



**TOWN OF ARLINGTON**  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

CC: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development  
Michael Rademacher, Director, Department of Public Works

From: Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner, Department of Planning and  
Community Development

Date: May 6, 2021

RE: MBTA Bus Stop Accessibility Improvements and Proposed Relocations on Pleasant  
Street

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On December 22, 2020, the MBTA submitted a memo to the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and Department of Public Works (DPW) about projects planned for Arlington as part of the MBTA Bus Stop Accessibility and Safety Improvement Program (BSASI).<sup>1</sup> The memo included 30% design plans for bus stop improvements along Pleasant Street that have been prioritized for construction in 2021 by the MBTA. Pleasant Street carries one bus route in Arlington, Route 67 (Turkey Hill – Alewife Station).

The MBTA proposes making accessibility upgrades at the existing stop location for Pleasant Street at Spring Valley (Stop ID 23532).

The MBTA proposes making accessibility upgrades and relocating the following bus stops:

- Pleasant Street at Oak Knoll (Stop ID 23535)
  - Proposed relocation to Pleasant Street at Wellington Street, adjacent to 93 Pleasant Street (west side of the street)
- Pleasant Street at Addison Street (Stop ID 23533)
  - Proposed relocation to Pleasant Street at Wellington Street, adjacent to 94 Pleasant Street (east side of the street)
- Pleasant Street at Irving Street (Stop ID 23536)
  - Proposed relocation to the far side of the intersection of Pleasant Street at Irving Street, adjacent to 145 Pleasant Street (west side of the street)

After reviewing the proposed relocations with the Transportation Advisory Committee and public feedback received, the staff recommendation is for the Select Board to approve these bus stop relocations as proposed. The remainder of this memo explains the purpose and goals

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mbta.com/projects/better-bus-project#accessibility>

of the relocations, public outreach conducted, and comments received for each proposed relocation.

## **Background and Purpose of Bus Stop Relocations**

The above bus stops have been prioritized for improvements due to one or more major access barriers, as well as relative need based on ridership, proximity to adjacent stops, Title VI considerations, and proximity to hospitals/health clinics and other facilities that serve vulnerable users. While the MBTA seeks to improve accessibility at all bus stops in their system, they also analyze whether bus stops should be relocated to improve service and safety as well. The four stops proposed for improvement in the MBTA's proposal all have significant accessibility barriers based on the MBTA's analysis.

In general, relocating the three bus stops identified above serve multiple goals:

- Improve safety for pedestrians by moving the stops closer to existing crosswalks and orienting pedestrians to cross the road behind buses instead of in front.
- Improve bus service by adjusting bus stop spacing for more efficient service.
- Place bus stops near transit-generating land uses, such as churches, day care centers, businesses, and multifamily residences.
- Improve bus service by placing bus stop on the far side of signalized intersections.

The relocation of these bus stops will also impact an estimated eight (8) on-street parking spaces, specifically around Pleasant Street at Wellington Street. In general, the legal parking spaces will be relocated to the locations of the current bus stops. Along with accessibility upgrades, the MBTA will also install bus box pavement markings to delineate the bus stop and crosswalk markings where they are upgrading curb ramps.

## **Public Outreach and Comments**

DPCD worked with the MBTA and their consultants to have abutter notification letters mailed in mid-March. To supplement the MBTA's notification process DPCD mailed letters to about 253 properties by direct mail in an area principally centered around the Oak Knoll and Addison Street proposed relocations because they would have impacts to on-street parking. The letters mailed included details on all the proposed relocations. Direct emails and communication were also sent by the Economic Development Coordinator to businesses and churches in the area, including the Boston Church of Christ and Saint John's Episcopal Church.

The Town and the MBTA received five (5) public comments: three (3) comments related to the proposed relocation of Oak Knoll and Addison Street bus stops to Wellington Street, and two (2) comments on the proposed relocation of the Irving Street bus stop to the far side of the intersection at 145 Pleasant Street. The abutter at 93 Pleasant Street stated their opposition to relocating the Oak Knoll bus stop, and the two comments for Irving Street were both in opposition to the relocation. Concerns raised included: increased noise and dust to abutters from relocated stops; affect on historic properties; relocating stops away from potential or existing transit users; snow clearance at stops; existing drainage issues around crosswalks near

stops; and improving accessibility at existing stops. (See attached for full comments received.)

The following information is provided in response to the public comments:

- The MBTA is not currently proposing bus shelters at any of the proposed bus stop relocations in this memo.
- Route 67 runs only on weekdays from 6 am to approximately 8 pm. The current schedule provides for service once per hour (inbound and outbound) in the mornings and evenings, and service every 45 minutes between 2:45 pm – 5 pm. This means about two (2) buses will travel down Pleasant Street each hour (one inbound and one outbound), with 20 trips per weekday.<sup>2</sup>
- The main reasons for locating the stop from Oak Knoll to 93 Pleasant Street are to improve pedestrian safety by locating the stop closer to the existing crosswalk across Pleasant Street, locate the stop closer to transit generating land uses, and to improve stop spacing, to improve service. In addition, the existing bus stop at Oak Knoll has challenges to making it accessible due to a street tree that is partially in the sidewalk near the existing Oak Knoll bus stop. Construction to make this stop accessible could result in tree impacts that could damage the tree and require its removal. This requires an additional process through the Tree Committee, which may delay accessibility upgrades for this stop.
- As part of this project the MBTA will be redesigning the curb ramps and will make every effort to reduce flooding at the stops within the scope of the project. Based on field observations it appears that every approach the intersection has a water issue, so riders are dealing with this issue in the stop's current location as well
- Snow clearance for this bus stop is responsibility of the abutting property owner, and sidewalk clearance is required under Town bylaw whether a bus stop exists or not.

## **Staff Recommendation & Next Steps**

The staff recommendation is that the Board approve the above bus stop relocations as proposed by the MBTA. The MBTA project will improve accessibility for these stops, which are considered high priority. The stop relocations will create safer conditions for pedestrians, improve transit service on Route 67 through more efficient stop spacing and intersection approaches, and locate stops closer to transit-generating uses.

If the Select Board approves these relocations the MBTA will finish their construction designs and work with DPW on the construction management of the MBTA's contractor. No tree impacts requiring Tree Committee approval are anticipated at this stage in the design unless the Board declines to relocate the Oak Knoll bus stop.

I would be glad to discuss this further, should you have any questions about this proposal.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://cdn.mbtta.com/sites/default/files/route\\_pdfs/2021-spring/067-2.21.2.0.pdf](https://cdn.mbtta.com/sites/default/files/route_pdfs/2021-spring/067-2.21.2.0.pdf)

(Note: this schedule has been reduced due to the MBTA's Forging Ahead plan. If the frequency is increased back to its original schedule in Fall 2019, this will provide for about four (4) buses during peak morning and evening hours (two inbound, two outbound) and about one per hour on off-peak hours. The schedule would remain a weekday-only, 6 am to 8 pm service.)