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Date: Sat, 30 May 2020 11:19:20 -0400  
Subject: Safety at Appleton St/Mass Ave intersection

Fellow Arlingtonians:

It was with great sadness that I read of the death of Charlie Proctor at the intersection of Mass Ave and Appleton St. I actually only learned of it today, thanks to a notice shared by the EALS Coalition.

While upset by this news, I am also not at all surprised. As a parent of a former Ottoson student, I drove through that intersection enough to know the confusion it creates among motorists. I saw students sprinting across Appleton, knowing full well the danger of the situation.

I also have regularly passed through that intersection as a bicyclist along Mass Ave. ***Every single time I travel eastbound as a cyclist***, I pass through with a real sense of anxiety. Drivers come down the slope of Appleton and have to strain to see who's going eastbound. They cause me less dread, however, than the cars going westbound and turning left. I always enter the intersection hyper-vigilant, prepared for a westbound driver to make a poor decision, turn left and cut me off.

It's unfortunate that change usually only comes after tragedy. Let's not let Charlie's death be a devastating loss, soon forgotten. At a minimum, let's use it as motivation to improve the safety of the intersection and help ensure it doesn't happen again. I'm sure Phil and Chad have already shared their suggestions with you, but especially the short-term proposal makes complete sense.

- *SHORT TERM - with new roadway striping, modest restrictions on parking, and signs, the bike lane that currently ends at the Dunkin Donuts just west of Appleton should be extended to at least Burton St or, ideally, to connect to the existing bike lanes east of Brattle Square. Inexpensive flex posts could also be installed on the double yellow line to force left-turning motorists to use a tighter radius and more slowly.*
- *LONG TERM - building off of the 2012 CTPS report, a new traffic study and design plan must begin very soon. With appropriate public involvement, this could be a year-long process. Finding funding, final bid documents and construction could easily take a couple more years as well. Based on that, it is imperative that the Town initiate the short term plan this summer.*

The marked bike lanes that the town has installed elsewhere along Mass Ave, I'm certain, have dramatically improved road safety. Additionally, I believe Phil's idea to add flex posts in the intersection to help guide traffic better is a very sensible suggestion. We recognize that an effective, long-term solution will take time and money, and that should still be pursued. In the meantime, though, let's make some immediate improvements that will reduce the danger at this location.

All the best,  
Geoff Birmingham