

**Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, July 27, 2004 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. Jim McHugh, Kevin O'Brien, Mike Rademacher, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Others present: none

1. The minutes of 5/22/2004 were approved unanimously.

Mike Rademacher arrived.

2. Democratic National Convention Traffic

Committee members noted that traffic in Arlington this week lighter than usual, contrary to the expectation that Arlington might see an increase in traffic due to the DNC. Lt. McHugh reported that the police are cutting back on traffic details starting on 7/27.

3. Mass. Ave. Corridor Bids

Scott Smith reported that two qualified bids were received, from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) and Howard/Stein-Hudson (HSH). Members of the committee (Ed Starr, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, John Sanchez and Scott Smith) conducted 1/2-hour interviews with each company on 7/21.

Advantages of VHB include

- A lower bid price
- More extensive experience with the State funding process

Advantages of HSH include

- More of a vision for the corridor
- A larger presence at the interview

Scott reported that the working group was inclined to recommend VHB, because the experience with the funding process is critical. However, we definitely want to keep HSH on the short-list for possible future work. Mike Rademacher also noted that the experience with obtaining funding is critical.

4. Downing Square (intersection of Park Ave, Lowell Street and others)

Kevin O'Brien arrived during the Downing Square discussion.

Elisabeth Carr-Jones presented traffic volumes and speeds, noting that speed data is still needed for Lowell Street on the east side of Downing Square. Options that were considered included

- Make Park Ave extension, Bow as a one-way loop
- Westminster one-way away from the intersection
- Roundabout

It was noted that the one-way loop could increase conflicts in the intersection, and might lead to increased traffic on streets connecting Park Ave Extension and Bow. Problems with a roundabout include the following:

- Only about 70' of clear space is available; need about 110' to accommodate trucks
- Geometry is difficult (many streets coming together)
- Traffic volumes are uneven on the approaches.

Elisabeth also noted poor stop sign compliance, especially for the right turn from Lowell to Park. Another issue is speeding on Lowell Street by the Arlington reservoir.

Members of the committee raised a number of other ideas:

- Stop sign on Park Ave. northbound. (Needs review of the traffic impact)
- Raise the crosswalk on Park Ave, to ensure that all northbound Park Ave traffic enters the intersection slowly.
- Reverse angle parking on Park Ave.
- Raise the entire intersection
- Channelization to reduce pedestrian exposure and to bring the Bow street approach closer in.
- Bump-out on the east side of Park Ave. The bump-out would (a) reduce the crosswalk width and (b) limit the parking that impedes visibility of pedestrians in the crosswalk
- Traffic calming on Lowell Street starting at the reservoir
- Work with Lexington to slow traffic at the intersection of Lowell Street and Route 2A
- A land swap involving the land (now used for parking) between Bow and Lowell (east)
- Look at the Lowell/Mass Ave intersection to possibly form a T intersection
- Westminster one-way out of Downing Square only as far as the first driveway. Note that because of the school, vehicles may need to turn around on Westminster.

Ralph Elwell noted that the hedge on the Rowsell property needed to be trimmed. Kevin O'Brien offered to call the developer.

5. Symmes

Kevin O'Brien reported that Howard/Stein-Hudson had presented their preliminary findings on Symmes based on several assumptions to the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) on 7/19. Their early recommendation is to keep the Woodside lane access open. The neighbors seem to be divided on the question of whether to keep this access open.

Elisabeth Carr-Jones noted that about half the concerns at the public meeting were about traffic.

Kevin will write a memo to the Board of Selectmen requesting TAC assistance to the ARB.

TAC members raised some ideas for mitigation:

- A proper sidewalk on Woodside Lane down from Hospital Road to Oak Hill
- Millett street one way eastbound
- All way stop or other traffic calming at Woodside/Oak Hill.

Jeff Maxtutis questioned the reasonableness of some of the numbers in tables 1 and 2 of the Howard/Stein-Hudson memo. Hourly and daily totals were not in the usual ratios.

6. Summer Street/Park Avenue Extension

Jim McHugh noted that DPW had trimmed the tree that was blocking the view of the traffic signal on Monday. Larger traffic heads (12") have been requested early for the intersection.

7. Cedar-Park-Waverly, Cedar-Renfrew and Hillside-Renfrew

Jeff Maxtutis presented his analysis of the intersections and some recommendations. These will be discussed with the Town Engineer and brought to the next meeting.

a. Cedar-Park Avenue-Waverly Street

Jeff noted that given the proximity to a bus stop, pedestrian volumes were substantial. Issues at Park Avenue/Cedar Avenue/Waverly Street include the following:

- Stop sign placement
- Wide expanse of asphalt with a small traffic island is confusing to drivers and presents a long crossing distance to pedestrians.

Recommendations include the following:

- New stop sign and stop lines at the corner of Park Avenue and Cedar Avenue
- Stop sign for Waverly Street traffic at the corner of Waverly and Cedar.
- New crosswalk between existing handicap ramps.

There was general agreement with these recommendations. Scott Smith suggested that the island be extended to both better channelize traffic and lessen pedestrian exposure. A “virtual” island extension (with reflective poles) could be done in conjunction with the crosswalk installation.

b. Cedar-Renfrew

This is a T intersection, where residents requested a stop sign on Renfrew Street, which is the minor leg of the intersection. Currently, although Cedar has right of way, most motorists on Renfrew do not stop. Scott Smith questioned the need for a stop sign, noting that there are a large number of T intersections in Arlington, and the vast majority have neither stop signs nor significant crash rates. Jim McHugh pointed out that a stop sign would not do any harm. We agreed to review crash statistics for these intersections.

c. Renfrew-Hillside

This is an uncontrolled 4-way intersection. Hillside is a minor collector with considerably higher traffic volume than Renfrew, a local street. The recommendation is for a stop sign facing traffic on Renfrew. There was general agreement with this recommendation.

We will aim for a formal vote on these recommendations at the next TAC meeting.

8. Jason Street

The selectmen received a petition from residents requesting

- Stanchions at Jason/Norfolk and Jason/Menotomy Rocks (MR) Park
- Thermoplastic at both crosswalks
- A “Children” sign on Jason southbound.

Scott Smith reported on his visit to the site on Sunday 7/25, and suggested that given the serious visibility issues with the Jason/Norfolk crosswalk, its apparent low pedestrian usage, and its proximity to a 4-way stop controlled intersection, it would be appropriate to ask whether this crosswalk should be removed. As far as the other requests went, he expressed the following views:

- Stanchions at Jason/MR Park may be appropriate as a traffic-calming device. Jason Street does have high rush hour traffic volume, and a substantial number of pedestrians use this crosswalk. Others indicated that the new lime-green signs were placed there to replace the bollard because the life of the bollard was limited.
- We have a program in place for installing Thermoplastic at sites with heavy traffic volume such as Mass, Pleasant, Summer, Medford, Broadway and others. In time, thermoplastic may be installed on Jason – but other crosswalks have more need based upon safety issues..
- A “children” sign would be ineffective.

He suggested that Town Engineer do an evaluation of the visibility issues at the Jason/Norfolk site.

9. TAC Administration

Ralph Elwell presented a series of suggestions for sharing TAC responsibilities. Roles presented include Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Education, Redevelopment Board Representative, Technologists, and Webmaster. All members were asked to review it.

10. Route 60/Mass. Ave.

Kevin O’Brien reported that BSC should be able to demonstrate a simulation model at the August TAC meeting. Ed Starr suggested giving them a substantial amount of time on the agenda.

11. East Arlington Parking Study

Scott Smith reported that he spoke with the Town Manager about parking policies in Brookline and Winchester. A working group meeting is planned for August.

12. Department News

Lt. McHugh reported that the crosswalk supervisors for the schools are being restored, and one will be at Quincy and Gray next year.

Kevin O’Brien raised the question of whether a crosswalk at Summer / Orient was included in the Summer Street plans. Given the plans for a park at Reed’s Brook, there may be substantial pedestrian traffic at this location in the future. Members were not sure whether a crosswalk was already part of the plans. Lt. McHugh suggested that a conduit be placed across the road at this location, so that if it is decided to install a signal in the future, such installation could be done at low expense.

Elisabeth Carr-Jones and Jeff Maxtutis asked to see the Dallin School plans.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Handouts:

Agenda package including agenda, list of items needed for town day, Board of Selectmen requests for Renfrew and Waverly Streets, and for crosswalks on Jason Street, status of actions to be done, sharing of TAC responsibilities – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 5/2004 and notes on Jason Street crosswalks – from Scott Smith

Recommendations for Waverly, Cedar, Renfrew – from Jeff Maxtutis