



## **Town of Arlington**

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To: Select Board

From: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

Date: September 9, 2021

RE: Mass Ave/Appleton Intersection Short-Term Safety Recommendations

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As the Board well knows the history of the Mass Ave and Appleton Street/Appleton Place intersection, this memo is being presented to recommend a path forward for addressing safety at this intersection as well as concerns from abutters and businesses about potential impacts from these improvements.

At its July 8, 2021, meeting the Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee (“the Committee”) reviewed two different options to make safety improvements at this intersection and the nearby corridor: Short-Term Option 1: Shared Lanes and Short-Term Option 2: Bike Lanes. After reviewing and discussing both options, the Committee voted 8-3 to recommend Short-Term Option 2: Bike Lanes to the Board for approval.

Both options make overall improvements to the safety of the intersection and area by reducing the turning speed of vehicles turning left from Mass Ave onto Appleton Street, improving visibility for pedestrians at crosswalks, reducing conflicts at the intersection, highlighting the presence of bicyclists on Mass Ave, and taking measures to reduce overall traffic speeds on Mass Ave. Also, both options could begin implementation later this fall to add pavement markings and signage. However, Option 2 would require the removal of approximately 22 parking spaces on Mass Ave, with most of the impact being on the south (eastbound) side of Mass Ave between Appleton Place and Burton Street. This is to facilitate the creation of a dedicated bike lane on the eastbound side of Mass Ave between Richardson Ave and Forest/Burton Street.

Understanding that the Board has heard substantial concerns from nearby businesses and residential abutters about the parking impacts of Option 2, I am recommending that the Board approve Short-Term Option 1: Shared Lanes on a temporary basis until further study of the parking impacts from Short-Term Option 2: Bike Lanes have been completed this

fall. The overlap of the improvements in Options 1 and 2 allow for many of the same safety improvements to be implemented no matter which Option is approved.

Town staff will conduct a parking utilization and turnover study in October to understand actual parking usage along Mass Ave and on nearby side streets in this area. We will plan to study the corridor between Richardson Ave and Fessenden Road. Due to the closure of schools for the summer, uncertainties from the impacts of COVID-19, and general traffic volume reductions during this season, it has not been possible currently to do a credible parking utilization study for this area to understand the impacts from Option 2.

After this parking study has been completed, the results will be reviewed by the Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee to determine if more data is needed and to allow for additional public engagement from abutters, businesses, committee members, and the general public. The Committee may also consider additional observations and monitoring from Town staff on the implementation of Option 1. The Committee will then forward this information to the Board along with a recommendation to stay with Option 1 or implement Option 2 or suggest an alternate option.

Additional information is provided along with this memo for the Board's review.

I am available for additional questions or discussion on this recommendation.