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to remove the Handicap Only parking space in front of 19/21 Ralph Piteri Terrace; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Margaret Sheehan of Grandview Avenue addressed the Commission concerning the lack of Stop signs at intersections near the Cunniff School. She reported that she has had four instances of near head-on crashes at the intersection of King Street at Grandview Avenue. Ms. Sheehan noticed that many intersections near Maplewood Street also lack Stop signs. Ms. Sheehan requested increased Stop signs and increased enforcement of distracted driving violations.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sgt. David Sampson
Assistant to the Traffic Commission