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Subject: Letter of Support for Improved Cycling Conditions on Arlington Roadways

Members of the Select Board:

My name is Kate Byrd, and I have been a resident in Arlington for five years. I am writing in support of Ms. Alison Piasecki and Mass Bike's effort to improve bike safety in Arlington.

My husband and I are both avid runners and cyclists. We rented in East Arlington for five years and recently purchased a home in the Brattle neighborhood in large part because of the easy access to the Minuteman Trail we use daily for exercise and commuting. However since first moving to Arlington and purchasing a bike, I have had concerns about the safety of riding on town streets.

I often commute towards Lexington on my bike and was appalled at the Minuteman Trail and Lake St. intersection as it is unsafe, ambiguous, and inefficient for cars, walkers, runners, and cyclists alike. In 2015, I reached out to the Town and was told it was being handled. Five years later, the intersection is nearly identical.

Last summer while commuting home eastward on the Minuteman, I was crossing Mass Ave from the Uncle Sam park in Arlington Center. I was struck from about 8 o'clock as a driver took an illegal right on red coming up Mystic Street. They fled the scene. The police department was quick to arrive, and I was "lucky" to have no head injury or broken bones. I will note I will never lay on my stomach due to shifted ribs and require chiropractic services every 8-10 weeks, despite being a relatively healthy and active 27 year-old. I was also very disappointed in the follow-up response from law enforcement. A social media post requesting any information was the only action taken to find the driver.

With this history, I read with sadness and anger about the accident on Mass Ave and Appleton. It was then revealed that this intersection had been identified as "somewhat alarming" in a 2012 memo from the Boston Regional MPO ([link](#)). I believe this falls into a pattern of slow response and inaction when it comes to taking sizable steps towards improving bike safety on Arlington streets. Improved biking conditions help all citizens by reducing pollution and traffic, opening up parking spots for those who need them, and improving physical and mental well-being through exercise to name a few. I hope as we look forward that prioritizing safety for those on bikes becomes a top priority for the town. Recent occurrences highlight that this is not just a nicety, but rather a matter of life and death for citizens of Arlington and surrounding towns.

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