



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7 Twin Circle Drive, Arlington, 02474

Memorandum

To: Board of Selectmen, Arlington, Mass

From: Transportation Advisory Committee

Subject: Crosswalk at Library Way/Mass Ave.

Reference:

Date: October 27, 2005

At your request, the TAC has reviewed the existing conditions of the crosswalk located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Library Way/Water Street. The goal of our review was to develop ways to improve pedestrian safety without significant compromise to vehicle operations. At its meeting on 9/27/05, the TAC voted unanimously for the following recommendations. Phase I recommendations can be done quickly. Phase II recommendations will require additional design work and expenses. An attached Report provides background for these recommendations.

Phase I

1. Massachusetts Avenue: At Crosswalk

- a. Widen crosswalk markings to current standards (12' wide).
- b. Trim hedges at library side of crosswalk (east side of library driveway).
- c. Maintain crosswalk bollard.
- d. Add crosswalk across Library Way at intersection with Mass Ave.
- e. Add sign "No Parking Here to Corner", on Mass Ave 20' west of Library Way.

2. Massachusetts Avenue: Westbound

- a. Trim/remove low hedges in traffic island.
- b. Trim low tree limbs in traffic island that impair sightlines.

Phase II:

1. Massachusetts Avenue: At Crosswalk

- a. Construct sidewalk bump-outs at either end of crosswalk.
- b. Add crosswalk identification signs.

2. Massachusetts Avenue: Westbound

- a. Install advance crosswalk warning signs on either side of westbound approach.
- b. Install advance yield lines.

3. Massachusetts Avenue: Eastbound

- a. Install advance crosswalk warning sign on sidewalk side of eastbound approach.
- b. Install advance yield lines.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Starr

Chair of Transportation Advisory Committee

Transportation Advisory Committee Members:

Joseph Cahill, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. James McHugh, Kevin O'Brien, Charles Pappas, Michael Rademacher, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, and Edward Starr.

Web site: www.tac.arlington.ma.us/

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – Library Way/Mass Ave Crosswalk

1. Massachusetts Avenue: At Crosswalk

The streets in the vicinity of the crosswalk have long been the topic of discussion in regard to necessary improvements. In 2000, the BSC Group submitted a Traffic Improvement Study for Arlington Town Center. The purpose of the Study was to “analyze traffic operations in Arlington Center” and among other things “enhancing the pedestrian environment”. The difficulties of the Library Way crossing were discussed within the report with a recommendation of investigating the feasibility of installing pedestrian traffic signals at the crosswalk.

In November 2001, a group of residents living in the vicinity of the subject area submitted to the Town, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Requests. Within the document, it was suggested that sidewalk bump-outs be constructed at the crosswalk to improve pedestrian visibility and reduce the crosswalk length. Bump-outs will also eliminate the presence of vehicles parking near the crosswalk on the approach side of the crossing. This will greatly improve visibility of pedestrians using the crosswalk and vehicles exiting Water Street and Library Way.

In August 2005, TAC members visited the site to make an assessment of the crosswalk. In addition to the above previously documented observations, it was noted that crosswalk would benefit from additional signage, improved pavement markings and better sightlines.

In addition to the difficulties facing pedestrians at the crosswalk, left hand turns from both Water Street and Library Way are difficult for vehicles. Over the past three years, 10 crashes have been documented at the crosswalk, 5 involving left hand turns and one involving a pedestrian (not associated with a left turning vehicle). Based upon traffic counts within the BSC Group Report, approximately 60 vehicles make a left hand turn from Water Street during peak hour traffic. Eliminating the left turn would force these vehicles to travel through Water Street and Russell Street to Mystic Street. None of the above mentioned reports recommended eliminating left hand turns at the crosswalk.

Recommendations for the crosswalk and immediate vicinity are listed below. Phase One items are initial recommendations while Phase Two items will require additional design work prior to implementation. Improvements for Westbound and Eastbound approaches follow.

Phase 1

- a. Widen crosswalk markings to current standards (12' wide).
- b. Trim hedges at library side of crosswalk (east side of library driveway).
- c. Maintain crosswalk bollard.
- d. Add crosswalk across Library Way at intersection with Mass Ave.
- e. Add sign “No Parking Here to Corner”, on Mass Ave 20' west of Library Way.

**Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee
Library Way/Water Street – Massachusetts Avenue Crosswalk
27 September 2005**

Phase II

- f. Construct sidewalk bump-outs at either end of crosswalk.
- g. Add crosswalk identification signs.

It is noted that the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor through this area is currently being studied for improvements. The redesign of Massachusetts Avenue in this area may allow for the extension of the traffic median to the crosswalk (not currently feasible due to roadway widths). The subject of a signalized pedestrian crossing is also recommended for reviewed as part of the corridor improvements project.

2. Massachusetts Avenue: Westbound

Vehicles approaching the crosswalk from this direction have extremely poor visibility of the crossing. Vegetation in the traffic island, and parked cars shield the majority of the crossing from motorists' vision. Adding to the confusion of this approach is the close proximity of the Rte. 60/Mass Ave intersection. Vehicles accelerating from that intersection may not be expecting a crosswalk so soon and without proper warning do not have enough time to react when within view of the crosswalk. The following recommendations are aimed at improving visibility of the crosswalk from the westbound approach:

Phase I

- a. Trim/remove low hedges in traffic island.
- b. Trim low tree limbs in traffic island that impair sightlines.

Phase II

- c. Install advance crosswalk warning signs on either side of westbound approach.
- d. Install advance yield lines.

3. Massachusetts Avenue: Eastbound

Visibility of the crosswalk from this approach is significantly better than from the other direction although it still lacks adequate advance warning. The following recommendations are made to improve motorist's awareness of the crossing:

Phase II

- a. Install advance crosswalk warning sign on sidewalk side of eastbound approach.
- b. Install advance yield lines.

Respectfully submitted:

Michael Rademacher and Howard Muise; 27 September 2005