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## Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

*Dockets #0588-0596 FY21 Budget  
Public Works Department/Transportation Department  
Working Session: Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 11:00 a.m.  
Hearing: Thursday, May 7, 2020, 10:00 a.m.*

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The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the FY21 budgets for the Public Works Department and Transportation Department at the Working Session on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

Recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT8G6cS3-pg>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

1. Verbally at the hearing on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, at 10AM.
2. For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to May 7<sup>th</sup>, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
3. By deferring to a specific scheduled departmental budget hearing.

Please annotate and return this information request before May 7<sup>th</sup>, indicating how each question will be answered.

*NOTE: The following list also includes questions that were previously asked at the April 16<sup>th</sup> Working Session on the Capital and Public Facilities Department budgets. The Administration indicated that these questions would be best answered at the upcoming Public Works and Transportation Department Ways and Means hearing.*

### **BTD and PWD Budget Questions**

#### **Councilor Michael Flaherty asked:**

- Is there an audit of our streets around hot spots and crosswalks that are not clearly marked to make sure we are on track with Safe Streets? **Capital Section**
  - For all of our Vision Zero projects, we evaluate and update ramps and crosswalks to make them compliant as part of our work. For example, the striping project on Marginal Road also included about 17 ramp upgrades, as well as crosswalk restriping.
- Please provide an update on the Northern Ave Bridge. **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing

*Carried over from Capital Working Session:*

- Can we have a review of signage and signaling, from a Vision Zero perspective? **Capital Section**
  - We are in the process of re-evaluating the timing and phasing of our traffic signals at intersections with the most safety concerns for vulnerable users. We are starting with the top 15 intersections this summer and fall and hope to expand that number in the coming year. We have just developed a new methodology to identify safety concerns at signalized intersections



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looking not just at crashes, but other leading indicators such as close calls, and turning speeds. We are also in the process of updating our policy guidelines for how we decide on the phasing and timing of signals to improve safety for the most vulnerable users.

- Can you provide details on investments to crosswalk and lane markings improvements? **DPW Operating**
  - The Mayor's increased capital budget funding has allowed us to accomplish significantly more work. New contracts were awarded in late 2017 and work got underway in the Spring of 2018 (April) when weather allowed us to start. We were able to bring our current state of good repair from approximately 36% to approximately 60% by the fall of 2018. We were hoping to get to 80% by the end of November 2020 but have been on hold due to the current state of emergency.
- Please provide an update on the Long Island Bridge. **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing

### **Councilor Liz Breadon asked:**

*Carried over from Capital Working Session:*

- How will the Capital plan or budget reflect the recommendations from the Allston/Brighton Mobility Study? **Capital Section**
  - BTD will select concept designs included in the Allston Brighton Mobility Study and has received funding in the Capital Plan to advance them for detailed design.
  - Any updates on the study? **Capital Section**
    - BPDA continues to refine plans based on recent community feedback with the goal of finalizing plan recommendations in later 2020.
  - Any plans for new pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures, including improvements to crosswalks, in Allston/Brighton? Hoping to see implementation of these recommendations in the short term. **Capital Section**
    - BPDA has identified traffic calming strategies and presented those at community meetings in early 2020. BPDA is evaluating feedback to those concepts and will present any recommendations at future community meetings. Any recommendations will still need to be brought through the engineering process, which will determine the feasibility of these recommendations.
  - Any plans for bus shelters with live arrival times? **Capital Section**



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- The Allston/Brighton Mobility Study has identified several bus corridors for stop improvements, including bus shelters and real time arrival information panels. These findings were presented at community meetings in early 2020 and BPD is evaluating public feedback.
- Additionally, BTD is partnering with the MBTA to improve bus stops in Allston/Brighton. Specifically, BTD is currently coordinating a community process for bus bumpouts on Brighton Avenue.

### **Councilor Frank Baker asked:**

- Update on Slow Streets initiatives in District 3. **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing

#### *Carried over from Capital Working Session:*

- Any updates on the Long Island Bridge? **Capital Section**
  - How will the effects of COVID-19 impact the timeline of the bridge?
    - To be answered at hearing
- Will the sidewalk repair budget be negatively affected by COVID-19? **Capital Section**
  - No, the budget will not be affected as far as we know
  - Are sidewalks slated for repair or construction still going ahead as scheduled? **Capital Section**
    - To be answered at hearing
- Any update on state projects at Kosciuszko Circle and Morrissey Boulevard; are we in contact with them about these, and how do they relate to Moakley Park project? **Capital Section**
  - BTD and BPDA are working with DCR to advance the design of K Circle and Morrissey Boulevard with respect to sea level rise. This effort will be coordinated with emerging designs for Moakley Park.
- Are there plans for the City to build infrastructure for organics and composting? **DPW Operating**
  - As part of the City's Zero Waste Plan, we are looking to study and support the secondary markets and infrastructure that is needed to reach our Zero Waste goals. Our organics and textile pilots are the first step in this direction.



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### **Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George asked:**

- Update on the training for PWD employees on the safe collection and disposal of needles including our efforts across the City to create better options for disposal and pickup. **DPW Operating**
  - We have built a real time connection to the expanded sharps teams and coordinate collection within short time windows. This communication occurs both before areas of note are cleaned and also in real time when needles are found. Lots of credit to Devin Larkin from BPHC and our own Danny Nee.
- Update on Safe Routes to School relative to raised sidewalks. It's a very important issue when we think of public safety, for pedestrian safety and for our kids to slow traffic down. **BTD Operating**
  - The Safe Routes to School project for the Ellis community will include traffic-calming elements where appropriate.
- Are we on track in implementing Safe Routes to School in particular in partnership with BPS? Is the plan still happening? **BTD Operating**
  - Safe Routes to School in Boston is largely centered on education and encouragement activities, led by BPS with some help from BPHC. For our Neighborhood Slow Streets program, we consider the location of public schools in prioritizing zones and as part of our neighborhood-wide analysis for safety improvements.
- Interested in increasing the amount of raised crosswalks, particularly around schools, parks and playgrounds. **Capital Section**
  - How many raised crosswalks do we have across the City?
    - We have raised crossings over side streets on several recently completed capital reconstruction projects: Commonwealth Ave, Centre St (Hyde Sq to Jackson Sq), and Quincy St (Blue Hill Ave to Columbia Rd). This has become standard practice for many of our corridor projects, including upcoming work on Ruggles St (Roxbury) and Tremont St (South End).
    - We have 13 more in design through the Neighborhood Slow Streets program. After neighborhoods were prioritized, we worked with residents to understand the places in greatest need for safety improvements. We are building raised crosswalks where technically feasible and appropriate to the context. Examples of raised crossings ready for construction this session: Elmhurst St at Elmhurst Park in Dorchester and Oak St at Ash St near a community center and playground.



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- When appropriate, we work with BPDA to include raised crosswalks as part of mitigation for development projects.
- How were those areas selected?
  - They were selected as part of existing capital programs and reconstruction projects
- Update on the Northern Bridge design plan. **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Update on Project Oscar around composting and its success rate. **DPW Operating**
  - How much was actually collected and where do you think additional sites are needed.
  - We average around 10 tons of compost material per month at our current sites, and we will look to expand to additional neighborhood locations based on anticipated demand and resident interest.
- Update on the pedestrian ramps to make sure they're ADA compliant. **BTD Operating**
  - What is the number of pedestrian ramps across the City that are ADA compliant and where we on that?
    - We are conducting a City-wide asset survey to determine the ADA-compliance of all ramps, and we plan to double the number of ramps we repair and upgrade, starting in 2020.
- Are we moving closer to having a full fleet of municipal electric vehicles? **BTD Operating**
  - Yes. This budget makes steady progress based on the goals outlined in Boston's 2019 Climate Action Plan update, which calls for the City to have a 100% zero-emission passenger vehicle fleet by 2035.

Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- Any updates regarding Long Island Bridge? **Capital Section**
  - What does the timeline look like?
  - Where are we in the permitting process?
  - To be answered at hearing

**Councilor Ricardo Arroyo asked:**

- At the moment only 8 of 37 PWD contracts are with MWBE; what plans does PWD have to increase contract diversity and do outreach to solicit a broader pool of applicants, especially as many contracts end on June 30th? **DPW Operating**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Similarly, BTD only has 5 of 34 contracts with MWBE; what plans do they have to improve representation? **BTD Operating**



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- To be answered at hearing
- PWD and BTD still had sizable unspent FY20 budget authority as of March 31<sup>st</sup> (\$15 million and \$9 million respectively); what is the plan for the unspent amounts? **BTD PWD Operating**
  - The cabinet will continue to spend down budgeted funds on personnel expenses and high-quality basic city services, including spring street sweeping, increased residential waste tonnage, traffic signal supplies and COVID-19 cleaning costs.
- Are there any plans to introduce Slow Streets in District Five, and where? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- How are you reaching out to the community about construction projects in this COVID-19 period? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Any plans for investment at American Legion Highway re: bike lanes and safety improvements? It's a dangerous hotspot. **BTD Operating**
  - We look forward to continuing community conversations with all stakeholders along the corridor about their goals and the tools available. Because of the need for in-person discussion or outreach, we would look forward to continuing those in the fall or next spring.
- How are you recruiting engineers during this period, and what's the budget for that? **BTD Operating**
  - To be answered at hearing
- What Vision Zero items are allocated for District Five, and what do you do to make sure these are equitable among districts – can we get a rundown on Vision Zero for all the districts? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Please provide data available on BlueBikes and their relative use at different locations. **BTD Operating**
  - We introduced bike share in Roxbury and East Boston in 2017. In the two years of service since then, we've seen a real uptick in usage: in East Boston, trips have more than doubled and in Roxbury they have more than tripled. While trips have been modest in neighborhoods new to bike share, such as southern Dorchester and Mattapan, we expect to see ridership growth as residents become more familiar with Bluebikes.
  - Bluebikes ridership, and bike-riding in general, is more common where people have safe places to ride bikes, separate from higher-speed vehicular traffic. BTD and PWD have many projects in design now that will provide



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the types of bike facilities that will be comfortable for more people, including those who want to bike with their families.

- What is the City doing to increase the tree canopy in District Five?
  - **Defer to Parks department hearing**

*Carried over from Capital Working Session:*

- Can you provide updates on the local transportation projects at Cummins Highway and Mattapan Square, and how their state funding may be affected by COVID-19?

### **Capital Section**

- In Mattapan Square, we are advancing a design to add a crosswalk across the southern leg of the Blue Hill Avenue intersection with River Street at Mattapan Square, and also to potentially add bus lanes and bike facilities through the square. We don't currently have state funding for these projects, however we may pursue state funds to supplement city funds we are requesting for construction. Cummins Highway is also in design, and we hope it can enter construction by the end of this construction season.
- Any plans for investment at Hyde Park Ave, beyond design study funded by the MBTA? **Capital Section**
  - BTM is early in a community process to analyze multimodal improvements for Hyde Park Avenue in collaboration with the MBTA. This process will look at improvements for bus service, bike connections, pedestrian crossings, and overall safety features.
- Is there any new funding for traffic calming measures in general (speed bumps, street lights, etc.), which is a leading thing that the Council hears from our constituents about? **Capital Section**
  - Yes, we have introduced a new \$2m program for rapid safety interventions in the neighborhoods, which will be piloted in FY21.
  - Our Neighborhood Slow Streets program has also been fully funded for construction of the existing 11 zones in design as well as the design of additional zones in the coming years. We will have 15 zones completed or in construction in 2021.
  - We systematically add traffic-calming designs to our major capital projects as well. For example, we are adding raised crosswalks and a raised intersection on Ruggles St to address safety concerns.
  - We are able to provide traffic-calming benefits and improve safety on all of our projects that add protected bike lanes. National research, pulling on local data in cities, have proven that protected bike lanes improve safety for everyone on the streets: people walking and biking in addition to people biking.



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### **Councilor Ed Flynn asked:**

- Update on Vision Zero around pedestrian safety, traffic calming measures, speed bumps, street lighting, and most importantly reducing the speed limit across the City. **Capital Section**
  - Our Neighborhood Slow Streets program has been fully funded for construction of the existing 11 zones in design as well as the design of additional zones in the coming years. We will have 15 zones completed or in construction in 2021.
  - We systematically add traffic-calming designs to our major capital projects as well. For example, we are adding raised crosswalks and a raised intersection on Ruggles St to address safety concerns.
  - We are able to provide traffic-calming benefits and improve safety on all of our projects that add protected bike lanes. National research, pulling on local data in cities, have proven that protected bike lanes improve safety for everyone on the streets: people walking and biking in addition to people biking.
  - We have also introduced a new \$2m program for rapid safety interventions in the neighborhoods, which will be piloted in FY21.
- Update on the bike path on Summer Street. **Capital Section**
  - We are working with BCEC, MassPort, and others to design separated bike facilities from East Service Road to Pappas Way in connection with the proposed center-running bus lane project.

### Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- Any updates on the Long Island Bridge project? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Sidewalk repair are needed citywide. **Capital Section**
- Can we remove some utility poles to make sidewalks more accessible? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Sidewalk repair is needed in and around Villa Victoria. This is desperately needed for seniors and residents with disabilities in the area. **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Update on what the PWD is doing to ensure that sidewalks are ADA compliant throughout District Two. **Capital Section**
  - How can we ensure that crosswalks are aligned with the pedestrian ramps?
    - To be answered at hearing





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### **Councilor Matt O'Malley asked:**

- In FY21, Vision Zero has a budget increase of \$5M. There is a project that has City and State funding component on Columbia Ave that has a dedicated bus lane. There is talk of having a bike connection between Districts Six and Seven to allow for that and to encourage better usage of the Southeast Corridor. **Capital Section**
  - What is the update on that since it is not in the Capital Budget?
  - What will it look like in District Six and throughout the City?
  - [Bike connections near the Columbus Ave bus lane project will be identified through the Egleston Square planning process. As a quick update, there is \\$500,000 in the budget allocated for the Egleston Sq project and we will be wrapping up the RFP selection process in the next few weeks.](#)
- Update on the allocations relative to the Capital projects on Center Street in Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury for safety initiatives. **Capital Section**
  - [The recommended Capital Plan includes the requests for Centre/South Streets in JP and for Center Street in West Roxbury.](#)
- We were able to secure a pilot program for composting and textile pickup in last year's budget. What is the status to move from a single stream recycling to a multi-stream process? And is the City thinking about that? **DPW Operating**
  - [Transitioning to multi-stream has not been evaluated at this time. Increased education campaigns and outreach is highlighted as an FY21 goal. With that will come a better product in the bins, keeping contamination costs low and marketability higher.](#)
- There are fewer people using the MBTA.
  - Is the City thinking about micro-mobility such as the use of scooters and bikes as a way to get around the City? **BTD Operating**
    - [At this time, many privately-operated e-scooter businesses have halted operations in cities across the country. We are one of the fortunate cities to have a publicly-owned and managed "micro-mobility" option in the form of our bike share, Bluebikes. We are adding 17 more stations in the coming year, including our first stations in Hyde Park. Today, the City of Boston hosts 220 stations, within a regional total of 350+ stations.](#)
    - [The BTD team has been working closely with area TMAs and hospitals to provide free 30-day passes and discounted annual passes to hospital staff. BTD recently received a micro-grant to subsidize our already discounted passes for those who use public assistance programs or otherwise have a qualifying income. We](#)



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anticipate this grant to focus on “frontline” workers at our corner stores, restaurants, grocery stores, and other essential retail.

- In addition, we plan to offer discounted passes to everyone during the various Green Line Transformation projects happening this summer. Pending our ability to gather in small groups, we will resume our social bike rides and our learn-to-ride program for adult women.

Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- Any update on Long Island Bridge? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing

### **Councilor Kim Janey, President asked:**

Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- Regarding the Melnea Cass Blvd., Warren Street and Blue Hill Ave., and Ruggles St. Complete Streets Projects: **Capital Section**
  - What is the timeline for each project?
    - To be answered at hearing
  - Do they include any funding from the State or Federal government?
    - Yes, both include state and federal funding.
  - Who was contracted for the Warren and Blue Hills project?
    - Beta Group, Inc.
  - How many POC, women, and Boston residents working on these projects?
- Who is conducting the Franklin Park Yard study?
  - When will it be completed?
  - Defer to Parks Department hearing
- Will the HUD grant for the Whittier Street Housing Dev. Roadways project be affected due to the pandemic? **Capital Section**
  - Uncertain at this time.

### **Councilor Lydia Edwards asked:**

- Have they implemented traffic calming measures on Bennington Street? **Capital Section**
  - Bennington Street is being addressed as part of PLAN: East Boston and will include ideas on how to calm speeds and create a better “greener” street with more street trees.
- How do we ensure sidewalks are ADA compliant in East Boston and in the North End? **Capital Section**
  - To be answered at hearing



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- The number one question from the constituents in the North End and East Boston is that every City lot should have a trash barrel, including a doggie waste barrel that is attached to it or have it near the Greenway. **DPW Operating**
  - Any thoughts on that?
  - [The Streets Cabinet has care of 2 lots in the aforementioned neighborhoods \(both in EB\). We can look to add necessary units where needed.](#)
- We have 2 million tourists a year in the North End. I am interested in increasing Hokey hours, and I am concerned about timing for Street Workers in the North End. **DPW Operating**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- Is it possible to get more infrastructure work done now that there are fewer cars on the road? **Capital Section**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- Update on the police station in East Boston and how it is juxtaposed next to a substation that is being built by Eversource. I want to make sure the City Council has the signoff and accounting of how this can happen when you have a police station with a lot of radar technology right next to a substation.
  - Was a study ever done on this decision?
    - [Defer to Police Department hearing](#)
- The City has been discussing acquiring a large plot of land from a private owner in Eagle Square. **Capital Section**
  - How should the land be designed and repurposed for city purposes?
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)

*Carried over from Capital Working Session:*

- Any update on how the traffic taskforce for East Boston that was announced in the State of the City address in January will be funded and implemented? **Capital Section**
  - [The Task Force will review the recommendations of the PLAN: East Boston initiative and prioritize projects for implementation. We will estimate costs for these projects and fund through the Capital Plan process.](#)
- Can you provide updates on the following projects: **Capital Section**
  - McArdele Bridge – is this still starting as planned?
  - North Washington Street Bridge – any delays or concerns?
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- Is there any new funding for police details for construction projects, especially the bridge projects? Any consideration of using the BPD school crossing guards?
  - [We are not aware of any new funding or the suggested consideration.](#)



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### Councilor Julia Mejia asked:

- One of PWD's FY21 goal is to launch a recruitment campaign for engineers and skilled laborers. **DPW Operating**
  - What will the recruitment campaign look like?
  - What is your outreach program to ensure you are recruiting a diverse pool of candidates?
  - Explain how you will implement your FY21 procurement policies.
  - Where are you looking to expand your pool of respondents and what will that process look like.
  - Is there a recruitment plan or campaign for hard to fill positions? For example the campaign that would reach out skilled employees of color in the City.
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- The budget narrative states that PWD has spent \$1.3M in overtime cost. However, in the PWD summary section it states that \$2.3 has been spent so far. **DPW Operating**
  - Can you please explain the reason for the difference in the amount reported?
    - [The budget narrative section is based on PWD's non-snow OT costs, while the PWD spending summary includes snow-related OT that will be charged back to the Snow budget.](#)
- How do we decide how garbage cans are spread across the City? **DPW Operating**
  - [We look at high pedestrian foot traffic areas. Major thoroughfares and the like. We also take into account residents who might live locally to the new barrel and if they may not want it closeby, for various reasons. We look at any ADA issues a new location might create.](#)
  - Is there a study involved?
    - [We use both operational and resident input to add and remove units. Largest contributor to removal is misuse of the baskets with residential bags as well as commercial abuse.](#)
  - Can the schedule be changed to include more pickups in certain neighborhoods?
    - [Yes, and those changes occur seasonally in many downtown neighborhoods.](#)
- How are the City sidewalk repairs prioritized? **Capital Section**
  - What is the timeline, including the process to get it repaired?



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- To be answered at hearing
- Is there funding available for a public awareness campaign to discourage driving and encourage more bike ridership in the City? **BTD Operating**
  - Not at this time. In the past, we partnered with BPHC to use CDC funding to employ neighborhood champions and ambassadors for bike-riding. We've also had support via marketing funds from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MA to run campaigns and classes.
- How can the City assist in cooling down neighborhoods that have heating patterns in ways that doesn't involve tree planting? **Capital Section**
  - Are there other options to cool communities that have heat problems?
  - Street trees are an excellent way to reduce the urban heat island effect during the day. A comprehensive reduction in the urban heat island must include minimizing the overnight heat as well. To accomplish this, we need to reduce the total areas of paved surfaces, such as surface parking lots, and re-prioritizing space within the public right-of-way to accommodate improved tree beds, wider sidewalks, and bike lanes. This reallocation has other benefits too -- reduced noise pollution, less microplastic from brake pads and tires, and fewer tailpipe emissions.

Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- Joins Councilor Flynn in wanting to see investments in sidewalk repair at Villa Victoria prioritized

**Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:**

- Excited to see the City investment in the work on the final Kenmore Square block of the Commonwealth Ave Mall – what is the nature of the MBTA's participation in this project and how confident are we of whatever funding or cooperation we need from them on this?
  - **Defer to Parks Department hearing**
- Pleased to see the Back Bay Fens Path prioritized, would make a huge difference to make the treasures of the Fens physically accessible to more people; could you provide more detail on this (timeline & project specifics)? **Capital Section**
  - The Fenway-Yawkey Path came out of the Fenway-Longwood-Kenmore Transportation Action Plan and has been a neighborhood priority for many years. It will allow people walking and biking on the Emerald Necklace to go under Park Drive instead of crossing at grade and will extend the family-friendly path to Lansdowne Station and Fenway Park. It will be constructed in phases in cooperation with the MBTA, MassDOT, and the Landmark Center development.



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- Composting is a district-wide interest in my community. **DPW Operating**
  - What is the rollout pilot plan, and what can we tell constituents who may want to be part of it?
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- Maximizing equity in procurement at BTM and PWD is so important, even more so as we enter a difficult economic period in which city capital money may be one of the main sources around; what is your proactive plan to improve these numbers?  
**BTM DPW Operating**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- What is the capacity in your departments to increase the quantity of horizontal street-work that you do simultaneously, so as to catch up and even get more done than usual once the construction pause is lifted but traffic still remains lighter?  
**Capital Section**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- There is a real gap between our Vision Zero commitments and our signalization policy and how many seconds we give pedestrians to cross, and how we time the lights in general. We need to think systematically about moving lights throughout the City to prioritize our most vulnerable. **BTM Operating**
  - What is the plan for that?
  - Does the City have a plan for more widespread pedestrian-activated lights at crossings, because that can be useful in certain neighborhoods?
  - [We are in the process of re-evaluating the timing and phasing of our traffic signals at intersections with the most safety concerns for vulnerable users. We are starting with the top 15 intersections this summer and fall and hope to expand that number in the coming year. We have just developed a new methodology to identify safety concerns at signalized intersections looking not just at crashes, but other leading indicators such as close calls, and turning speeds. We are also in the process of updating our policy guidelines for how we decide on the phasing and timing of signals to improve safety for the most vulnerable users.](#)
- In the Beacon Hill area we have a long tradition of informal street sharing. How can the City create more space, in light of social distancing needs, to make streets more available for pedestrians, cyclists, stroller, etc.? **Capital Section**
  - Is there a way during the COVID pandemic, without having to assign police details to block streets, to make things more like Downtown Crossing – pedestrians first – through tactical moves like putting up a rolling light that says beware of pedestrians in the street, adding planters, using tape or cones, etc.?



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## Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

*Dockets #0588-0596 FY21 Budget*

*Public Works Department/Transportation Department*

*Working Session: Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 11:00 a.m.*

*Hearing: Thursday, May 7, 2020, 10:00 a.m.*

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- Yes. The City is launching a “Streets Response to COVID-19” initiative to repurpose the right-of-way to accommodate social distancing particularly to provide space near testing centers, outside small-businesses including restaurants, at bus stops, for play space in the neighborhoods, and near overflowing parks.
- New York City is closing down 40 miles are of streets; are we considering this?
  - We are focused on ways to create space to social distance where it is needed most at this time and have started to explore the closing of streets.
- I saw the removal of some ‘beg buttons’ on Commonwealth Avenue – do we have more widespread plans to remove those?
  - To be answered at hearing
- There’s an interest in seeing shorter light cycles during COVID-19, to keep all travelers waiting for shorter periods given the decrease in traffic – is this possible?
  - We have updated the central computer traffic signal schedule to run the mid-day traffic pattern all day versus having the AM and PM peak traffic patterns operate during weekdays. Due to the significant reduction of traffic, this will have shorter cycle lengths all day that will reduce delay to vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- As restaurants begin to reopen, could we provide outdoor space by permitting some locations to use street space for tables, in order to enable safe social distancing? This seems like a logical experiment for Newbury St. **BTD Operating**
  - Yes, we are starting a program for this.
- What are we doing about the dangerous increased speeding during this period – how can we slow it down? **BTD Operating/Capital**
  - To be answered at hearing
- Can you speak to overall plans to increase the availability of slow-street tactical elements for neighborhoods that may not win a Slow Streets grant? **Capital Section**
  - We are in the process of redesigning how we respond to constituent concerns about safety on neighborhood streets. The proposed \$2 M budget investment will allow BTD to respond to 311 concerns much more quickly and deploy more built traffic calming elements, such as curb extensions and raised crosswalks, to improve safety.
- Have we begun thinking about priorities if & when the state and/or federal governments start talking about a major countercyclical investment in



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infrastructure? I just want to note my hope that we will prioritize the Red-Blue connector on that front. **BTD Operating**

- BTD is committed to the Red-Blue Connector project and has made recent efforts to advance this initiative through discussions with MassDOT and the MBTA. Additionally, BTD has worked with development projects at Suffolk Downs and Mass General Hospital to include analysis and design provisions for this project.

Carried over from Capital Working Session:

- While conducting the street lighting survey, is it possible to also survey types of fixtures so as to promote better consistency, vs. the random mix that have come in throughout the Fenway in recent years? **Capital Section**
  - Street Lighting is ready to review any and all lighting requests as they relate to the Fenway Area. We are currently working with BTD project planning to implement a consistent lighting design along the Boylston Street area in between Park Drive at both hands.
- With the overall crosswalk restriping investment, can we expect restriping specifically where the non-visibility of crosswalks is promoting dangerous speeding and bad conditions for pedestrians in the East and West Fens (as on Hemenway St and Boylston St)? **Capital Section**
  - The Boylston St project in Fenway will include restriping crosswalks.
  - BTD had previously looked at Hemenway St for bike lanes, which would have organized traffic and could lead to lower speeds. However, the community was split in their support for the project.
  - Other crosswalks in the area that are in need for refreshing will be shared with the operations team to schedule.
  - Refreshing crosswalk markings helps to raise visibility and expectation of pedestrians. It's not to reduce speeds - we have other tools for that. Right-sizing our streets is the most effective tool.
- What effect will the slowdown of the public process have on the timeline for improving bike facilities connecting the Southwest Corridor path to downtown? **Capital Section**
  - We will continue with the project, though specific designs, routes, and overall timing will change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our team values working with community members to share information and problem-solve together. We hope to have opportunities to talk with people about the project soon.





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- There is an investment committed for surveying and repairing city-owned stairs etc.; could this please include the staircase between 141 and 129 Fisher Ave in Mission Hill? **Capital Section**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- The extra-wide Dartmouth St mall (Boylston to Beacon) recently got some spot repairs, but can it be prioritized for a wholesale brick replacement? It connects Copley Square to Newbury St to Commonwealth Ave to the Esplanade, gets a ton of use but is not in good condition from an accessibility perspective. **Capital Section**
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)
- We saw some work happening on Blossom St already – what has happened already and what is going to happen there? **Capital Section**
  - Will project improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Blossom & Parkman?
  - [To be answered at hearing](#)

*Add'l Questions from Capital Working Session; accidentally left off, so not answered:*

- How will sidewalk repair funds be allocated?
  - What is the plan for accelerating our rate of achieving a state of good repair?
  - Will there be a shift towards replacing the bricks for whole stretches of brick sidewalk at once?
- Where will the new dedicated bus lanes be?
- Will the new investment in crosswalk restriping really get us to a 3 year replacement cycle?
- Can you provide more details on the street light survey?
  - Also, how does the city decide where more light is needed?
- Does the reference to getting pedestrian ramps to a state of good repair by 2030 refer only to repairing existing ramps, or also to adding ramps?
  - The plastic pads for pedestrian ramps appear to be deteriorating at an alarming rate; is there a plan for improving the quality of these?
- Not all areas that need to slow speeding are functionally eligible for the Neighborhood Slow Streets program; is there funding in this budget for deploying more tactical slow-streets elements (speed bumps, pedestrian activated lights, raised crosswalks) across the city to places not included in Slow Streets?