

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

Tuesday, November 18, 2003 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Lt. Jim McHugh, Mike Rademacher, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Others: Jack Duranceau, Angela Chung, Mitchell Kotiuga, Mary Avila, Chris Sacca, Andrew Peach, Don Eunson, Suzanne Owayda, Ray Bradley, Paolo Marinelli, and several other residents

1. MIT-Lemelson Grant

Arlington High School was one of only 10 schools in the nation to receive the grant for a new invention. The group at Arlington High School, led by Jack Duranceau, is developing a new crosswalk with automated pedestrian detection and in-pavement light emitting diodes. Members of the group introduced their roles in the project.

Mary Avila: Liaison with suppliers and the town

Chris Sacca: Working with the LEDs and looking at companies

Andrew Peach: Pedestrian detection

Michelle Kotiuga: Posts on sidewalk and power

Angel Chung: Overall coordination

Mike Rademacher will be the liaison from TAC.

2. Safe Routes to School (SRS)

Suzanne Owayda was present for this discussion.

Don Eunson introduced the SRS program, with a focus on Dallin and Ottoson schools. Before the program started only 35% of Dallin students walked (most were driven). With SRS the fraction walking increased to 56%. By an unfortunate coincidence, it is the three schools involved in SRS (Dallin, Thompson, Ottoson) that have lost street supervisors. Three intersections were discussed in some detail:

a. Gray and Quincy

Gray Street is wide, and does not have a sidewalk on both sides. The intersection is at the bottom of a shallow hill. Don recommended sidewalks on all streets near the school and pedestrian warning signs (in the middle of the road). Elisabeth Carr-Jones noted that the pedestrian warning signs are an issue on narrow roads, and can't be used in snowy conditions.

b. Mass. Ave. and Appleton

For traffic westbound on Mass. Ave., pedestrians are not visible. A bulb-out may be appropriate. Although there is a pedestrian-actuated signal there, the button has to be pushed very hard, and there is a delay before the light changes. Scott Smith suggested that priority be given to fixing the signal, noting that in a similar situation in Cambridge (where a pedestrian signal stopped functioning properly) pedestrians simply learned to ignore the signal.

c. The 6-way intersection at Appleton and Wachusett.

This is an intersection that has lost a crossing guard. Similar to Downing Square, it has stop signs on 5 approaches. Perceived issues include heavy rush hour traffic on Appleton, speeding MBTA buses, stop sign violations, and an extremely wide expanse of asphalt that is difficult for pedestrians. At least one stop sign is hidden by foliage and is faded.

In general, Don urged as much vertical traffic calming (speed humps and the like) as possible.

Suzanne Owayda suggested that TAC might be able to help in advising the deployment of street supervisors.

3. Quincy and Gray

Elisabeth Carr-Jones expressed disappointment that more could not be done at this point. The committee unanimously approved the following recommendations:

1. Install fluorescent yellow-green roadside signs on Gray Street (Pentagonal School signs)
2. Install thermoplastic pavement markings on the Gray Street crosswalks.
3. Instruct the Town Engineering Department to install a crosswalk on Quincy Street at the time of water main replacement construction (currently scheduled for Fall 2004).
4. Instruct the Town Engineering Department to investigate narrowing Quincy Street at its approach to Gray Street at the time of water main replacement construction.
5. Continue targeted traffic speed enforcement on Gray Street
6. Instruct the Town Tree Warden not to replace the large street tree just west of the SW corner of the intersection on Gray Street, when it is removed in due course.

4. The minutes of 10/28/03 were approved unanimously.

5. Rawson Road

Scott Smith reported that he spoke with Sue Johnson of 28/30 Rawson Road, and she is OK with a stop-ahead sign in front of her house. He also spoke with Jack Jones (Commission on Disabilities) about the impact of standing bus stops on people with disabilities. Jack offered to bring this issue before the Commission on Disabilities at their next meeting.

The committee unanimously approved the following recommendations:

1. At Broadway and Rawson (north side) sign and enforce current restrictions against parking on a handicap ramp and within 20' of an intersection.
2. Erect a stop-ahead sign on Rawson on the southbound approach to the stop sign at Warren. (To reduce sign-clutter, the graffiti-covered "Children" sign at Amherst and Rawson should be removed.)
3. Maintain the stop bars that have recently been painted at both intersections.
4. Directed enforcement for speeding, especially on Broadway.
5. Provide education and enforcement on the 20' parking rule at intersections.

6. A 4-way stop is NOT recommended. The added delay to motorists, as well as added pollution and noise from the stops and starts, would outweigh any safety benefit.

Jim McHugh suggested that a flyer be drafted for the businesses. Scott Smith will draft the flyer.

6. Mass Ave. CDBG Update

Scott Smith reported that on 11/17/2003, he briefed the Arlington Redevelopment Board on proposals for the Mass. Ave corridor in East Arlington. Reaction was generally positive, but one concern was expressed about ensuring consistency in Mass. Ave. from one end of the Town to the other.

7. Mass/Rt. 60 CDBG Update

Ed Starr reported that one previous study recommended 2-thru lanes on Route 60, but the final report dropped that recommendation. Michael Rademacher noted that with the conflicts between right turns and pedestrians, a thru-right lane might not have much capacity. Scott Smith noted that this tradeoff between pedestrian safety and traffic flow could become extremely emotional, and it was important to have good facts. For example:

- What is the crash rate for concurrent pedestrian crossings versus our experience at this intersection?
- What about the left turn into Cambridge Savings?
- Would relieving traffic here just move the problem to Medford/Mystic, Medford/Warren or Mystic/Summer?

8. Bylaws

Ed Starr presented the revised bylaws. The second sentence of Article II (Purpose) was altered to read, "An object of the TAC is to improve the safety of residents and the quality of life in Arlington by addressing transportation issues." With this change, the bylaws were unanimously approved. The next step is to submit them to the Board of Selectmen.

9. Town News

Kevin O'Brien had indicated that we should be talking to the Arlington Redevelopment Board more. Elisabeth Carr-Jones suggested that, since the ARB often receives traffic studies, we should offer assistance in reviewing them. There was general agreement that this is a good idea.

John Sanchez reported that he had reviewed State law pertaining to school zones. The Town has the authority to establish a 20-mph school zone provided that (a) it is not on a state highway, and (b) it is within 300 feet of school property. Quincy/Gray may be too far away, but Elisabeth offered to check.

We briefly discussed the issue of street supervisor assignments. Although the school department pays for them, Officer David McKenna makes the deployments. Scott Smith suggested that in places that have lost a crossing guard, that pedestrian warning signs be placed, but only during school hours (this means that someone would have to be found to place them).

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM

Handouts:

Meeting agenda, and revised bylaws – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 10/2003, recommendations for Rawson/Broadway and Rawson/Warren – from Scott Smith

Quincy/Gray recommendations – from Elisabeth Carr-Jones

State laws pertaining to school zones – from John Sanchez.