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Gary Christenson, Mayor

TO: The Malden City Council
FROM: Mayor Gary Christenson
RE: Centre Street
DATE: September 5, 2023

This memorandum is in response to the discussion in the community concerning the modifications that were made on Centre Street to accommodate a bus lane and bike lane. I have communicated with you in the past about the elements of the handling of this entire project that we should learn from for future projects. It is not my intent to go back and revisit that, but rather to recognize where we are at now and to communicate from my administration's perspective what the next step is.

As you recall, when the project was first proposed, an important component was the upgrading of the signals that would work in concert with the lane changes. The proponents of the project have from the beginning spoken of the importance of the signal changes to support the lane modifications. After a lengthy delay, we are finally at the point where those changes are being finalized and we will be able to see the impact of these changes on the lane modifications and how it affects traffic.

I have instructed our City Engineer to engage in a traffic study of the Centre Street corridor so that we can review the 'before and after,' share that with the public, and engage in transparent dialogue on what is working, what needs improvement, and in general, map out where we go from here with the benefit of that data. I would remind everyone that whatever changes may be needed should be done in partnership with the MBTA. As a city with two stations within our boundaries, it's important that we work collaboratively with the MBTA on this and all issues. Doing so recognizes the importance of this relationship as we continue to work with the MBTA on other unrelated but equally important matters.

I respect the right of any group of citizens to request that the City Council place a question on the ballot. It's a power afforded to the City Council in our charter and something that only happens once a majority of the City Council agrees. Regardless of the outcome of that discussion and vote, I intend to engage both the City Council and the Traffic Commission in reviewing the outcome of the traffic study and in discussing what steps, if any, should be taken as a result of what we learn from that study.