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Date: Mon, 1 Jun 2020 18:17:37 -0400
Subject: in support of safety improvements to Mass Ave/Appleton intersection

Dear Arlington Select Board members and candidates:

I'm writing to you because the recent death of cyclist Charlie Proctor at the Massachusetts Avenue and Appleton Street intersection in Arlington hit very close to home for me: Charlie's girlfriend, Alison, who survived the crash, was my neighbor in Somerville for the past year. Alison lived across the hall, and Charlie was a devoted boyfriend, so he was someone I saw quite frequently--often, as he and Alison headed in or out together, on their bikes. It is upsetting and surreal that I will never see him again.

Charlie and Alison had planned to move in together today, June 1, before his life was tragically cut short. For Alison, and in Charlie's memory, I write to you today to express my support for infrastructure improvements that would make that intersection safer for vulnerable road users.

As a cyclist myself, I've ridden through the Appleton/Mass Ave intersection many times. I'm aware that it's a complex intersection for which there is no easy fix, and that the ultimate solution may be a couple of years away. I understand that, which is why I ask the Select Board to work with other Town officials to implement a two-phased plan:

In the short term: I believe that with a combination of new roadway striping, modest restrictions on parking, and signs, the bike lane that currently ends at the Dunkin Donuts just west of Appleton could and should be extended to at least Burton St or, ideally, to connect to the existing bike lanes east of Brattle Square. Better yet, inexpensive flex posts could also be installed on the double yellow line to force left-turning motorists to proceed through the intersection more slowly.

In the long term: I believe that, building off of the 2012 CTPS report, a new traffic study and design plan must begin as soon as possible. With public involvement, this could be a year-long process; finding funding, final bid documents and construction could take a couple more years as well. Because of long-term timeline constraints, and because I expect bicycle traffic to increase in the summer, as it always does, I believe that is imperative that the Town initiate the short term plan this summer.

Thanks so much for reading.

Best,
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