



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

To: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager
Cc: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning & Community Development
From: Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner
Date: August 12, 2020
RE: Proposed Locations for Bluebikes Stations in Arlington Center and East Arlington

The Town of Arlington will become part of the Bluebikes regional bike share system as part of an expansion of the system in summer 2020. Unlike the Limebike dockless regional bike share program in which the Town previously participated, Bluebikes has stations where users can rent and return bicycles for short term trips. The Department of Planning and Community Development has worked with Bluebikes staff, the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC), East Arlington Livable Streets (EALS), and administered a community survey to determine locations for the Bluebikes stations. This memo describes the public survey process and concordant outreach to the community to gather feedback on locations, and provides recommended station locations for discussion and approval by the Select Board.

Six station locations are proposed for this initial roll-out of Bluebikes in Arlington. However, only four locations are being requested for approval at this time, and two require further review. The following four locations are recommended; greater detail about each station is provided on page three of this memo and in the accompanying presentation:

1. Railroad Lot at Minuteman Bikeway
2. Mass Ave at Broadway
3. Broadway at Grafton St
4. Mass Ave at Grafton St

The following two locations require additional review before finalization:

1. Linwood St at Minuteman Bikeway
2. Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field

Station Siting Guidelines and Public Engagement

The Bluebikes initial expansion into Arlington includes six proposed stations. Each station will have eleven docks and six or seven bicycles for a total of 38 bicycles. Station siting guidance was provided by Bluebikes. The additional factors considered in the review criteria include:

- Each station has a footprint 32' long and 6' wide.
- Stations must be no more than 1/3 mile from at least one other station, approximately a 5-minute walk. Stations in neighboring municipalities are factored into these distance criteria.
- Stations cannot impede access to utilities such as manholes or storm sewer grates.
- Stations need to be placed on firm, level hardscape (no grass, no dirt).
- Stations require at least 4-6 hours of sunlight for power.
- Stations should not be located in the area of work for near-term construction projects that would require relocating stations within two years.

- Stations on sidewalk can stay out during winter—Bluebikes will shovel out (stations located on sidewalks may not impede accessibility). Stations on street may need to be removed for winter plowing at Town’s discretion).

Due to the station distancing criteria, the stations in this initial expansion must be located near the closest existing stations, which are in Somerville and Cambridge. As a result, this criterion makes siting a station in Arlington Heights infeasible. Requests for Bluebikes stations in Arlington Heights were one of the most frequent comments on the station location poll.

DPCD staff began by using the station siting guidance above and discussing possible locations with a small working group of members from ABAC and EALS. DPCD shared possible locations with Bluebikes staff and created three possible networks of stations for public feedback. A survey for public feedback was made available between July 23 and July 31, where the following network options were presented:

- STATION LOCATIONS OPTION 1: Mass Ave at Town Hall, Mass Ave at Whittemore St, Mass Ave at Linwood/Foster St, Mass Ave at Capitol Square, Mass Ave at Thorndike St, Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field.
- STATION LOCATIONS OPTION 2: Minuteman Bikeway at Swan Pl/Mass Ave, Mass Ave at Whittemore St, Minuteman Bikeway at Linwood St, Broadway at N. Union St, Mass Ave at Capitol Square, Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field.
- STATION LOCATIONS OPTION 3: Mass Ave at Whittemore Street, Mass Ave at Linwood/Foster St, Broadway at N. Union St, Mass Ave at Capitol Square, Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field, Broadway at Sunnyside Ave

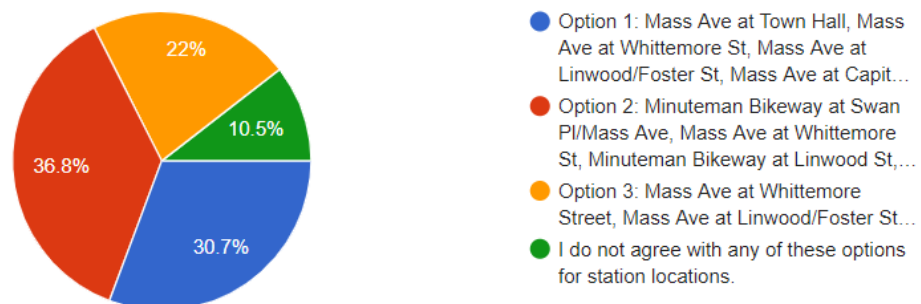
These three options had three station locations in common: Mass Ave at Whittemore St, Mass Ave at Capitol Square, and Minuteman Bikeway at Thorndike Field.

In total, 515 individuals responded to the survey. The breakdown of the preference survey is shown below.

Which options for Bluebikes station locations do you prefer? (Please refer to the larger images above for specific locations under each option.)



505 responses



Option 2 received the most votes (186, or 36.8%), followed closely by Option 1 (155, or 30.7%). Of the respondents who indicated that they did not agree with any of the station network options, the majority of comments expressed concern that there were not station locations in Arlington Heights. Other concerns included a desire to retain on-street parking, objection to specific locations in the networks, and general opposition to the town participating in this bike share program.

Station Field Review and Detailed Locations

DPCD and Bluebikes staff conducted field review of the proposed station locations to determine precisely where stations should be sited. Due to factors around site suitability, conflicts with utility locations, traffic safety, and parking demand, some of the precise locations proposed in Option 2 of the public poll could accommodate a Bluebikes station. Staff endeavored to site stations as close to the approximate locations in Option 2 as possible.

Adjustments to station locations were made for the Capitol Square location and the Minuteman Bikeway at Swan Place location. A station at Mass Ave and Grafton St is proposed in place of the Capitol Square location, about two blocks from Mass Ave and Lake St, due to challenges with siting a station directly in Capitol Square. Similar challenges arose in reviewing options for Minuteman Bikeway at Swan Place, in addition to comments and concerns about station locations not being far enough into Arlington Center and towards Arlington Heights. As a result of field review and public comment, staff are proposing a station along the Minuteman Bikeway west of the intersection of Mass Ave/Mystic St/Pleasant St to replace the proposed station at Swan Place at the Minuteman Bikeway, which is not feasible at this time.

The detailed locations of the stations are attached to this memo as presentation slides for the Board's review.