

## TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING

(Special Meeting)

November 29, 2021

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chair Elena Proakis Ellis, Councilor Eccles, Commissioner Rossi, Commissioner Peart, Commissioner Parenti, Chief Mike Lyle, Commissioner Krechmer, Former Mayor Infurna, Sgt. Jon Goc – Technical Advisor

### I. New Business

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 4 of Chapter 76 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1998, the Melrose Traffic Commission holds this Public Hearing on rules, regulations, and votes adopted by the Melrose Traffic Commission at its October 28, 2021 meeting pertaining to the following as identified in the petition submitted to the City signed by more than 25 registered voters of the City of Melrose on November 15, 2021:

1. **Changing parking on the west side of Main Street (southbound) from about 244 Main Street continuing south to Sylvan Street**
2. **Adding dedicated bike lanes on the east side of Main Street (northbound) from 338 feet north of the Melrose/Malden City limit to Mount Vernon Street**
3. **Adding dedicated bike lanes on Main Street southbound (west side) from about 244 Main Street to Sylvan Street**
4. **Amending the Melrose Traffic Code for consistency with existing signage on Main Street, both sides, south of Wyoming Avenue to the Melrose/Malden City limit as it pertains to parking restrictions and time limits.**

Elena reads through the agenda items which she states mirrors the wording that was on the petition submitted. She explains the format for tonight's meeting, which is that she will read through the numbered items and after reading each item ask if there is public comment on that item. She states that she will share documents that have been submitted in advance if the speaker wishes. They will then move to the next item on the agenda for public comment and testimony. The commission will reserve its deliberation, discussion and vote until the end of the meeting after all testimony and documentation has been heard.

Exhibit 1 is admitted as the public notice of tonight's public hearing which was posted on the city's website.

Exhibit 2 is the petition submitted to the Traffic Commission (TC) signed by more than 25 registered voters, requesting the holding of this public hearing. This has been distributed to commission members.

Exhibit 3 is the newspaper publication of the votes at issue published in the newspaper for two successive weeks of November 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. There is an exception with item #5 in the publication which had a typographical error where it stated Mt. Vernon Ave. instead of Mt. Vernon St. for the limit of the northbound bike lane.

Prior to tonight's meeting Elena states that she had received written comments and testimony which she will admit for the next exhibits. At the end of tonight's meeting, Elena states that the TC will vote on the items and the votes will become final with the exception of item #5 from the original vote which was the northbound bike lane. It will still require publication for two additional weeks due to the typographical error. If that vote is voted the same, we will have to publish it for two weeks. If anything is voted differently, we would need to publish that for two more weeks.

Elena then states that she has received a lot of public comments via email that she will read in as exhibits.

Elena proceeds to read two more emails that came in after the start of the meeting. The first letter reads.

My name is Andy Monet and I am a Melrose resident. I learned only today that a new hearing will take place due to the efforts of some residents to prevent to install unprotected bicycle lanes on Main St. The bicycle lanes as planned, is an important step to increasing safety for all road users. As Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90 Section 17C and Section 18C note, the TC should act in the interest of public safety. The expert opinions of both city staff and MDOT are clear that bicycle lanes increase safety for people on bicycles who include many children in the city of Melrose and people using other forms of transportation. Therefore, the TC should uphold its wise prior decision to install bicycle lanes and begin acting in the interest of safety for all. Thank you for your consideration.

The next email Elena reads is from David Stevens. It reads: There was a time when due to the nature of Main St. activities that would put you at risk would be avoided because Main St. is a main street and is busy. Bicycles should avoid this street and use the back roads. Common sense should prevail here and not make the city and citizens more dangerous. Thanks, Dave.

A motion is then made by Chief Lyle, seconded by Councilor Eccles to open public comment. All are in favor.

Resident Bill Gordon is the first to speak. He starts with Exhibit A to explain how we got here and states that after watching the last meeting again, he and a lot of other people were not happy with the decision. Mr. Gordon resides at 178 Main St. and he would lose his on-street parking as well as his neighbors. His neighbors on the northbound side were not happy either. They see this as a dangerous situation, as we are pushing parking onto their side of the street, as well as losing some of the parking due to the added crosswalks. They feel that the crosswalks are a good idea, but are losing net parking on that side, then all of the parking from around 244 Main St. to Sylvan. He mentions that he is a lawyer by trade and that he is unhappy, so he went to the law and looked at the statutes of the Melrose TC. He states that the law provides us the remedy of a petition and a hearing, so they are exercising that right. If they continue to feel aggrieved, they will continue to see what legal rights they have and pursue them; however he is hoping we can resolve them this evening.

Mr. Gordon then discusses Exhibits B and C which are from the MUTCD manual and states what the purpose of this manual is (see highlighted text in Exhibit C). He goes on to say that when it comes to pedestrians, you want them in the street as little as possible, so the idea now of having the people on the southbound side of Main St., park on the northbound side and then cross the roadway, just statistically increases the risk that they will be harmed by an accident. This is because you are forcing them into the roadway by taking away their parking.

Next, he brings up Exhibit D where he goes through the highlighted portion and discusses the principals of traffic control devices. He focuses on one line item which states to command respect from road users. If you have a traffic device or a pavement marking that no one is going to pay attention to, it is not effective and arguably useless.

He continues his discussion and brings up Exhibit 1, which is a picture facing northward at around 178 Main St. to give some sense of how wide the northbound side is. He states that it is much wider than the southbound side because there is parking, followed by a bike lane, and then a travel lane. On the southbound side there is a bike lane and a travel lane. He did ask the Mayor at the abutters meeting to move the line back to the center and DPW moved it about two feet; however it is still off-center.

In Exhibit 2 he goes through and shows where the yellow line is now and states it is still off center in favor to the west side because of the dedicated bike lane. He states that this was not supposed to happen however, because it is not an effective law yet due to it not being published twice, the notice being defective and an error at the motion last meeting. In the notice it stated that it ended at Mt. Vernon Ave and some of the members in the lower Main St.

group pointed out that Mt. Vernon Ave is parallel to Main St. and Main St. never intersects Mt. Vernon St. It was never properly advertised and so that lane can't be put in. Still he states the yellow lines were pushed over towards the west side, the southbound lane. He thinks that it is within the minimal road widths that are required generally in Melrose, but points out that what they have on Main St. is different than most side streets. It is a major bus and traffic route and that the cars are always going over the yellow lines. He brings up Exhibits 3 through 10 to show examples of this.

Exhibit 11 shows an evening where he and his wife had to shuffle cars in their driveway. Even being right up against the curb, the bus crossed over the yellow line. When the bike lane goes in the cars are going to be so much further on the north side and this is going to be an accident waiting to happen. He wants this to stop because it is not safe. He understands that it is not a bad thing to have bike lanes, it's a good value and good goal, but so is the safety of the residents of lower Main St. When we say these things, this is what we are seeing on a daily basis and did not see this when the lines were centered.

In Exhibits 12 and 13, he continues to show more examples of the yellow lines being crossed. He understands that the DPW's position is that this is their minimum; however he feels that only works on side streets. This is a problem for the trucks and the buses. It is the nature of Main St. It has trucks, it has bus traffic and this is the reality. You ask where the energy comes from and he says it comes from concern for safety for our family, friends and neighbors.

Mr. Gordon continues onto Exhibits 14 and 15 which again show the lines being crossed. He repeats what he stated earlier which is that you can't have a pavement marking that everyone ignores, it means that it is lawless.

Exhibits 16 and 17 show more examples, with even cars crossing over the lines. Theoretically he states that cars could stay within, but it is the behavior that he says has changed since the lines were moved off center. He just wants them to look at the evidence he presented and ponder the safety implications. One of the goals of the Melrose TC is to preserve and foster safety, that's the purpose of the rules and regulations. He understands that bikers have safety issues that need to be addressed, but those safety issues are compromising the safety of the residents that live 24/7 on Main St.

Mr. Gordon then discusses his neighbor Carl Johnson who resides at 180 Main St. He states that he is 81 years old, a Vietnam vet and suffering from cancer. He has many health aides that visit his house, as well as family and friends and needs to have his house accessible. No one was aware of these things he states because no one went around and talked to the neighbors. Survey monkey was done; aerial maps were looked at, however no one looked at the community. This is why you have over 92 people signing a petition over a weekend. He goes on to say that he feels that the commission was struggling to find the right answer. He thinks that with the facts that were presented at the last hearing, he understands why the vote went the way it did. They too are just trying to present facts that indicate that it is not a safe choice and is a burden to the elderly and disabled in the neighborhood. He doesn't think that the younger people realize the stress it is for people getting into their older years. It may be a great thing for the bikers; however the burden is real for those that live in the neighborhood. He concludes by thanking the commission for listening and for their patience.

Coner McGuire speaks next. He appreciates some more of the insight on the neighborhood down there. He understands and has some compassion for the safety concerns being brought up. He states that he grew up in Melrose, is raising his family in Melrose and his elderly parents live here. Safety is a top priority. He mentions that it is interesting how seeing the same evidence being presented can lead to different conclusions. The trucks and buses that are cutting over the yellow line he states generally does not happen if they are following the 25mph speed limit. He states that it is counterintuitive. Designing the road so that the vehicles have to slow down seems like it is less safe, but the data and the professional designs, the agencies that do the traffic studies, state that you can put a

speed limit of any mph you want on the street. Cars will generally drive as fast as they feel comfortable based on the road design regardless of the speed limit. To enforce those speed limits down there to 25 mph is hard. Ultimately, the data does suggest that by making this a multi modal area, the speed limit gets enforced by the drivers themselves. They will see that they are constrained in this area and need to slow down. His mother even mentioned when the Franklin St. corridor bump outs happened and the outdoor seating was introduced it forced her to slow down because it had become so much smaller. This is the point and ultimate goal. He understands the neighborhood wants safety and he doesn't feel that the safety is having this runway basically like an airport where cars drive crazy speeds down there. He restates that he has lived in Melrose for over 40 years and that he is well aware of how fast cars can drive down there. With that he has a different conclusion and supports the multi modal transit; as the name suggests, too, it's the public right-of-way. This is more than just private parking for cars. It was brought up a couple of times that we are going to lose our parking or that neighbor is losing that parking. It is a public right of way. It wasn't invented for cars, so we are just trying to bring some equality and make it safer. Hopefully they will see the safety get there and the speed limits falling by the better design.

Leilani Nelson speaks next and thanks the TC for their original vote on this and for going through everything tonight to hear it again. She personally was very excited at the decision made a few weeks ago. She lives at 76 Linden Rd. and she bikes, walks and drives down Main St. every day. Her daughter is in daycare just past Pine Banks and she bikes there if they can or take the bus. She states that her family only has one car. She reiterates that she was super happy with the decision before and encourages the TC to keep that decision even though clearly there has been some new evidence presented. She goes on to say that she agrees with Conor, the resident that spoke before her, that it is a public space. It is more about the public safety of all rather than some individual parking spots, although it's unfortunate for those that will be losing it. She wants people to consider that cyclists and pedestrians are more vulnerable so when you look at safety and accidents, yes it's unfortunate if someone gets in a car accident, but they might not die. A cyclist or someone walking can get seriously injured. For her it is more about safety for those that are more vulnerable on that road. Right now it is like an airport runway. Personally as a driver she felt safer driving during the pilot stage with the narrower lanes because people did drive slower and people didn't think they could create two lanes of cars. Right now when she drives down there it feels like a free for all. People go really fast even though the flashing signs are telling you what your speeds are and not following it. Again she hopes that the TC sticks with the original vote and appreciates all that the TC is doing.

Paula Burg of 265 Main St. speaks next. She has lived there for more than 30 years. She has witnessed lower Main St. from Sylvan St. to Wyoming, become a major thoroughfare with cars, trucks vans and heavy equipment. During commuting hours there are so many vehicles that they are backed up for blocks waiting for the traffic signal to change. She states that vehicles speed down during this straightaway. Since the double yellow lines were moved off-center, large cars, trucks, trailers, and other vehicles going southbound don't fit in the travel lane, so they cross over the double yellow line. This in turn makes the cars on the southbound lane move into the bike lane or the parking spaces. Everybody keeps getting shifted over, it does not matter how fast you go. Even if you travel slower you still cross over the lane in the southbound lane and there is typically someone parked on the southbound lane. She mentions that when Elena and the TC last spoke they had mentioned to just have the bike lane southbound, but with the lanes so narrow people are crossing the yellow lines. While the southbound side may meet minimal width requirements, it is unrealistic and unsafe for the kind of traffic that takes place on Main St. Most drivers are less courteous and fail to slow down. By making the road so narrow, it's an accident waiting to happen. If safety is our biggest concern, then the double line needs to be moved back to the center with parking on both sides and sharrows to identify that drivers/cyclists are sharing the lanes. When cyclists have to weave in and out of traffic, they are more likely to get hit. A viable alternative for cyclists would be to create bike lanes along the rail tracks.

Garrett Nelson lives on Linden Rd. in Melrose and speaks next. He states that he bikes every day down this corridor with his three year old daughter. He would like the commission to think about the word compromise. He states that the plan before us is not the maximal plan that cyclists would like. They would like separated lanes and no parking on both sides. He mentions that the city has shown many adaptations and wisdom regarding people's needs. They have moved the parking back to the curb on the northbound side, removed the southbound lane in front of the Caruso apartment building, which he disagrees with. He states the only compromise he has heard from the other side is that cyclists should simply go away or not use this street. Derby and Waverly are too narrow, Mt Vernon is too steep and those are the only three streets that run north to south in the town. If it did move there parking would be taken away from those people. He feels that the plan before the committee represents an equitable compromise and encourages the committee to uphold the previous decision. He feels that the overall safety is more important than a few people parking on the street.

Jonah Chiarenza of Lebanon St. speaks next and states that he is the former chair of the PedBike Committee and Executive Director of Bike to the Sea, and a transportation planner by profession. He states that all of the photos that Mr. Gordon had referenced when speaking had cars parked where they technically were not supposed to due to the prior vote of the TC. He mentions that where the lane has been sized to accommodate both a travel lane and a bike lane that the design of that part of the road is not meant to accommodate parked vehicles and other vehicles driving correctly. He states the exhibits are not legitimate and should not be considered. Having people cross the street when extra parking is needed is not something that went unthought-of in this proposal. There are four or five more crosswalks being added in to make it more convenient for people to cross the street. That with the narrow lanes, no parking on one side of the street, daylighting at the crosswalks to improve visibility and the potential to add RRFBs, if they are warranted, really will make the street safer. Not only safer for cyclists, but also for people on Main St. driving into and out of their houses. It will also be better for bus users as well. He ends by stating that we need to consider everyone on Main St. not just the older residents who have certain circumstances.

Jonathan Berg speaks next and states that the people that are in opposition to this are not anti-cyclists; it is based upon public safety. He states that Mr. Gordon's evidence clearly shows and states that adding flashing lights is not going to stop people from speeding. He asks why there are no cameras to document speeders. He states the MBTA right-of-way is the alternative to create a bike path which provides a safe space for cyclists. He concludes by stating that he is a cyclist and will not go down Main St. due to how dangerous it is.

Ryan Williams speaks next and states that the situation we are in now is confirmation bias. We go into a situation where we already think we know the answer to it, so we provide all of these facts and evidence to try and convince other people that what we are saying is right. The problem with that is that we blind ourselves to outside information. He goes through some things that were brought up tonight, the first being that narrow lanes cause congestion and cause accidents. He states that road diets don't produce more traffic and they have been shown to reduce accidents. He also states that bike lanes do not cause accidents or cause people to drive into other people's cars. That is the action and responsibility of the people driving in their cars. He goes on to say that there are people that drive recklessly on Main St. and the reason for this is that they have been allowed to do so because the previous design enabled this. The lanes are incredibly wide which has proven to increase people's speeds. There is little to no clarity at intersections, especially at Sylvan and Main, for where people are supposed to go and how people are supposed to proceed which is why you will see people driving in the parking lanes. The biggest threat to Main St. is this petition itself. It has halted a project mid-stream resulting in a design that he feels makes no sense. The reason is because it is unfinished. The design that the commission decided on was a compromise, some got some things and some got other things. He asks the TC to stick to their values and vote the same way that they voted before, so that we can have a safer and more inclusive complete street for Main St. and Melrose.

The next speaker is Steve Lombardi. He mentions that he had written a letter about the plan and all of the things in his letter came true. It was difficult to back out of his driveway, cross the southbound lane into the northbound lane and people leaving the side streets had a hard time turning both left and right. Local residents did not have a chance to participate in the planning and they are not anti-bike or safety. He works from home and does not see enough bikers and asks where the customers are? He doesn't understand why we can't have the signage stating to share the road. He also disagrees with the narrowing of the lanes. The law abiding citizens will slow down, but the law breakers will continue to speed. Having no parking on the southbound side is not going to be able to be enforced because there is always going to be an oil delivery or delivery of some sort. They are not going to park across the street. He mentions that residents were brought into this late and with any commercial project there is a give and take. He hopes that they reconsider and put sharrows and heavy duty signage.

Don Stead speaks next and states that he has a business at 145 Main St. He agrees with the other abutters that it is unsafe not only for bikers, but for people backing in and out of driveways. Sharrows on N. Main St. go on and on, so he doesn't understand the big change for S. Main St.

Estelle McDonough speaks next and states she doesn't understand why they can't have the sharrows as well as parking on both sides for people that need it. She states that Malden does it and Melrose does it in other areas. If the yellow lines were in the center it would give adequate room for parking, sharrows and also signage which is extremely important. Safety is very important and shared streets really emphasize safety. She states that ambulances come down Main St. and no matter how well trained people are driving if you don't have the space then it's a problem. If there is an accident and an emergency vehicle needs to get by, drivers need to have the space to pull over for them. She really wants to hear what Chief Lyle thinks about the moving over law and how this narrow little lane is going to affect that.

Meghan McDonough speaks next. She feels that if the abutters were brought in sooner that we could have avoided all of these meetings. She states the neighborhood really wants to be heard. While Melrose residents were involved with the planning, it was not necessarily people that live in the neighborhood. The topic seems to be about bike safety. She mentions that a lot of discussion is taking place over two city blocks. They don't want to lose parking, they know bikers are going to be there and we should just put sharrows to mark the road. The neighborhood is not anti-bike lanes; they just want the best configuration for the street. She states that there is a design stage and an implementation stage and when you try to implement it that's when you find out what works and does not work like we are here. Also, how people use the space needs to be factored in. She mentions that she walked the street with a neighbor last night and although no cars were parked in the southbound lane, cars were still crossing the yellow line. This raises concerns for the design. She states that in polling the neighborhood the majority of the people think that we can do better and think that someone is going to get hurt. She mentions that everyone was very interested in the bike transit way next to the train and would want to look at that long term. She points out that bikes are always going to be on Main St.

Elena then reads a comment from Liam McHale that was in the WebEx Q & A. It reads: Thank you for taking the time to set up this meeting. I am a resident living in this area of Melrose and would like to state that my family and I support the bicycle lanes and multi modal modifications being made to this section of Main St. I support keeping the bike lanes and road modifications. Slowing speeds and modifying the flow of traffic will make this section safer. Melrose needs this. Thank you for your time. Additionally, he writes in that he lives on Derby Road with a young family. We need more bike lanes in Melrose. I strongly support the bike lanes on lower Main.

Finn McSweeney wants to make sure that on behalf of the PedBike Committee that the commissioners did receive and were aware of the almost 400 signatures they received in support for this sort of improvement on lower Main St. It is tremendously popular city wide. People want to see this and they have talked a lot about planning. He then

mentions that if you go to the Melrose master plan from 2017, there is a section that asks residents what is the single most important characteristic to you that we preserve and maintain in Melrose. By a long shot it was the ability to get around safely by multiple modes of transportation whether by rail, bus, car, bicycle or on foot. The proposal that we saw and that was approved by the TC on October 28<sup>th</sup> is the type of road that Melrosians want to see in Melrose.

Bill Gordon speaks again and wants to reply to the comments people made about what he presented. He would just like to state that the people opposed just exercised their right to petition as it states in the TC statute. It is standard practice because these types of decisions have local impact. It is built in for people to raise these concerns. Second he states that his evidence is valid as he is showing that with a car parked and the center lane where it is that adding a bike lane will in fact impact cars going over the line.

Elena reads a comment from Steve Lombardi in the chat. She reads, Idea let's put our ideas of sharrows and parking on both sides for a trail run and agree to review it in several months. We had the design bike riders wanted and it was not viable, you had your trial run let's try ours.

Motion to close public comment is made by Commissioner Parenti, seconded by Chief Lyle.

By unanimous consent public comment is now closed.

Decision is made to discuss all of the items together.

The items up for discussion are:

- 1. Changing parking on the west side of Main Street (southbound) from about 244 Main street continuing south to Sylvan Street**
- 2. Adding dedicated bike lanes on the east side of Main Street (northbound) from 338 feet north of the Melrose/Malden City limit to Mount Vernon Street**
- 3. Adding dedicated bike lanes on Main Street southbound (west side) from about 244 Main Street to Sylvan Street**
- 4. Amending the Melrose Traffic Code for consistency with existing signage on Main Street, both sides, south of Wyoming Avenue to the Melrose/Malden City limit as it pertains to parking restrictions and time limits.**

Elena states the bike lanes on the southbound side past Sylvan were not actually specified on the petition as being brought into question.

Councilor Eccles asks Elena for clarification as to where we go from here in regards to posting requirements, the way that the petition goes and implementation.

Elena states that if we vote consistent with what we voted on October 28<sup>th</sup> then we have already posted for the two weeks in the newspaper that is still printed; we have already posted all of our decisions from October 28<sup>th</sup>, EV charging stations, crosswalks, etc.; so if we vote the same then all those votes stand and we don't have to republish those. The only exception is that in the ad and on the agenda rather than Mt. Vernon St. she wrote Mt. Vernon Ave. mistakenly. Elena contends that she feels it was very clear that we were discussing Mt. Vernon St., not Mt. Vernon Ave. and that it was clear to everyone, however from a technicality standpoint that is not what we put in the newspaper. The bike lane from 338 feet north of the Melrose/Malden City limit to Mt. Vernon St. would have to be put in the newspaper again for two more weeks if we decide that we still want to approve that. She states that if we vote something different tonight, then we would have to put whatever that new vote is into the newspaper for another two weeks.

Commissioner Krechmer asks about the Mt. Vernon Ave. issue and asks if that is something that can be voted on at the next TC meeting in December because it would be two weeks.

Elena states that we can in fact vote on it tonight and then publish it for two weeks. She mentions that a potential delay tactic for the project would be for folks to file another petition of just that one item. After the publication last Friday, we can now paint all the crosswalks because those are not part of tonight's discussion. We could paint everything else other than that northbound bike lane if everything was approved again. Elena feels that if another petition was filed just about the northbound bike lane, it would be just a delay tactic. She goes on to say that the city's line painting contractor has wrapped up for the season and we are unlikely to get them back until the spring. Their hope would be if we had an unseasonably warm day that they could at least get the crosswalks down and detour traffic. Elena feels that we have actually created a less safe condition by just putting in the center line.

Chief Lyle asks for clarity on whether we are voting on all four items at once or break them up individually.

Elena states they will vote on them separately still, but discuss all four together.

Commissioner Parenti asks if we have options aside from an up and down vote. He asks if there is an avenue where we can open or make an amendment to the decision we made previously now that this is reopened. He states that there were a few people that testified that the proposal we made does not go far enough. He is wondering if we have latitude in both directions.

Elena states that given that is a public hearing relevant to a petition on four specific items that we probably just need to vote up or down on these specific items. She states that obviously at a future TC meeting we could always reopen a discussion on something different if we choose.

Chief Lyle asks about Item #2, adding the bike lanes on the east side of Main St. He states that based on the numbers that were presented from the pilot, where we flip flopped it from a bike lane from outside and inside to the curb, he states that when you add it all up we are about 2 feet short on the northbound side.

Elena states that there should be at a minimum 23 ft. which would be an 11 foot travel lane, a 7ft. parking lane and a 5 ft. bike lane.

Chief Lyle mentions the buffer lane and Elena explains that in the last meeting they decided to move the buffer lane to the southbound side. This would allow people more room getting out of their driveways and so the center lane would not be so off centered. Chief Lyle then discusses the width of the southbound side and how the width varies the whole way. Elena goes through her measurements as well and states that the narrowest part is actually a part that they did not restripe in front of the Ionic. She states that from the curb to the edge of the double yellow is 16 ft. 7 in. and then it went to 18 ft. Throughout the area where we striped it was 17 ft. 2 in., 17 ft. 3 in., 17 ft. 9 in., 17 ft. 2 inches, 17 ft. 4 inches. That is just five spots she measured in the area. Chief Lyle states that he went from 278, 238, 212, 180 and 164 and it varied from 17 ft. to 16.7 and it went from the curb right to the edge of the yellow line. He said although this is just approximate, these are his concerns because Main St. is a dedicated truck route. Elena states that the 11 ft. travel lanes are a given, however it's the buffer, bike and parking lanes that would vary. When they go to stripe it with the fog line they will set an offset from the double yellow with their machine and they just go. The 11 foot travel lanes would be consistent the whole way.

Chief Lyle stated that when he gets calls about the bend area around 278 Main, he calls it the sharpest area; he is surprised at how wide it is.

Elena mentions that she drove this area many times in the past two weeks and a lot of it really does depend on your speed. She states that if you go 25mph through that whole corridor, it is very easy to stay in the lines whether someone is parked on the right hand side or not in both directions. The reality is that a lot of people are not going the speed limit. She thinks that when they paint the fog lines that would increase the likelihood that people will go the speed limit.

Chief Lyle states that he has a CDL and he understands what is like to drive a semi and a tractor trailer. He goes on to respond to the resident Estelle that was wondering about the fines for not moving over for an emergency vehicle and he states that it is a \$100 fine. He states that it is a judgement call on whether to ticket, especially if someone is doing their best to get over. On Main St. in Melrose everyone is splitting the road for them. It is very seldom in the city will you see someone cited for that, maybe on the Parkway, but not on Main St.

Elena asks Sgt. Goc a few questions that were raised by residents regarding bus routes and the buses having adequate space to pull over for cars to get around them. Elena states that she was driving on Franklin, Upham and Lebanon which are other streets that have bus traffic and are much narrower than Main St. She wants to know if we have problems with crashes as a result of people going around buses.

Sgt. Goc states that is a good question and obviously it is a natural occurrence on some of our main arteries. He states that in a lot of these areas, which will be the case on Main St, that the sight lines are very good. For example, if a bus pulls over and it's not all the way against the curb, the average driver will either stop for a minute, or slow down and then they will look and see if it's safe to go left and pass the bus going over the yellow line a little. It's sort of a natural occurrence and the reasonable prudent driver will only do that seeing the sight lines of the other lane coming at them and knowing that it is safe to do so. He doesn't see it as an issue. Certainly it could happen and it would obviously be the driver's fault for going around the bus when it isn't safe and for going over the yellow line.

Chief Lyle states that he checked some other areas in the city and that W. Wyoming is probably the narrowest heading east bound. Some areas of the road are 9 ft. 10 inches and 9 ft. 7 inches, so that is pretty narrow especially going by the Lincoln school. He states that this is the narrowest he could find.

Commissioner Krechmer follows up on the accident question. Do we have any other history of accidents on that section of Main St? He states that the new center line probably hasn't been there long enough for history, but even during the trial period or other configuration, asks if there were any accidents?

Sgt. Goc states that they had one in front of the McDonough house, in the southbound area. The accident occurred at night and it was dark in Sept. /Oct. The parking lanes were projected out at the time and people were parking 6 ft. out because that was the design stage of the trial. The McDonough car was parked 6 ft. off the curb. A car was driving northbound and a car approached the area driving a significant speed. They stated that the car in front of them slammed on the brakes and took a quick left onto Woodruff and that caused them to steer to the right and slam into the parked vehicle. Had they been going the speed limit, been paying attention and not following too closely that accident would not have happened. It was not due to where the car was parked, but driver error. He states that other than that one incident he does not recall anything else. He did do a quick five year history on the area, but stated that it was fifty-five accidents and that is for the entire city. He does not have direct data in that corridor. It has not come to his attention that it is a problem area.

Elena wants to address a point that keeps coming up regarding the process, the involvement of the neighborhood and the timeline. She wants the commission and the public to know what the timeline actually was from the city perspective. It is also in detail on the webpage. The city identified this for a priority project for a road diet back in 2017 when they did the complete streets prioritization plan. It was identified as needing to be paved in 2018 and then after that point the city was not working on a plan for a road diet until June 2021. She mentions that they have an ongoing relationship with the PedBike committee. They used to have monthly meetings with them and inform them of upcoming projects and if they had any ideas or wish lists that we would love to hear them. Similarly when they were looking at the north/south bike routes, they reached out to them and said let us know what routes you feel would work best. When we were ready to design the north/south bike route we looked at the report the committee prepared and then said okay we like this, we don't like this. We solicit the opinions of the PedBike committee because they are a very active and knowledgeable group. People work in this industry and know about transportation design. That happened in this case in about the 2019 timeframe, they had put together a report, a wish list for what the committee thought would be good for lower Main St.

The city did not begin to think about what our proposed plan would be for the pilot program until about a month before our first meeting. At the first meeting in July that is where we presented what we were thinking of doing and we talked to the PedBike committee. We also talked to the MAPC that was offering us some free technical assistance and we picked out what we might want to see from the PedBike plan and from some other ideas that we had internally and we put together the pilot project. There was not this protracted period during which the city staff was planning and not involving the residents of Melrose outside of the PedBike committee. She can't stress that enough. She mentions that one resident stated we do one project at a time. Elena goes on to say that we are doing 10-15 roadway and utility capital projects at any given time. We are designing them, constructing them; we are in various phases of them, many projects at once. With us realizing we were nearing the fall when we could get paving done and understanding that Eversource and National Grid were finally done and we had finished our water improvements, then we said well what we are going to do? That was the time frame. There was about a month. We talked to PedBike, we talked to MAPC, we put together the meeting notice for the July meeting, we put together a presentation, we held the meeting and then we did the striping two weeks later. We then did the survey, the in person neighborhood meeting, the meeting at the learning commons that was both virtual and in person. We also hand delivered notices to the Main St. abutters, to the immediate abutters for several of those meetings, and did Everbridge calls to pretty much everyone south of Wyoming. So Elena has a hard time with the comments about lack of involvement. She states that perhaps maybe the residents would have liked longer discussions, it was a fairly short time frame from June up until now, but she thinks we had robust discussions at every meeting. She does not feel that there weren't viable ideas that weren't considered. She feels that the decisions that they made in October were made with a wealth of information and a lot of public input. There was no decision that was going to make everybody happy and she feels the decision they arrived at was a compromise. It was a compromise that she was comfortable with then and remains comfortable with, recognizing that there are challenges. There are challenges in every direction with the proposed plan, but she feels it is an appropriate balance for this roadway.

Councilor Eccles thanks the residents for their time and also for the exhibits that were presented. He states that the configuration that is on S. Main St. today is not the plan that any of the commission voted for. When looking at pictures of it and hearing issues with it he states that it wasn't his intention for the street, the parking on the southbound lane forcing people into the other travel lane. A car with enough space to pass safely is about eight feet wide and that's not the same as what the bike lane would have been. With that, he agrees with Elena that the process was extensive. Even the week that we voted he states that we had the meeting at the high school, came

before council and then the TC meeting. He has heard from many members of the public personally and in the meetings and he will stick with his vote from October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Rossi thinks that we all agree that the primary consideration is safety. Safety trumps everything else. Safety is not just for the drivers, but it is also for the cyclists and pedestrians. He thinks that is what has been weighed in the previous conversations, discussions and ultimately our vote. Safety whether it was safer overall to have the bike lanes, which in his opinion does make it safer for the cyclists. Acknowledging that everything is somewhat of a tradeoff, but he didn't see that it was terribly more hazardous for the drivers with the configuration we voted on compared to what it was before. He appreciates the exhibits that Mr. Gordon presented. He states that there will always be cars parked there, whether it is people pulling in and out of driveways or an Amazon delivery, there will be cars that go over the yellow line from time to time. He doesn't necessarily think that creates a huge hazard by itself, as we have all noted the sight lines are very good there. He mentions that he asked about the accidents because if there were head on accidents with people crossing the yellow lines we would know about them. We do know that crossing the line happens in other parts of the city where the streets aren't as wide. Ultimately he feels that what they voted on last time was safer overall and there is a benefit to encourage people not to use their cars. He doesn't feel that this will eliminate congestion in Melrose, but it is better to give people another option besides driving. Although there was some new evidence presented, he states that it's not enough to make him switch over.

Commissioner Krechmer appreciates the exhibits but wants to point out that if you look at the pictures there is a fair amount of distance between the car going over the line and the parked vehicle. The bike lane would be even narrower and he thinks part of the problem is there is no fog line there now. He feels this would keep people in the lane and guide them forward. As a cyclist himself, there is no question that a bike lane is safer than sharrows and safer than an unused parking lane that has a car now and then.

Elena goes on to mention that the way the center line is currently striped can accommodate any vote up or down on the agenda tonight. This would assume that in its narrowest points there is six and a half foot parking lanes and eleven foot travel lanes, on that southbound side. She drove and parked her car down there the last few days and noticed that the people crossing the line are generally the people going too fast. Mr. Gordon's photos were valid points, but she also goes back to the configuration that this board voted for before that is no longer relevant when it becomes a bike lane and not a parking lane, except on the occasion when someone pulls over to drop something off or what not. It's even narrower in a spot that we do allow parking just after Wyoming and that travel lane and parking lane total are narrower than anything we did south of where the paving limit was. Obviously it's a layout that the city has found acceptable in the past and has not had a problem with.

Former Mayor Infurna states that her comments have not changed much from the last meeting, but would like people to remember that this is Main St. and it is used by many. It is also a residential area with a couple of businesses on it, so she thinks that makes a difference when we consider bike lanes here. She mentions that Main St. is mostly a shared street from Wakefield all the way down to downtown Melrose. We are looking at 200 yards of bike lane. She is hesitant to support any of this because for 200 yards we are really disrupting the neighborhood and making a big change. We always try to be consistent with our signage and everything that we are doing with the city and if we have Main St. as a shared road except for 200 yards, because right after Sylvan you can park again, she thinks that we are being a little inconsistent for the bike riders going down. She is not sure that she can support this, with the parked cars now impacting the side streets during a holiday or with visitors. She is still not going to support this. She certainly supports bikers and their lanes, but she feels that Main St. is Main St.

Commissioner Peart would just like to thank everyone for their time and effort on this project.

Commissioner Krechmer makes a motion to restrict parking from about 244 Main St. continuing south to Sylvan St; seconded by Commissioner Parenti. All are in favor with the exception of Former Mayor Infurna and Chief Lyle therefore the motion carries.

Elena reads the next agenda item which is adding dedicated bike lanes on the east side of Main St. (northbound) from 338 feet north of the Melrose/Malden City limit to Mount Vernon St.

Motion made by Commissioner Krechmer, seconded by Commissioner Parenti. All are in favor with the exception of Chief Lyle. Motion carries.

The next agenda item is to add dedicated bike lanes on Main St. southbound (west side) from about 244 Main Street to Sylvan St. Elena states that the bike lane south of Main St. was not questioned in the petition, so that is already approved.

Motion made by Commissioner Peart, seconded by Commissioner Parenti. Former Mayor Infurna and Chief Lyle vote no, however the rest of the TC vote yes and the motion carries.

The last agenda item is to amend the Melrose Traffic Code for consistency with existing signage on Main St., both sides, south of Wyoming Ave. to the Melrose/Malden City limit as it pertains to parking restrictions and time limits. Elena states that this is not making any changes, it is just procedural. She points out that the petition left out some of the wording and this would be to accept as otherwise voted previously in this meeting. She states that it is a critical piece of that motion. She emphasizes that this does not supersede any of the other votes taken tonight; it would just be to have the Traffic Code match existing signage. For example if someone is parked outside the apartment building just after Wyoming and the sign says 2 hour parking and the code states 1 hour, we would update the code to say 2 hour parking. Former Mayor Infurna states that it would also include no parking from 244 Main St. to Sylvan.

Elena then clarifies again that is not intended to supersede any prior votes from tonight. It's just in the areas where we didn't vote on something that relates to restrictions to make the traffic code match what is on the existing signage.

Motion made by Chief Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Rossi. All are in favor, motion carries.

Chief Lyle makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rossi.

Unanimous consent is made to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting concludes at 8:36pm.