

May 24, 2022

Dear Christine Wallace, Newburyport City Council, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, and all others that this may concern,

I moved to this charming city on the water to escape the Boston traffic, population, and safety concerns. My friends thought I was crazy, but I knew this was city was home and an hour plus commute each day was well worth it to come back to Newburyport at the end of the day. As a 25-year-old I invested in this town, and would never go back and change that, but like anything as population and traffic increase throughout the years, we add in traffic lights, stop signs, cross walks, sidewalks, etc. We learn to adapt and grow to create change to meet the needs of the residents in each neighborhood and community at large to keep the character of our town intact.

As a resident of Merrimac Street for the last 5 years, I have noticed the uptick in traffic, tourism, through traffic, businesses, speeding cars, aggressive drivers, and daily almost accidents. While crossing Merrimac Street, almost daily am hit by cars, yes, even when in crosswalks. When calling the police to address this concern, the concern is dismissed quiet rudely, which is yet another concern, I will address elsewhere. I am unable to pull out of my cross-street, from Elm to Merrimac Street when leaving my house and I am not only one who shares this sentiment in our neighborhood as there is 1 hour parking allowed on Merrimac Street from Whites Ct (174 Merrimac St) to Pop Crowley Way (150 Merrimac St).

I am formally asking that the 1-hour parking sign from Whites Ct (174 Merrimac St) to Pop Crowley Way (150 Merrimac St), allowing for 1 hour parking on Merrimac Street be removed. When people see parking on that side of the street, they often assume they can park between Merrill St (175 Merrimac St) and Boardman St (151 Merrimac St) as well. This specific stretch of Merrimac is extremely dangerous, narrow, and doesn't allow for street parking. Even with the cars parking half on the sidewalk and half in Merrimac St, there isn't room for cars to go around without crossing the double yellow creating a traffic jam. When these cars try to parallel park, turnaround doing complete U-turns in the middle of Merrimac, pull out of their parking spot, etc. they aren't paying attention and it is a complete nightmare. Allowing parking here is a complete mess and just adds to the lack of safety along Merrimac Street.

As I stated above, when a city grows, we need to adjust to ensure safety is at the forefront of our decisions as a community. I believe back in the day, this parking was a good choice, but with the growth, we need to adjust, and I am looking forward to seeing it removed with your help. Photos on pages 2 and 3 of this document with videos and letters of others speaking on their concerns of safety on Merrimac Street directly taking from public records, attached to this email.

Let's make this step towards creating a safer city.

Thank you for your time,

Emily Dunn

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