

Report of the Transportation Advisory Committee to the Board of Selectmen

29 April 2002

Cleveland Street

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Summary Recommendations

Please see the *Detailed Recommendations* section, below, for the reasoning behind these recommendations.

1. Enforce existing parking regulations, particularly time limits on Mass Ave., those related to parking too close to intersections, and too close to driveways.
2. Enforce the existing State Law (Chapter 90, section 16a), which (with some exceptions) prohibits a motor vehicle being stopped more than 5 minutes with the engine running.
3. Begin work towards a set of options to address commuter parking on an area-wide basis. This would include at least East Arlington, and may include the entire Town.
4. Post Lake Street as “No Heavy Trucking”, consistent with the existing legal truck exclusion on Lake Street. If legal, also post Cleveland Street as “No Heavy Trucking”, consistent with the 1955 letter from the Board of Selectmen to the Arlington Police Department.
5. Explore allowing nighttime truck usage of Route 16 between Broadway and Mass. Ave.
6. Make the signage for the left turn restriction from Broadway to Cleveland clearer.
7. Explore with DPW the application of traffic calming devices in Arlington, and have TAC develop guidance for prioritizing traffic calming requests (such as those for Cleveland Street and others)
8. Targeted speed, parking and left turn enforcement during the afternoon and early morning (6 AM – 8 AM) hours

WE RECOMMEND NO ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. Stop sign at Cleveland / Waldo (Will not improve safety)
2. Speed limit sign (Will not be effective at reducing speeds)
3. Actions that would have a substantial effect on residents of neighboring streets. Such actions would require a public process involving the residents of those streets. Examples include
 - Extending the no left turn restriction. (Would shift traffic to Oxford street and may substantially inconvenience residents of Waldo, Marathon, Trowbridge, Windsor and Amsden street.)
 - Rearranging the one-way streets in the area

Supporting Information

Timeline

5 February 2002: Board of Selectmen refers issue to TAC

12 February 2002: TAC appoints working group, consisting of Scott Smith (chair), Michael Rademacher, Lt. Jim McHugh (Police), and Ron Santosuosso (DPW)

March 11 – 12 (Monday – Tuesday): Traffic counts performed on Cleveland Street

19 March 2002: Working group members meet with Cleveland Street residents in Fox Library. Working group representatives present included Karen Kelley (of the Police Department Traffic Unit), Michael Rademacher and Scott Smith.

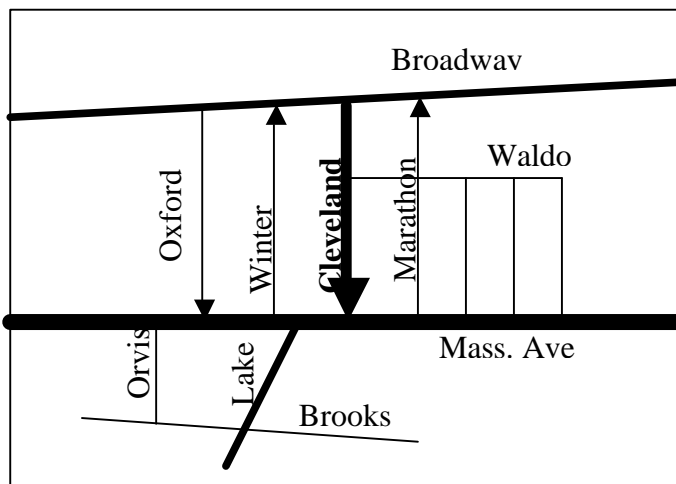
2 April 2002: TAC discusses and unanimously adopts these recommendations. Committee members present included Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Larry Englisher, Lt. Jim McHugh, Scott Smith, Ed Starr, and David Walkinshaw

29 April 2002: Recommendations presented to the Board of Selectmen

Existing Conditions

Summary

Cleveland Street is in a thickly settled residential area, near the East Arlington business district. It is a public way that runs one way from Broadway to Massachusetts Avenue.



The street is 24' to 28' wide from curb to curb. Resident complaints include (1) illegal parking, both near intersections and too close to driveways, (2) commuter parking, (3) excessive through truck traffic, especially between 4 AM and 7 AM, (4) trucks parked with engines running near Boyles Market (at the corner of Broadway and Cleveland), and (5) excessive cut-through traffic operating at high speed.

Signage includes two signs indicating No Left Turn 7am-930am Cleveland at Broadway, No Parking Signs at the Broadway and Mass Ave ends, a Children sign at 52 Cleveland St., and a Stop Sign at the Mass Ave end. No speed limit sign is posted. According to Police Department records, no special speed limit has been established for the street; therefore, the speed limit is the state-wide default of 30 mph for thickly settled areas.

Traffic Volume and Speed

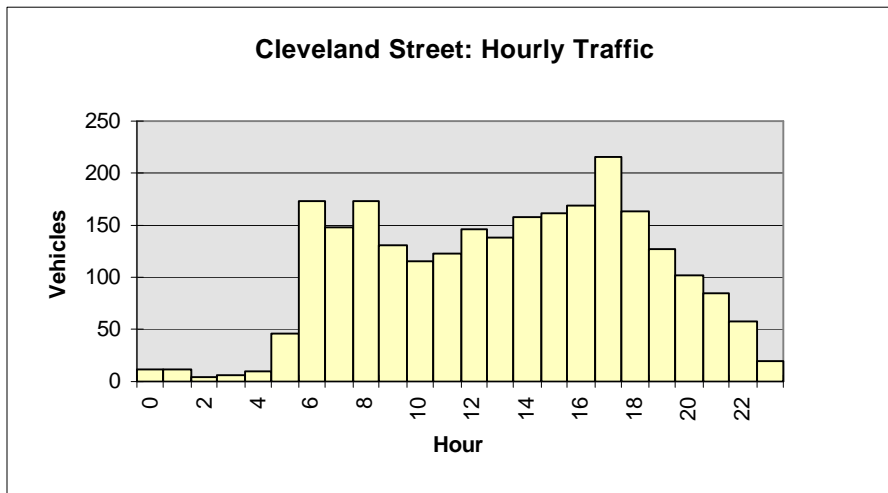
Traffic volume data comes from the Louis Berger Transportation Assessment study (2002), the Arlington Police Department (APD) traffic counters, and observations by one resident. Unfortunately, we do not have a breakdown by vehicle type (car, truck).

Daily Traffic Volume

Location of count	Date	Source	Daily traffic
North of Waldo	December 2001	Assessment study	3,571
52 Cleveland St (south of Waldo)	Monday 3/11/2002	APD counter	2,391
52 Cleveland St.	Tuesday 3/12/2002	APD counter	2,642

Hourly Volume

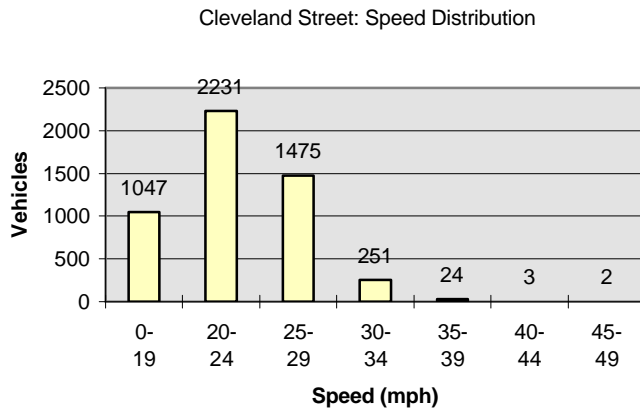
Hourly volumes are depicted on the chart below. They are averaged over 3/11 and 3/12/2002. The peak periods are from 6 – 9 AM and from 2 – 7 PM. Note that the traffic volume is lower from 7 – 8 AM than from 6 – 7 AM. This is unusual, and indicates that the left turn restriction is having some effect. However, violations of this restriction are still a frequent occurrence.



A resident observed turning movements from Broadway to Cleveland Street on Friday 3/15, between 7:00 AM and 8:38 AM. She noted that of a total of 373 cars turning onto Cleveland Street, 123 were turning left illegally from Broadway.

Speed

Speeds were observed on 3/11 and 3/12 at 52 Cleveland Street. For the two days of observations, the average speed was about 22 mph, the median speed was about 23 mph, and the 85th percentile speed was between 28 and 29 mph. The distribution of speeds is shown below:



Crashes and Citations

During the past 3 years, 15 crashes appeared in the Police Department database for Cleveland Street. Nine of these were at Cleveland St and Mass. Ave. No crashes appeared at Cleveland and Waldo.

During the period from 1/1/1999 to 3/25/2002, 101 citations and 378 parking tickets were issued.

Detailed Recommendations

1. Enforce existing parking regulations

By enforcing the time limits on Mass. Ave., those spaces are freed up for the short term parking needs of retail customers in the area. Therefore, they have less need to circle the residential streets looking for parking. Residents of Cleveland street are also concerned about parked vehicles blocking their driveways, and the numerous illegally parked vehicles at the Broadway and Massachusetts Avenue intersections.

Residents had also suggested the use of painted pavement markings to better delineate the illegal parking areas.

2. Enforce the existing law against parked vehicles with engines running

“Chapter 90, Section 16A, Massachusetts General Laws: No person shall cause, suffer, allow or permit the unnecessary operation of the engine of a motor vehicle while said vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes. This section shall not apply to (a) vehicles being serviced, provided that operation of the engine is essential to the proper repair thereof, or (b) vehicles engaged in the delivery or acceptance of goods, wares, or merchandise for which engine assisted power is necessary and substitute alternate means cannot be made available, or (c) vehicles engaged in an operation for which the engine power is necessary for an associate power need other than movement and substitute alternate power means cannot be made available provided that such operation does not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution. Whoever violates any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars for the first offense, nor more than five hundred dollars for each succeeding offense”

3. Begin work towards a set of options to address commuter parking on an area-wide basis

There appear to be four groups of parkers on Cleveland Street:

- Residents and their guests (who need all-day parking)
- Local business owners and employees (who need all-day parking)
- Customers of local businesses (who need short term parking)
- Commuters

Since a healthy business district benefits the neighborhood, residents acknowledge that the first three groups have legitimate parking needs.

However, commuter parking is an issue across East Arlington, and will be most effectively addressed via an area-wide approach. Attempting to address it one street at a time will simply move the problem to a neighboring street.

4. Post Lake Street as “No Heavy Trucking”

As part of the Regional Truck Study, Arlington signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cambridge, Somerville and other communities. Part of the MOU calls for no new truck restrictions without the agreement of the other parties to the MOU.

According to the Town Planning Department, MassHighway investigated current legal truck restrictions in Arlington and other communities. Arlington’s existing legal restrictions include a truck exclusion on Lake Street, which is posted with one sign at Massachusetts Avenue and Lake Street. This sign is not clearly visible to westbound

traffic on Massachusetts Avenue. Therefore, a logical route for a trucker wishing to reach Route 2 from Broadway might well include Cleveland Street and Lake Street.

To discourage this through truck traffic, we recommend that the Lake Street ban be well posted..

We note that many other Arlington streets that run from Broadway to Mass. Ave. are posted with truck exclusions. According to Police Department records, the Selectmen requested that Cleveland, Oxford, Marathon and Winter Streets be posted with truck exclusions in 1955. Although signs were erected at that time, it is not clear whether State approval was received for these exclusions. Furthermore, these exclusions do not appear in the Regional Truck Study.

The committee believes that in interest of equity, if neighboring streets (such as Oxford Street) are posted with truck exclusions, Cleveland Street should be posted in a similar manner, provided that such a posting is legal and does not violate any agreements with neighboring communities.

5. Nighttime truck usage of Route 16

Lifting the truck ban on Route 16 between Broadway and Massachusetts Avenue would be at the discretion of the Metropolitan District Commission. So far, they have shown no inclination to lift the ban.

6. Improve signage for the left turn restriction

The current signage for the left turn restriction at Broadway and Cleveland is difficult to see. Residents suggest use of a standard, symbolic NO LEFT TURN icon, with the times posted beneath.

7. Traffic Calming

Cleveland Street, like several other local streets in Arlington, suffers from unusually high traffic volume. Although average speeds are not excessive, residents are justifiably concerned about even a few motorists speeding. A number of Arlington streets, including Cleveland Street, may be candidates for traffic calming measures such as speed humps. Since Town financial resources are limited, we recommend the development of (a) a process for evaluating candidate traffic calming locations that ensures that appropriate measures are proposed and that a solid majority of affected residents support the action, and (b) equitable guidelines for prioritizing traffic calming requests, so that Town resources are focused on the the streets with the greatest need.

8. Targeted enforcement

The current left turn restriction sees numerous violations. When excessive speeds occur, they seem to occur in the early morning (6 AM – 8AM) and mid-afternoon hours. Therefore, we recommend targeted speed, left turn and parking enforcement during the early morning and afternoon hours.

Consideration should also be given to increasing the fine for Town traffic bylaw violations to a value higher than \$20.

9. Areas where we recommend No Action

a. Stop sign at Cleveland / Waldo

A stop sign on Cleveland at Waldo street is unwarranted, for the following reasons:

- Since there have been no reported crashes at Cleveland / Waldo in the past three years, we will be unable to significantly reduce the number of crashes at this intersection.
- Since the stop sign would violate the normal expectation of the street with slowest speed and/or the lowest traffic volume being stopped, it may increase the hazard at the intersection. It would also violate the normal right-of-way expectation for a T intersection (where Waldo yields to Cleveland).
- Since such a stop sign would violate normal motorist expectations, we can expect numerous violations.
- It will do nothing to reduce mid-block speeds on Cleveland.
- It will lead to increased noise and pollution as vehicles accelerate away from it.

b. Speed limit sign

The legal speed limit can not be changed without state approval. Since the state bases its approved speeds on the 85th percentile speed, it is not likely the state would approve a speed limit any lower than 30 mph.

Since the majority of motorists are already traveling less than 30 mph, a speed limit sign would have little effect. In fact, it may be misinterpreted by a few motorists as a signal that they should be driving faster.

c. Actions that substantially affect residents of neighboring streets.

Such actions should involve a public process involving the residents of those streets. Examples include

- Extending the no left turn restriction. This would shift traffic to Oxford street and may substantially inconvenience residents of Waldo, Marathon, Trowbridge,

Windsor and Amsden streets, who use Cleveland Street to access their homes from the north.

- Rearranging the one-way streets in the area. This would require consultation with the residents of those streets, as well as a careful assessment of the effect of such a rearrangement on the Mass Ave/ Lake Street intersection.