

On 5/7/20 10:28 AM, Brian Ristuccia wrote:

There is some in-depth coverage along with video and a statement from the deceased victim's brother at CBS4/WBZ at <https://boston.cbslocal.com/2020/05/06/arlington-bicyclist-killed-crash-charles-proctor/>

I have more to say on this crash, but am taking some time to cool off before I send the message.

I'm going to be blunt: Our town has known of the danger at this intersection for years and has failed to act to correct it. As a result of our inaction, more than a dozen people have been injured and now someone has been killed. If we continue to fail to act, it will happen again.

As a daily traveler through this area I have witnessed countless close calls and the aftermath of more than one collision. In addition to the hazard posed by red light runners to people crossing on foot [0], westbound drivers turning left from Mass Ave onto Appleton Street without yielding to oncoming traffic are also a major problem. Furthermore, the entire 1100 block of Mass Ave surrounding this intersection becomes a dangerous speedway when not constrained by congestion, with drivers sometimes moving at more than double the town-wide 25 MPH speed limit. We have seen vehicles crashed into other travelers, onto the sidewalk, and into buildings with worrying frequency. [1] [2] [3]. The conditions leading to these close calls and crashes must not be allowed to continue.

According to a 2012 memo from the Boston Regional MPO to the Town of Arlington: "In the past five years, there were two crashes that involved pedestrians and two crashes that involved bicyclists. This amounts to nearly one pedestrian or bicyclist crash each year. In the opinion of the staff, this rate is considered somewhat alarming for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists at an intersection." [4]

The memo includes details of a study which recommends geometric and signal changes at the intersection. I respectfully request this committee advise the town to implement the changes recommended in the study with urgency, and to consider these changes additionally:

- Bend the end of Appleton Street to improve sight lines and simplify the intersection by dead-ending Appleton Place or shunting it to Mass Ave (See Alternative 2 in the MPO memo)
- Left turns from Mass Ave to Appleton Street must be protected-only. Owing to the severe danger from westbound drivers turning across the path of eastbound traffic coming down the hill, there must be no permissive left turns allowed.
- Provide dedicated, separated space for people using bicycles on this stretch of Mass Ave, even if it means reducing or eliminating automobile parking. If the bike facility is to the right of a lane from which other traffic might turn right, straight and right turning movements should have separate phases at the signal.
- Improve other nearby intersections and pedestrian crossings, notably Mass/Forest/Burton and Mass/Quincy, where there have been injury crashes involving pedestrians [5]
- Implement traffic calming measures to discourage deadly speeds

I encourage safe streets advocates to not let this issue rest. When the current emergency is over, our kids will be back to school and literally hundreds of them will cross at this spot each day. It must be fixed.

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Brian Ristuccia

[0] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhISq5xxK3E>

[1] <https://www2.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/06/20/mbta-bus-hits-tree-arlington/MuNfnYgA44slooM5zNXILI/story.html>

[2] <https://arlington.wickedlocal.com/news/20190514/car-crashes-into-brite-white-laundromat-arlington-police-log>

[3] <https://arlington.wickedlocal.com/news/20200210/speeding-motorcyclist-flung-90-feet-after-striking-vehicle-arlington-police-log>

[4] https://www.ctps.org/data/pdf/studies/highway/2011_safety_operations/Arlington_Memo.pdf

[5] <https://patch.com/massachusetts/arlington/mother-struck-mass-ave-crosswalk-o>