



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

MEMORANDUM

To: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

From: Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner

CC: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development

Date: May 20, 2022

RE: Correspondence Regarding Traffic Calming on Huntington Road

On March 12, 2020, the Select Board forwarded correspondence to the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) from resident Mandy Ellenwood regarding traffic safety on Huntington Road between Park Ave Extension and Forest Street. Specifically, Ms. Ellenwood was concerned about drivers going too fast on this short section of Huntington Road and the difficulty of pedestrians, including children, of crossing Huntington Road to get to the sidewalk on the south side of the street. This memo detailing the situation and recommendations for next steps is a follow-up to that correspondence.

Location Context, Resident Communication, Staff Observations and Crash Data

Huntington Road is a small local street approximately 25' wide located between Wright Street and Forest Street in Arlington Heights, with the segment of concern being between Park Ave Extension and Forest Street. There are asphalt sidewalks on the south side of this segment of street, but not the north side. There are no pavement markings and no traffic control for its approaches to Forest Street or Park Ave Extension. Land uses nearby are residential and it is about 0.2 miles from Peirce Elementary School. One bus route (MBTA Route 67) goes near Huntington Road, on Forest Street.

Town staff initially reached out to Ms. Ellenwood in March 2020 to note that it would not be possible to meet or do a site visit due to the COVID-19 pandemic that had just started, that traffic patterns have been significantly impacted and observations would not show the same as "normal" times, and to ask clarifying questions about her correspondence. Staff also noted Town policy and practices in terms of traffic calming, and that this section of Huntington Road is short, with little potential for speeding. Ms. Ellenwood responded that she understood we would be able to reach out to her about this issue later and determine if it is still a problem once traffic came back to normal.

Staff were able to conduct traffic observations in late November 2020 once the COVID-19 pandemic had eased at the time and traffic began to come back to normal levels. Ms. Ellenwood’s additional communication with staff noted that northbound drivers who are queuing on Park Ave Extension to turn onto Forest Street will use this short section of Huntington Road as a cut-through to get to Forest Street instead of waiting to turn from Park Ave Extension. She noted that drivers are going too fast and recklessly speeding through the neighborhood to get to Forest Street. Staff observed that some drivers made this maneuver; however, since observations were done in late morning, not much traffic was observed making this movement. Staff noted that geometric conditions at the intersection of Park Ave Extension and Huntington Road, especially at the south-southeast part of the intersection, provides very little deflection for drivers turning onto Huntington Road. The turn operates more as a “slip lane” that does not require drivers to slow down before turning onto the street. As such, drivers can turn onto the street from Park Ave Extension at speed, faster than at an intersection with sharper angles. It was also noted that cars were parked in this intersection radius area, potentially slowing drivers but creating problems pedestrian safety and sight distance. Some form of temporary improvements such as temporary curb extensions could be a strategy to mitigate this issue in the short term.

Figures 1 and 2 are pictures of the intersection from the staff’s observations showing the roadway conditions.



Figure 1 - Looking northeast towards Huntington Road from Park Ave Extension showing the curvature of turn onto Huntington.



Figure 2 – Looking west, with cars parked in the curve from Park Ave Extension onto Huntington Road eastbound.

Crash history at this segment of road is limited. According to MassDOT data, since 2016 there has been one crash at the intersection of Park Ave Extension and Huntington Road, in 2016. This crash was an angle collision, occurring at dusk, and resulted in property damage only (no injuries). At the intersection of Forest Street and Park Ave Extension, three crashes are recorded, in 2017, 2018, and 2019. One crash was with a pedestrian while the other two were angle collisions; they all occurred in daylight and no injuries were reported. No crashes on Huntington Road are reported.

Recommended Action

Due to the evident geometric conditions that encourage speeding from Park Ave Extension to Huntington Road, DPCD staff recommend relaying this correspondence and issue to the Transportation Advisory Committee for further evaluation and recommendations. As noted above, there is potential for short-term temporary adjustments to the geometry of the intersection to mitigate driver speeds, which could be built into longer-term improvements. Staff have contacted Ms. Ellenwood to confirm that this is an acceptable next step, and she has noted her interest in continuing review of this condition. Staff recommend that the Board forward this correspondence to TAC to create a project and begin a review.

I am available for questions as needed.