



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: October 11, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: John Alessi (DPCD), John Aslanian, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Corey Rateau (APD), Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Beth Benedikt and Lenard Diggins.

Members of Public in Attendance: Jim Bogdan, Laurie Bogdon, Oksana Clarizia, Denise Curley, Max Eringros, Natalie Eringros, Ned Hall, Alyssa Lary, Claire Martinez, Diane McKay, Barbara Popolow, Paul Schlichtman, Petru Sofio, Lally Stowell, Taylor Took, Ben Willis, Laura Willis, and Pam Wolfson.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of September 13, 2023 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of September 13, 2023, were approved.

C. Town Day Table.

Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) and TAC hosted a joint table at Arlington Town Day on September 23, 2023. Laura Swan proposed a waterproof ABAC and TAC banner be designed and made in advance of the next Town Day. Scott Smith will raise the proposed joint banner at the next ABAC Meeting. He will try to locate photos of the banners from previous years to assist in the design of a new banner.

D. Correspondence Sent/Received from September 8, 2023 to October 6, 2023.

1. "Traffic Safety Concerns on Elmhurst Rd and Brooks Ave," Letter from the Select Board to TAC, 09/13/23. Discussed in Agenda #4, below.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

There were no public comments.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (John Alessi, DPCD).

Mass Ave and Appleton St update under Agenda #6, below.

B. Update from the Department of Public Works (Bill Copithorne, DPW).

Chestnut St: pavement markings initiated: long lines placed, which has helped traffic flow. Two evenings are scheduled for marking of crosswalks, arrows, and parking spots, and green high-friction bicycle lanes. RRFB equipment has not been received. It is scheduled to-be installed before the end of November.

Warren St: final resurfacing is scheduled for next Wednesday after Eversource completes its utility work. Pavement markings will be applied, weather permitting, with the goal of striping the centerline, fog lines, and three marked crosswalks. Some markings might not be completed until next year.

Medford St: bicycle lanes were approved by the Select Board. Pavement markings will be installed next year.

Arlington Heights: curb ramps are being updated on non-compliant ramps near Park Ave close to the Town line.

River St School Zone: DPW and APD are coordinating the School Zone signage and speed feedback sign installation.

Curb Ramp Project: completed curb ramp accessibility improvements in Arlington Heights (near D'Agostino's). Crosswalk installation near Summer St and Sunset Rd (near Peirce School) is underway. Several crosswalks on Mass Ave will be addressed during the remainder of the construction season.

Lake St and Minuteman Bikeway Light: Bikeway signal timing was revisited and updated in August. Observations were conducted under the new signal timing,

and further adjustments will be made to address coordination between Brooks Ave and the Bikeway to improve vehicle flow.

Broadway Watermain Construction: contractor is now bringing construction equipment to work on side streets. Construction on Broadway itself will not start until next year (at the earliest). Resurfacing will be the following year, presently scheduled as 2025. DPW and DPCD are reviewing the Broadway corridor.

C. Update from the Police Department (Corey Rateau, APD).

School Zones: APD is working with DPW on the School Zone on River St for the installation of the speed feedback sign and signage. APD is reviewing the School Zone on Chandler St near Hardy School.

Traffic Data Collection: Completed data collection on Elmhurst Rd, Oxford St, and Winter St, which will be posted to the TAC website.

4. Discussion: Elmhurst Rd and Brooks Ave.

Laura Swan summarized email complaints submitted to the Select Board on the topic of traffic on Elmhurst Rd and opened the meeting to public comments.

Pam Wolfson observed an increase in traffic volume in both directions. She added that a parked car was totaled in a crash and that it is not safe to walk on Elmhurst Rd.

Laurie Bodgan observed many instances of automobiles nearly hitting each other. She expressed concern for the possibility of school children walking to/from Hardy School being hit by drivers. She pointed out that there is an entry to the Minuteman Bikeway at the corner of Elmhurst Rd and Brooks Ave.

Alyssa Lary observed speeding business trucks and large pickups. She said that speeding automobiles create a dangerous situation for pedestrians and cyclists. She requested that only resident traffic be permitted on Elmhurst Rd.

Natalie Eringros agreed about safety being a priority and preventing collisions. She added that there is no sidewalk there.

Barbara Popolow remarked that drivers are using Waze and Google Maps, which is directing traffic into the neighborhood.

Corey Rateau (APD) responded that these are public roadways, despite the private way designation, and the public has a right of access. MassDOT regulates posted speed limits. In response to the complaints on speeding traffic, APD conducted traffic data counts over three days. Notably, average speeds were less than 20 mph, and the 85th percentile was less than 27 mph. Based on the data, the conclusion is that speeding vehicles is not a problem. Traffic volume

is higher than before repaving; the average is less than two vehicles per minute. Residents complaints included higher traffic volumes, some of which might be explained by a construction detour in August when Lake St was closed near Newcomb St.

Ben Willis asked if the Town could communicate with Waze so that it does not route traffic onto Elmhurst Rd. Scott Smith responded that residents can submit feedback to Waze for the posted Do Not Enter 7am – 9am Mon – Fri. Bill Copithorne added that Jim Feeney had been in contact with Waze to modify its directions to drivers on Lake St who would mistakenly turn onto the Minuteman Bikeway.

Laurie Bogdan asked for suggestions to improve the situation. She expressed interest in a stop sign at Elmhurst Rd and Brooks Ave.

Petru Sofio suggested adding a No Turn On Red at the intersection of Brooks Ave and Lake St in order to discourage vehicle traffic entering from Elmhurst Rd. He pointed out that the turn onto Lake St can be challenging due to sight lines.

Lally Stowell agreed with the idea of installing a stop sign and asked to consider a crosswalk and Do Not Enter sign from Brooks Ave onto Elmhurst Rd.

Corey Rateau responded that a Do Not Enter from Brooks Ave cannot be added since there is one on the other side and it that would prevent traffic flow onto Elmhurst Rd. Regarding crosswalks, he noted that crosswalks are not intended to slow vehicles. The roadway is a private way, and any crosswalk would need to meet warrants and standards such as ADA and MUTCD. There are no sidewalks on Elmhurst Rd because it is a private way. There are sidewalks on Brooks Ave. Speed bumps on Elmhurst Rd are an option, but traffic data show that speeding is not a problem.

Regarding a stop sign at Brooks Ave and Elmhurst Rd, the stop sign would need to-be installed on private property. Drivers should be coming to a full stop at that location based on driving standards, therefore placing a stop sign will not need to meet warrants. Residents should request the Select Board to permit the installation of a stop sign to the Brooks Ave side of Elmhurst Rd. Recently, a stop sign was installed on the Regis Rd private way near Thompson School.

John Aslanian asked about improving the path to the Minuteman Bikeway to make the space look more like an intersection to alert drivers and road users. John Alessi responded that he thinks the path is a private property desire line. He will check the Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project to see its findings and priorities on improving access points. Equity of improvements is important as Arlington Heights near the Lexington Town border are viewed as a priority. Also, if the path is improved, it will need to meet ADA standards.

Laura Swan will discuss stop sign installation with Bill Copithorne. A follow-up discussion on Elmhurst Rd and Brooks Ave will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Update: Bow St.

A resident near the intersection of Bow St and the Minuteman Bikeway requested a crosswalk be installed. DPW had examined crosswalk placement near this location and concluded that there was no feasible way to add an accessible sidewalk crossing near this location: Bow St curves at this location and limits driver visibility, and numerous driveway curb cuts impedes installation.

Shoji Takahashi and Laura Swan separately conducted observations during the morning rush hour and school arrival period. Peirce Elementary School is located nearby, and a number of students accompanied by parents/guardians crossed at different times between 7:30 – 7:50am. A second wave of students, likely OMS and AHS students, crossed to the Bikeway between 8:00 – 8:15am. Pedestrians were observed crossing at the curve by the entrance to the Bikeway and near the intersection of Bow St and Sunset Rd. A low retaining wall on the inside curve (northside of Bow St) hinders visibility. Many dog walkers and cyclists also were crossing Bow St to access the Bikeway.

Motor-vehicle traffic was orderly and speeds did not seem excessive. Many commercial vehicles including large trucks and trucks with trailers were traveling on Bow St to/from the commercial spaces on Bow St near Sunset Rd. Drivers were observed stopping to permit pedestrians to cross Bow St. Eastbound visibility was hampered by sun glare.

Based on observations of pedestrian movements, a crosswalk placed at Sunset Rd might be useful. This would connect to the crosswalk at Summer St and Sunset Rd which was installed recently.

Olesana Clarizia agreed about placing a Bow St crosswalk near Sunset Rd. She baby sits her grandchildren at Newland Rd and crosses at Sunset Rd.

John Aslanian remarked that an advance warning pedestrian crossing ahead sign will help drivers to see the crosswalk Jim Stubbe noted that drivers were observed to-be driving at a reasonable speed and stopping to permit pedestrians to cross. He asked whether installing a crosswalk was necessary. Laura Swan responded that a crosswalk might encourage pedestrians to cross Bow St at a safer location.

6. Update: Mass Ave and Appleton St.

The Select Board approved the updated conceptual design of the Mass Ave / Appleton St Safety and Accessibility Project. Engineering planning will begin and opportunities for feedback on design decisions will be in December or January.

7. Update: Eastern Ave.

Laura Swan described the draft recommendations: (1) expand the School Zone from Scituate St to Grandview Rd; (2) relocate the crosswalk ahead sign closer to the crosswalk; (3) remove the flashing-light school speed limit sign and install static signs; (4) install solar-powered speed feedback sign for downhill (eastbound) traffic. Traffic data recorded the 85th percentile speed as 31 mph. For the longer term, consider a curb bump out at the crosswalk when Eastern Ave is repaved.

Bill Copithorne added that the flashing-light school speed limit light is not working, and a contractor was called to repair it.

Corey Rateau responded that the sign proposed to-be relocated is a school zone assembly sign to alert that there is a school zone ahead. It is not an advance warning sign for a crosswalk.

8. Update: Dow / Rhinecliff.

Jeff Maxtutis summarized that this is an offset intersection with traffic moving to/from Route 2. The sightline is obscured by overhead branches, and tree trimming could improve visibility substantially. Consider replacing the Blind Driveway sign with a crosswalk sign.

Melissa Laube added that the crosswalk was repainted in the spring and was visible. However, the paint has faded quickly, and cracks in the pavement obscure the crosswalk. She mentioned that the Working Group has concerns about placing a bollard in the crosswalk.

Bill Copithorne responded that National Grid had done gas work in the area, and it is supposed to repaint where work was conducted. Crosswalks are repainted annually, but it does fade quickly. Newer installations use epoxy.

9. Vote: Wachusett Ave and Appleton St.

Jim Stubbe provided a summary on the draft Memo of the 6-way intersection. The recommendation is to add a stop sign to eastbound Appleton St with a Stop Ahead sign, and All Way plaques added to the stop signs of the intersection. The

Town should consider changes in geometry to reduce pedestrian crossing distances the next time DPW is scheduled to resurface the intersection.

Jeff Maxtutis noted that MUTCD has regulations on when there is a change in traffic movement. He asked whether TAC needs to check the warrants to install the stop sign. Corey Rateau responded that this situation is under the ambiguity warrant and engineering judgement.

Jeff Maxtutis requested that the Memo be modified to include the warrant justification. He added that tightening intersection will improve intersection (as it improved Downing Square), but it is costly. Also, he expressed caution about unintended consequences of adding the stop sign that might not have been considered. He will obtain a cost estimate for traffic counts including turning movements to ascertain if there might be a problem with adding the stop sign.

Bill Copithorne said that DPW will review the traffic signs in the area to make sure that they make sense and are correct; trees will be trimmed if necessary. He wondered if making this intersection an all-way stop might raise questions as to why Downing Square is not configured with all-way stop control. He pointed out that the initial concern was on traffic rolling through the stop signs, and this recommendation does not address it.

Jim Stubbe responded that, from his observations, drivers stop when vehicles from other approaches are present. When no vehicles are around, drivers roll the stop, possibly to better see the intersection. Adding a stop sign at eastbound Appleton St will remove ambiguity. Laura Swan noted that subsequent letters on the intersection pointed out the uncontrolled eastbound Appleton St approach.

10. Discussion: Broadway / Rawson Rd (Foster St).

Scott Smith summarized the draft recommendations: (1) expand No Parking on Rawson Rd; (2) paint marked crosswalk across Rawson Rd; (3) move Rawson Rd stop bar closer to the intersection; and (4) monitor/adjust signal timing of Warren St and River St as Rawson Rd is used as a cut-through for River St. In the long-term, consider tightening the road geometry on Foster St. Turning movement counts would be useful for examining the planned future work on Broadway.

Bill Copithorne responded that DPW will look at reconfiguring the Foster St crosswalk to reduce pedestrian crossing distance if Broadway is redone. DPW will investigate the signal timing, noting that it is an older setup having loop detectors with updated controller, pedestrian signals, and new sign box.

The Working Group will bring the draft Memo to vote at the TAC meeting.

11. Update: Summer St / Symmes Rd

Shoji Takahashi and Jim Stubbe discussed their observations of traffic movements on a weekday morning rush hour. High-volume vehicle traffic was well behaved through the complicated intersection. This section includes an MBTA bus route. Pedestrians and cyclists, including many students, passed through the intersection using the walk phase to cross.

Pedestrian flags. A resident requested pedestrian flags to-be installed at the intersection. Summer St and Brattle Rd intersection is controlled by a traffic signal. However, one right-turn lane from eastbound Summer St to southbound Brattle St is not signalized. This turning movement requires slow speeds to make the sharp, acute-angle turn, and the turning lane is narrowed by a landscaped traffic island. At the sharp-angle right-turn lane, driver visibility of pedestrians in the crosswalk is excellent. Pedestrian flags in this location do not offer enhanced benefit. At signal-controlled intersections, pedestrian flags cannot be installed. Therefore, the recommendation is not to install pedestrian flags at Summer St and Brattle Rd intersection.

Traffic phasing. A resident requested traffic-signal phasing be reviewed because of confusion at the intersection. Traffic was observed to-be well behaved through all light phases. There were occasions when drivers moving northbound on Brattle St and then turning right onto Summer St would encounter a red light at the intersection of Symmes Rd. This would occur if the driver was making the turn during the end of the green phase or in the yellow phase. All of the observed drivers stopped at the light by Symmes Rd. Drivers might think they are stopped in the intersection due to the close proximity (~100') between the traffic lights at Brattle St and then Symmes Rd.

To orient drivers, consider painting a stop bar at eastbound Summer St before Symmes Rd. Note: there is a stop bar at westbound Summer St before the Brattle St intersection. Bill Copithorne said that he will check if a stop bar was in the project plan for the intersection.

Shoji Takahashi will draft a Memo.

12. Discussion: Pedestrian Flags.

A. Raleigh St / Bates Rd.

This intersection is near Gibbs School. There is a single pole-mounted TAC canister installed, but the location is not listed on the TAC archives. Laura Swan, Bill Copithorne, and John Aslanian identified the TAC recommendation in the November 13, 2019 TAC Minutes. John Aslanian will complete the installation.

B. Appleton St / Rhinecliff St.

Corey Rateau said this is a high-volume road with an MBTA bus route; speeds are generally not a problem. No crashes at this intersection. This intersection was designed as a school crossing earlier this school year with advance warning signs and dedicated school crossing signage. It is a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Route.

Jeff Maxtutis added that this location would tie into Dow St and Rhinecliff St pedestrian flags. Both considered this to be a decent location to install pedestrian flags.

C. Summer St / Brattle St.

No action, per discussion under Agenda Item #11.

D. Park Ave /Oakland Ave.

Jeff Maxtutis said that this intersection is part of a larger TAC project. Park Ave at this location is a higher speed 35-mph roadway. Pedestrian flags are not enough and may provide a false sense of security with the present conditions. Melissa Laube agreed that more needs to be done to enhance the safety of the intersection. Corey Rateau also concurred noting that many children do not have good judgement for crossing roads.

Laura Swan summarized background of the traffic signal analysis at Park Ave and Appleton St. TAC should consider Park Ave corridor review and examination. Bill Copithorne agreed with examining it as a corridor. He noted the MBTA bus stops and DPW has concepts for geometry changes at many intersections of Park Ave. These concepts will be shared with TAC.

13. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.