

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

Tuesday, January 8, 2002 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Alan McClennen, Lt. Jim McHugh, Michael Rademacher, Ron Santosuosso, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Others: Charles Crevo, Marie Harris, Sudhir Murthy

Minutes from 12/19

The minutes of this meeting were approved unanimously.

Massachusetts Avenue corridor study

Charles Crevo and Marie Harris presented the study. The corridor study covers Mass. Ave. in East Arlington, from Alewife Brook Parkway to Franklin Street. In most of this corridor, the street is 66' wide, although it widens to approximately 80' near Lake Street. These are preliminary results, and do not include geometric details.

The study included a three-year crash history, limited to the signalized intersections. The intersection with the highest number of crashes was Alewife Brook Parkway, with 79 crashes over the three years.

All options have on street parking. Options considered include the following:

1. Bike lane and travel lane in each direction; two-way left turn lane (TWLTL)
2. Bike lanes in both directions. One travel lane westbound and two travel lanes eastbound.
3. Like alternative 1, but with a raised median
4. Widen street to 68'. 12' shared bike and parking lane in each direction. Two 11' travel lanes in each direction.
5. Two 12' travel lanes in each direction with no bike lane

The consultants, DPW and Public Safety had earlier eliminated options 3 and 4 based on cost, and option 2 based on possible confusion to drivers. A number of intersection options, with and without refuge islands, were also presented. Marie noted that the turn from Lake to Winter limited the locations where refuge islands could be placed. She also noted that according to MassHighway standards, a 12' lane width is desirable, with a 11' minimum.

Scott Smith and Elisabeth Carr-Jones raised the concern that, so far, the study is doing nothing to address pedestrian safety at the uncontrolled crosswalks. Orvis and Wyman, in particular, are far from any signalized intersection. Scott then presented data (from APD statistics) showing 48 pedestrian crashes between 1989 and 2000 in the Arlington

portion of the corridor. The majority of these crashes occurred at locations that were not near signalized intersections.

Scott also noted that the unsignalized intersection at Mass Ave and Orvis was a frequent site for vehicle crashes. He asked for the exact location of the machine counts between Linwood and Lake. (Both Bates and Orvis Roads have high turning volumes into and out of Mass. Ave.) He noted that given the high right turn volume from eastbound Mass. Ave to Lake, the placement of the bike lane to the right of a thru-and-right lane was dangerous. He suggested an exclusive right turn lane at this intersection, with the bike lane being routed to the left of it. Finally, he suggested that if Alternative 5 were adopted, a 13' outside lane and an 11' inside lane would be more bike-friendly.

Michael Rademacher asked whether bike lanes have been shown to be any safer. The answer seems to be that no one really knows.

Scott noted that Concord Avenue in Cambridge (between Fresh Pond Rotary and Belmont) has a 3-lane design similar to Alternative 2, and asked whether there have been reports of motorist confusion.

Alan McClennen suggested that we find out what Cambridge is planning for Mass. Ave in North Cambridge. Scott volunteered to call Cambridge. Alan also pointed out that this Mass Ave. Corridor study was focusing on high-visibility actions that could be implemented for the cost of paint. We will also need an open session in town hall, once we have developed a specific proposal.

Jim McHugh asked about the possible misuse of the TWLTL, with a danger of head-on collisions. Scott suggested that this could be addressed via the use of left turn pockets, rather than a TWLTL, at the intersections.

Transportation Assessment Study

Sudhir Murthy presented the results of this study, including a proposed functional classification of roads. Functional classifications are based on demand, but demand can be influenced by roadway design. Other information presented included

- Peak hour turning volumes at various intersections in the town, and level-of-service calculations for these intersections
- Peak hour pedestrian counts in Arlington Center
- Alternatives for the Mass Ave./Route 60/Bikeway intersection. He noted that an exclusive pedestrian phase would make the level-of-service even worse than it is now.
- Sidewalk conditions
- Elderly population by census block
- Child population by census block
- Bus service map and headways
- Road surface width map
- Land use classification map

Sudhir noted that the big issues for residents were pedestrian infrastructure and cut-thru traffic. In driving through the town, he noted that many of the pavement markings were worn, and that pedestrian amenities could be improved.

Projects

Due to vacations, Ron Santosuosso has not had an opportunity to discuss the Jason/Brantwood raised crossing or the Bike path intersections with Rich Bento.

Jim McHugh reported that the Police Department completed a baseline set of traffic counts on Cutter Hill prior to the installation of the stop signs. Weekday volumes were higher, by about 30 cars per day. There is now a two-way stop sign at Cutter Hill and Richfield (with Cutter Hill being stopped). It appears to be working well. The Town will be buying one more traffic counter. Two new full time officers are now on the Monday-Friday 8 AM - 4 PM shift, and will be used for directed patrol. Jim also handed out copies of the Mt Gilboa study. He noted that the number of requests from residents seems to be slowing down.

Warrant article

Alan McClennen is preparing a draft warrant article for the committee, to ask for funds to continue the transportation assessment study. It will go to Finance Committee at the end of January. At our next monthly meeting, we need to decide how to present it to Finance Committee. It is important that the Selectmen are on board. It is premature to ask for funds for physical improvements.

An action item is for committee members to think about how this money could be used, and to exchange e-mails no later than 1/13/02.

Other items

Ralph Elwell mentioned the upcoming Alewife Regional Forum. Elisabeth mentioned that the Mass Ave./Lake Street intersection has been changed so the walk light comes during every cycle.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

MEETING HANDOUTS

Agenda – from Ed Starr

Minutes of 12/19 meeting – from Scott Smith

Pedestrian crash statistics for Mass. Ave. in East Arlington – from Scott Smith

Functional road classification, and traffic volume counts – from Sudhir Murthy

Transportation Assessment Study results – from Sudhir Murthy

Mount Gilboa Safety Status report – from Jim McHugh