

Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Working Group

Meeting Notes

The meeting was held in Fox Library, on Thursday 10/10/2002, from 7:30 to 9:10 PM.
Attendees included

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Paul Campbell | Arlington DPW |
| Lois Cardarelli | Chandler St. |
| Elisabeth Carr-Jones | Lehigh St. and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) |
| Ralph Elwell | Montague St. and TAC |
| Kurt Fischer | Chandler St. |
| Marie Harris | Louis Berger Group |
| George Laite | Lafayette St |
| Alan McClennen | Arlington Planning Dept |
| Ron Santosuosso | Arlington DPW |
| Scott Smith | Amherst St and TAC |
| Susan Young | Chandler St. |

Mass Ave. / Route 16 Intersection

Marie Harris presented four alternatives for the eastbound approach to the intersection.

1. Dashed continuation lines in the intersection, to guide the left turn lane onto Route 16 eastbound, and to guide the middle lane on the Arlington side (left thru lane) to the left lane on the Cambridge side. This would be combined with improved left turn pavement markings and enhanced signage on the Arlington side.
2. Redo the signal timing so the left turn signal comes after the thru signal. This will discourage going straight from the left turn lane by making it more likely that a legitimate left turner will be blocking the lane during the thru signal.
3. Bollards (extending to the end of the traffic island) to separate the left turn lane from the thru lanes.
4. Bollards extending beyond Boulevard Road, combined with a parking restriction between Lafayette and Boulevard, to force all traffic into the thru lanes first.

Ron Santosuosso suggested an overhead sign on the Arlington side, to give motorists adequate advance warning of the left turn only lane. Scott Smith noted that it was in Arlington's interest to ensure a generous left turn phase from Mass. Ave westbound onto Route 16, because otherwise travelers from North Cambridge to Route 2 would be encouraged to cut through Arlington.

After some discussion, the consensus of the group seemed to indicate that the following course of action was appropriate:

- Implement Alternative 1 (dashed continuation lines, lane markings, and advance signs)
- Add an overhead sign to ensure sufficient advance warning to motorists

- Combine the engineering changes with increased police presence / enforcement. This may be as simple as having an officer present to simply ensure that those in the left turn lane do in fact turn left.
- Consider implementation of the signal timing changes, once Cambridge develops a plan.

Pedestrian / Bike / Bus Counts

Scott Smith handed out graphs of the pedestrian, bike and bus counts. The pedestrian and bike counts are presented below. Each line represents one hour of data collection at a location.

Table 1: AM Peak Pedestrian and Bike Counts

| Location | AM Peak Period (7:30 - 8:30 AM) | | | | | | | | Date |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | In crosswalk or with traffic light | | Not in crosswalk or against light | | Bikes towards Arlington Center | | Bikes towards Cambridge | | |
| | Able-bodied | Mobility-assist | Able-bodied | Mobility-assist | Correct Traffic Position | Wrong way or sidewalk | Correct Traffic Position | Wrong way or sidewalk | |
| Wyman/Palmer | 20 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 12 | | 20 | | 24-Sep |
| Harlow/Tufts | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 12 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 12-Sep |
| Oxford/Orvis | 28 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 14 | | 30 | | 3-Oct |
| Lake/Winter | 92 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 10 | | 40 | 2 | 17-Sep |
| Marathon/Chandler | 56 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 18-Sep |
| Varnum/Melrose | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0 ? | ? | | 32 | 4 | 24-Sep |
| Henderson/Boulevard | 13 | 1 | 24 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 44 | 4 | 25-Sep |

Table 2: PM Peak Pedestrian and Bike Counts

| Location | PM Peak Period (5:00 – 6:00 PM) | | | | | | | | Date |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | In Crosswalk | | Not in crosswalk | | Bikes towards Arl Ctr | | Bikes towards Cambridge | | |
| | Able-bodied | Mobility-assist | Able-bodied | Mobility-assist | Correct Traffic Position | Wrong way or sidewalk | Correct Traffic Position | Wrong way or sidewalk | |
| Wyman/Palmer | 17 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 1 | not noted |
| Harlow/Tufts | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 10-Sep |
| Oxford/Orvis | 30 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 22 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 7-Oct |
| Oxford/Orvis | 21 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 19 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3-Oct |
| Lake/Winter | 47 | 2 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 2 | not noted |
| Lake/Winter | 49 | 0 | 36 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 9-Sep |
| Marathon/Chandler | 42 | 3 | 30 | 5 | 15 | 9 | 11 | 4 | 19-Sep |
| Marathon/Chandler | 47 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 30 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 12-Sep |
| Varnum/Melrose | 8 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 34 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 12-Sep |
| Henderson/Boulevard | 11 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 44 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 30-Sep |

Volunteers also collected boarding/alighting (on/off) data for selected bus stops. This is presented below, along with the weekday totals from recent MBTA ridechecks. An empty cell means that no information was collected for that stop/time period.

Table 3: Bus stop on/off data

| Stop | 7:30-8:30 AM (1 hr) | | 5 - 6 PM (1 hr) | | Weekday Total (from MBTA, 1998-99 ridechecks) | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|------|-----------------|------|---|------|----------|------|
| | Inbound | | Outbound | | Inbound | | Outbound | |
| | Ons | Offs | Ons | Offs | Ons | Offs | Ons | Offs |
| Bwy/Medford | | | | | 341 | 275 | 331 | 383 |
| Avon Pl/Franklin | | | | | 100 | 29 | 20 | 59 |
| Wyman/Palmer | | | | | 89 | 35 | 36 | 123 |
| Linwood/Foster | | | | | 167 | 72 | 41 | 121 |
| #260/Harlow | 29 | 1 | 2 | 28 | 132 | 71 | 50 | 111 |
| Lake/Winter | | | 12 | 32 | 243 | 175 | 217 | 253 |
| Milton/Windsor | | | 1 | 13 | 164 | 103 | 63 | 156 |
| Thorndike/Teel | | | | | 85 | 48 | 53 | 96 |
| Boulevard | 8 | 4 | | | 26 | 24 | 32 | 31 |

Next Steps

Members of the group noted that some funds were recently granted for Arlington Center improvements, but no money is yet available for the East Arlington improvements. Without funds for implementation, what is the point of this planning process? Alan McClennen explained that the development of a vision that the community could agree on was just as important, and by developing a vision, it is more likely that the funds would become available. (Given competing demands for Federal/State funds, they are more likely to go to the community that has an agreed-upon vision on what to do with the money.) He noted that the Arlington Heights improvements were the result of some 75 meetings. The worst thing that could happen was for the funds to become available but the vision not to be in place. He noted that some planning funds could be available to facilitate charettes and the like.

There was general agreement in the group that it was time to (a) involve the business community, and (b) bring this process to a larger public, perhaps via some charettes or other larger public meetings this winter. Perhaps it would be appropriate to identify a group of 10-15 leaders.

Handouts

- ?? Four alternatives for the Mass. Ave. / Route 16 intersection (6 copies) - from Marie Harris
- ?? Pedestrian, bike and bus counts – from Scott Smith
- ?? List of objectives and possible actions – from Scott Smith
- ?? *Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars* – from Scott Smith
- ?? Excerpts on Curb Extensions, Refuge Islands and Lane Reductions (from *Streets & Sidewalks* and from the *Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide*) – from Scott Smith