



# Braintree Town Council Committee on Public Safety

One JFK Memorial Drive  
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

## MEMBERS

Shannon Hume, Chairwoman  
Elizabeth Maglio, Vice Chairwoman  
David Ringius, Jr, Member

## AGENDA

**Monday, February 10, 2025**

**Starting Time – 6:30p.m.  
Johnson Chambers**

1. **Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - November 1, 2023
4. **Old Business**
  - None
5. **New Business**
  - 036 24 Councilor Hume: Public Safety Department Head Updates or take up any action relative thereto
6. **Adjournment**



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Elizabeth Maglio, Vice-Chairwoman  
David Ringius, Jr, Member

## November 1, 2023 MINUTES

A meeting of the Committee on Public Safety was held via Zoom Webinar on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 beginning at 6:00p.m.

Clerk of the Council, Susan Cimino, conducted the roll call.

Chairwoman Hume was in the Chair

Present: Shannon Hume, Chairwoman  
Elizabeth Maglio, Vice-Chairwoman  
David Ringius, member  
Meredith Boericke, Council President (ex-officio)

Also Present: Margaret Laforest, COS  
John Thompson, Asst. Director of Public Works - Town Engineer  
Ryan Matheson, Engineering Manager  
Sgt. Brian Jenkins, Braintree PD  
Dennis Flynn, consultant BETA Group

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- November 15, 2022

Motion made by Councilor Maglio to Approve Minutes of November 15, 2022

**Motion:** by Councilor Maglio to Approve Minutes of November 15, 2022

**Second:** by Councilor Ringius

**Roll Call Vote:** For (3 –Hume, Maglio, Ringius), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **030 22 Council President: Pedestrian Safety South Braintree Square or take up any action relative thereto**

Motion made by Councilor Ringius to Take off the TABLE item 030 22

**Motion:** by Councilor Ringius to Take off the TABLE item 030 22

**Second:** by Councilor Maglio

**Vote:** For (3 –Hume, Maglio, Ringius), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

BETA GROUP REPORT:

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Braintree, acting through its Department of Public Works, commissioned a study to evaluate existing intersection operations at the signalized intersection of Washington Street, Hancock Street and Pearl Street (South Braintree Square) in November of 2022. The evaluation focused on the existing operation of the intersection for all users, with a primary focus on pedestrian operations/interaction and the existing concurrent pedestrian signal phasing. Also included were observations and evaluation of the existing operational deficiencies; identified safety concerns; and a review of documentation provided by the Town. Furthermore, the study provided improvements alternatives considering signal phasing and timing modifications; existing signal equipment adequacy; and provided recommendations for improvements.

This intersection evaluation builds upon that study to analyze and assess the alternatives provided by the November 2022 study. Updated traffic counts for the intersection were collected for the weekday peak periods and the Saturday midday peak period. Capacity analysis for the three alternatives provided in the previous study has been summarized in the subsequent sections of this memorandum and recommendations have been made as to the preferred alternative.

### **FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on a review and evaluation of the analysis results for the different alternatives described in report included in the documents for this meeting, the modifications proposed as part of Option 2, concurrent pedestrian phases and NB and SB right-turn control, provide the best overall improvements to pedestrian safety and vehicle operations. Option 2 accomplishes the primary goal of optimizing pedestrian safety by minimizing pedestrian/vehicle interaction, while also providing vehicle operations that are comparable to the current conditions. Further review of each option revealed that the Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) included in Option 1 can also be implemented as part of the Option 2 phasing to create a hybrid of the two options. As shown in Option 1, the LPI that proceeds phase 2+6 can be similarly incorporated into the Option 2 phasing. Under Option 2, the LPI would follow phase 1+5, upon pedestrian actuation of the east-west crossing. The LPI could also be implemented prior to phase 4+8, but is not as critical, since the NB and SB right-turns will be held during the concurrent pedestrian phasing, thereby eliminating this conflict. The hybrid option would further enhance the pedestrian safety, while having a negligible impact on the expected operations. Given these additional benefits, we recommend the hybrid approach of incorporating the LPI's into the Option 2 phasing strategy and improvements, as the preferred alternative.

**TO:** TASC

**FROM:** John P. Thompson, P.E., Asst. Director of Public Works – Town Engineer

**RE: MINUTES for the July 18, 2023, meeting - 1:30 PM, 85 Quincy Ave**

Attendees: John Thompson, Ben Hulke, Jim Arsenault, Chief Cohoon, Sgt. Jenkins, Ryan Matheson, Dan Hickey

**Discussion about further traffic signal improvements in South Braintree Square**

*– TASC discussed the 6/29/23 memorandum from Beta Group exploring potential additional changes to the South Braintree Square intersection signal phasing. While the memo does provide a recommendation to make additional changes to the traffic signal operations which could improve pedestrian comfort at the location, TASC did note a few concerns with the recommendation. First, TASC continues to believe that the traffic signal phasing is working well in its current state and questions whether it makes sense to introduce more changes. Every time changes and complexities are introduced, it can possibly add to user confusion which can have the opposite effect of what is being sought. Further, the recommended changes require the addition of new traffic signal heads and other equipment, and funding will have to be identified to complete these changes. TASC recommends that if the consultant-recommended changes are implemented, they are done so on a temporary basis at first, so that the intersection can be reverted to its current operations if issues arise as a result.*

John Thompson stated since last we met we pledged to do additional traffic counts and studies and traffic modeling to see if there were any changes we could make. We think we arrived at a very good alternative which can add an extra layer of enhanced safety and comfort for pedestrians while at the same time maintaining efficiency in terms of moving vehicles and not contributing to gridlock in the square.

We are calling it a hybrid option. We are looking to establish a leading pedestrian interval of 3 seconds on a couple of the approaches. It will be the east and west approach on Pearl Street and Washington Street by Southside Tavern we would look to establish a leading pedestrian interval. The walk signal will come on 3 seconds prior to vehicles getting the green light. North and South bound approaches have right turn only lanes. We can install new pedestrian signal heads which will have a right turn arrow that can actually turn red and hold the right turning traffic for 3 seconds and give the same head start to pedestrians if they push the button.

John Thompson stated we are moving forward with this recommendation. There is a cost involved. It is not just as simple as rewiring. We do need to install some new signal heads. These need to be manufactured.

Chairwoman Hume asked how they decided on 3 seconds?

Dennis Flynn, BETA group stated the LPIs are between 3 and maybe 7 seconds depending on your situation. We felt 3 seconds was a good place to start to enhance visibility. The more you add the less time for the vehicles.

Chairwoman Hume asked about cost.  
John Thompson said about \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Councilor Maglio asked if 5 seconds would make a difference.  
Was the consultant to improve pedestrian safety or vehicle operations or a combination?  
John Thompson stated is area was not operating correctly for the pedestrian safety. People would push the button and then walk without the walk signal. This should add and extra layer of safety.

Councilor Ringius asked if the Commission on Disabilities was informed about this.  
John Thompson said he has been in contact with Kristina Ziniti but not sure if the commission was formally informed of any of this.  
Councilor Ringius stated our focus obviously is pedestrian traffic. What is the modeling on the 3 second delay?

Dennis Flynn, consultant BETA Group stated we want to understand when we implement these things. Not just the safety benefits but what his means for the vehicle operations. With a 3-5 lead pedestrian interval, we are really maintaining the same. This is not leading to significant delay.

Councilor Ringius asked about the modeling on the 5 second delay?  
Dennis Flynn replied I don't have those results summarized. I would say its not significantly more delay for traffic. 3 seconds will get you 10-11 feet out into the intersection.

Councilor Ringius stated the concern is the person that's less capable or not able to match that average walking speed.  
Councilor Ringius stated there was a significant cost to change this over. If we went with 3 seconds and later want to change the time there would not be an additional cost correct? We can change the time when needed?  
John Thompson replied that is correct.

Councilor Ringius stated I would hope we can talk more with the folks on the Commission on Disabilities because some of those folks might not be moving at the average walking speed.

Councilor Maglio stated I agree to have this vetted through the Commission on Disabilities. Is there a modeling done for those people who cross at different speeds? Or who are seated in a wheelchair?  
Dennis Flynn replied the modeling just tells you the expected operations of what the vehicles are. The average walking speed is based on 3 ½ feet per second which 85% of the population walks.

Meredith Boericke, Council President asked if the leading pedestrian interval will be activated when someone pushes the button correct? Not random with the cycles.  
Dennis Flynn replied that's right. That is how we would propose it.

Meredith Boericke, Council President stated I would recommend the COD weight in and if 5 seconds would not be more detrimental I would offer we look at that. I would gather higher than the rest of the town those here live with disability, low vision, mobility impairment, wheelchair users.

Sgt. Brian Jenkins stated my only concern and I think this is the prevailing concern impact is that we need to be careful continually changing this intersection because it gets very confusing for motorists. Hopefully we pick what will be our long-term plan and is good for everyone. Maybe a social media campaign needs to go out through the mayor's office and police department as well that changes have been made.

Crystal Evans, COD stated I crossed the square at least 14 times today. The vehicles get to go before we do and the cars don't know when we're getting the walk because they can't see our walk signals. Its confusing for the vehicles. Walking the square with Mayor Sullivan ended up with the "No Turn On Red". What we had asked for at the time was the LED blank outs. I priced them out pre-COVID and they were \$2,000 to \$3,000 apiece. These would tell the cars what's going on and make it less confusing when a pedestrian is coming out. It is important to know and understand the population demographics in the square. It takes us longer to get our chair moving. It's not like somebody who's walking. Many people live in the square because they do not have cars.

Chairwoman Hume asked for the Commission on Disabilities to put this on their agenda and come up with an opinion and forward it to us.

Kristina Zinit stated she would have this on the next COD agenda under discussion.

Crystal Evans stated the police can only ticket a driver who hits a pedestrian with failing to yield.

Chairwoman Hume suggested we table this based on the COD to take this up and we can receive from Kristina Ziniti the outcome.

Motion made by Councilor Maglio to TABLE item 030 22 to a future meeting

**Motion:** by Councilor Maglio to TABLE item 030 22

**Second:** by Councilor Ringius

**Roll Call Vote:** For (3 –Hume, Maglio, Ringius), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

**NEW BUSINESS**

- None

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan M. Cimino, Clerk of the Council

**DOCUMENTS FOR MEETING**

- BETA GROUP REPORT
- TASC MINUTES for the July 18, 2023, meeting - 1:30 PM, 85 Quincy Ave