

Date: August 12, 2022  
To: Town of Arlington Select Board  
From: Dallin Elementary School  
Subject: Summary of Dallin's School Safe Arrival/Dismissal "School Street" Pilot Program

## Memorandum

### 1. Executive Summary

This memo summarizes the 3-month pilot program to improve the safety of Dallin students during arrival and dismissal times. The Arrival and Dismissal Pilot Plan (ADPP), which ran from March-June, is based around the "School Street" model of diverting car traffic away from the school entrance and allowing only buses, bikes and pedestrians on the street in front of Dallin. We welcome any questions about the pilot and hope that the board will consider some plan improvements and approve this to continue next year.

### 2. Synopsis

The ADPP rolled out very smoothly with the help of APD, DPW and parent and student volunteers. APD and DPW provided signage and the movable bollards to designate what areas were now closed to through traffic and direct the flow around Dallin. Parent and student volunteers ran the drop off area in front of Florence Field and kept the flow of traffic moving (in the correct direction) as much as possible.

Each morning at 7:45 and afternoon at 2:15, Dallin custodians placed the 4 bollards in both lanes at the intersections of Florence and George St. and Renfrew. The middle school buses arrived before the bollards were in place and they parked in front of Dallin. Bus drivers reported that they felt the area was much less chaotic and safer for both students and the drivers trying to enter and exit the area.

During the first week, Ofc. White, Principal Dingman, and Asst. Principal Karustis were outside helping families, abutters and commuters with the changes around school. The crossing guard at George Street also spent time (with her attention diverted from safely crossing children) retraining drivers at that intersection. While there were a couple of hiccups - primarily due to drivers not understanding and/or ignoring the new signage - the new plan went well and feedback was immediate and overall very positive.

#### Traffic Data:

The Dallin Safe Routes to School Committee met in late June to review the feedback and distill the suggestions into a handful of recommendations that could be implemented in stages, if approved by the Select Board. The TAC collected traffic data on side streets that saw an increase in vehicular traffic due to rerouting in front of Dallin.

### 3. Pilot Feedback

We solicited feedback from Dallin community members and abutters and collected 118 responses. Here are some highlights from the survey:



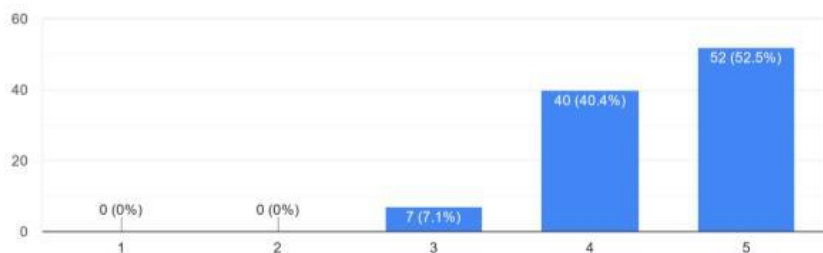
## Dallin families have an improved feeling of safety as a result of the pilot.

Prior to the pilot the average parent responded **3.4 on a scale of 1-5** to "How safe did you feel your student was during arrival/dismissal?"

After the pilot the average parent responded **4.5 on a scale of 1-5** for the same questions. (See chart)

With the Dallin School Safe Street Pilot in place, how safe do you feel your student is during arrival/dismissal?

99 responses



## The majority of families who switched modes due to the pilot have moved away from driving.

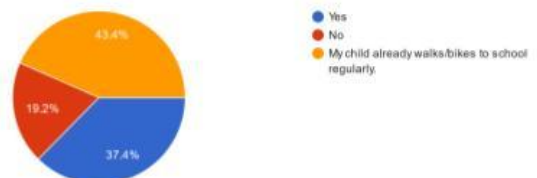
Current mode split is weighted toward walking (70%) with driving (26%), bussing (2%), and mixed modes (2%) comprising the remainder.

When looking at families who changed their mode as a result of the pilot, **88% chose to reduce the amount of driving.**

In addition, the "intent to switch" question showed **67% were more likely** to let their student walk/bike to school as a result of the pilot. (See chart)

With the Dallin School Safe Street Pilot in place, are you more likely to let your student walk/bike to school?

99 responses





## Local residents have a favorable impression of the pilot, with suggestions for further improvement.

"Huge success. Continue the program. I think we need to add speed bumps and enforce...signs reading 'No parking from here to corner'"

"Great idea as a mom of 4 grown sons! I would like to see it continue for everyone's safety"

"...it does not impact my travel significantly around the Dallin area. I continue to be concerned about parking on both sides of Renfrew nearest the school...I have concern (*sic*) about any emergency vehicles being able to make the turn from Florence into Renfrew"

"Low disruption, I often forget about it."

"Dedicated bike lanes/routes"

Here are a couple of suggestions from survey respondents on ways to continue to improve safety in the area:

*I continue to be concerned about parking on both sides of Renfrew nearest the school. I have encounter several situations where I was attempting to leave my house on Renfrew, traveling towards Florence and I had to back up or pull into a neighbor's drive to allow traffic to pass. I have concern about any emergency vehicles being able to make the turn from Florence into Renfrew.*

*Much improved on corner of Florence and Renfrew street. Can the cross walk be painted on the opposite corner of Renfrew street. Currently the kids walk on the sidewalk on Renfrew Street, then cross Renfrew street to the opposite side, and then cross Florence. Wouldn't it make more sense to stay on the same side as the crosswalk and not have to cross the street at Renfrew against oncoming traffic from the new traffic pattern. just move the cross walk. Thank you.*

#### 4. Videos/Photos

Below is drone video footage of Dallin's arrival before we implemented the new plan.

<https://youtu.be/8lIdyTZVN90>

#### 5. Proposed Updates

The Dallin Safe Routes to School (SRtS) committee developed the following recommendations based on school administration, community, and volunteer feedback:

- 
1. Drop-off area adjacent to Florence Field
    - a. Extend the drop-off area in front of Florence Avenue to Wachusett Street (*see Figure 6*).
    - b. Add permanent signage that would read “No Parking, Drop Off Only from 7:30-8:15 a.m. and 2:15-2:45 p.m. on school days; Wednesdays from 7:30-8:15 and 12:45-1:15 p.m.”
    - c. Institute a parking restriction on the other side of Florence during those times which would increase student and vehicle safety by increasing visibility and lessening traffic congestion and confusion on the narrow street.
  2. Signage
    - a. Evaluate language and placement of signage to eliminate confusion, E.g., “All traffic must turn right/left except buses and bicycles”.
    - b. Install a sign at the end of Florence Field similar to the one that was put in at the beginning of the pilot. (Drivers reported confusion over where the drop off lane started and ended.)
  3. Intersections and no-parking zones
    - a. Ask DPW to paint intersections and no-parking zones around Dallin to increase visibility and pedestrian safety.
    - b. When Florence Ave. in front of Dallin is closed during arrival and dismissal, cars are directed to turn left onto Renfrew Street and therefore drive through one of the primary pedestrian crosswalks. In order to increase safety at that very busy Renfrew/Florence Ave. intersection, we would like to have another crosswalk installed on the west corner of Renfrew that would allow pedestrians to make use of the existing closure and allow traffic to more freely and safely move from the drop-off zone. (*See Figures 3 - 5.*)

## Phase II

1. Work with the MA Safe Routes to School to observe arrival and dismissal patterns and collect data at other areas near Dallin where community members brought up safety concerns.
2. Support TAC in taking action to address safety concerns at the intersection of Wachusett and Appleton.
3. Develop additional safety improvements guided by MA SRTS, Connect Arlington, and advisory groups. Find funding sources to design and install these improvements in the Dallin area.

We request that the Dallin Safe Arrival and Dismissal Plan be formally adopted and the proposed updates be implemented. We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Thad Dingman  
Principal  
Dallin Elementary School



Figure 1: [Arrival/Dismissal Plan](#)



Figure 2: [Original Arrival/Dismissal Plan](#)



Figure 3: This pre-pilot photo shows the conflict that existed with pedestrians and cars at the intersection of Florence at Renfrew. We propose adding an intersection at the other corner which would decrease the potential of pedestrian/vehicular conflict.



Figure 4: A (very rough) mock up of proposed pedestrian crosswalk at the Renfrew/Florence Ave. intersection.

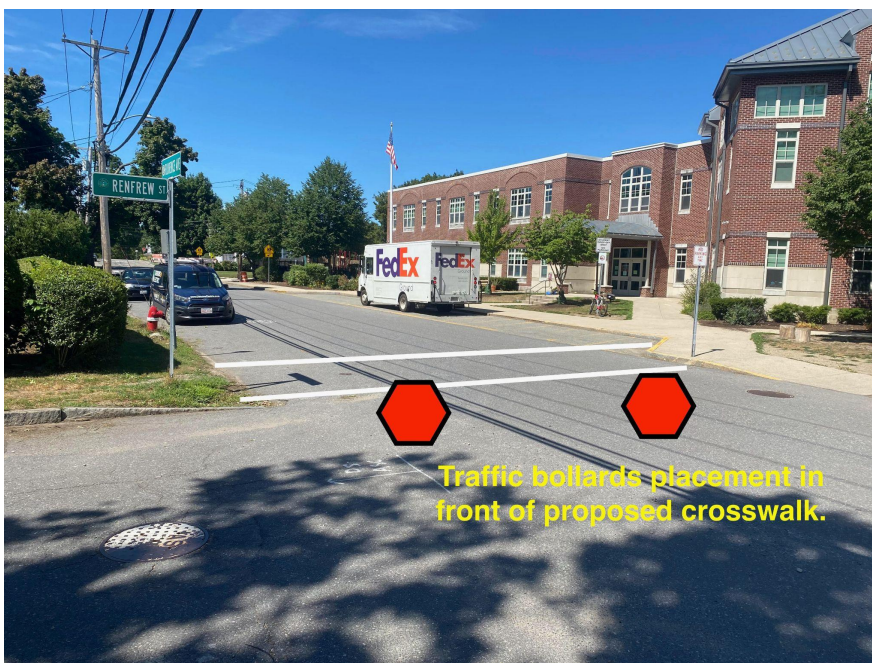




Figure 5: Another angle of the intersection.



Figure 6: This photo shows the length of the car queue during the pilot which demonstrates the need for increasing the drop-off zone length.

