



**Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager**

**Sanford Pooler
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Memorandum

TO: Select Board
FROM: Sandy Pooler, Town Manager *SMP*
DATE: October 11, 2022
RE: Chestnut St.

The Select Board received an email from Mr. Paul Schlichtman regarding Chestnut St., repairs to it, and proposed changes to be made to increase pedestrian safety, in light of the death of a pedestrian there.

I would like to summarize the Chestnut St. situation. The Town took action to remedy the immediate safety issues on Chestnut St. including:

1. Repairs to the sidewalk
2. Installation of crosswalk warning signs
3. Installation of No Turn on Red signs on Chestnut St., and
4. Restriping some crosswalks to improve visibility

What remains to be decided is whether to install pedestrian islands and flashing warning signs. The installation of the islands was a complicated issue. The consultants the Town hired, Stantec, will report to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) on October 12 that there is insufficient room in the road to accommodate the islands. As Mr. Rademacher's comments below note, the Town had previously received comments from the state Department of Transportation about its concerns regarding these islands. The need to study the islands and finally determine if they could be installed is what caused the construction work to be delayed this summer. Now, it is planned for the spring of 2023.

All the other improvements, such as bike lanes, parking changes, and pedestrian warning lights are dependent on the final design recommendations from Stantec.

Chestnut St. presents many issues, but I am confident that Stantec's recommendations to TAC will allow the town to move forward in the next construction season to improve the there.

I have copied Mr. Schlichtman's email below and have added comments from Mike Rademacher, the DPW Director. In addition, I have copied comments from Dan Amstutz, the Transportation Planner. It is the Planning Department that oversees this project and that has hired the consulting engineers who have provided plans to the Town.

Comments from Dan Amstutz: Stantec has made a significant amount of progress on the Chestnut Street safety project. We had a meeting a couple of weeks ago to review the status of the project and in the immediate term, they are expecting to attend the October 12 TAC meeting to share the revised concept with the committee (now that they have the ground survey completed and have confirmed that the crossing islands won't fit in the project). They are drawing up the construction plans, but unfortunately it's going to be next construction season before this project can happen. We also recently received the Notice to Proceed for the MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grant to help pay for this project (\$143,910.56 in grant funding), which must be completed by December 2023. Stantec has done a good amount of analysis on the Mystic/Chestnut intersection that will help us think about better connections in the area and deal with that intersection, which is very challenging and difficult for people walking and biking to cross.

Paul Schlichtman email **with comments from Mike Rademacher:**

Monday, September 26 marked 1,000 days since Ann B. Desrosiers was struck and killed while crossing Chestnut Street on her way to 7:00 a.m. Mass.

One year after the Select Board asked for a study of Chestnut Street, on May 12, 2021, the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee sent seven recommendations for short-term safety improvements to the Select Board.

They also made recommendations to study longer-term improvements to the intersections at Mystic Street and Medford Street. On July 21, 2021, the Select Board approved the Select Board recommendations. Today, three of the recommendations have been implemented, one has been partially implemented, and there has been no progress on three recommendations.

Here is a list of the actions approved by the Select Board and their current status.

1. Repair the sidewalk across the Russell Common parking lot driveway on the south side of Chestnut St. and install detectable panels on both sides of the driveway. The existing sidewalk is in poor condition (broken concrete) and not ADA compliant.

STATUS: A temporary sidewalk replacement has been completed with asphalt. A more permanent concrete replacement was to be completed during the 2022 construction season and coordinated with the repaving of the roadway. No construction has taken place in 2022.

2. Install advance crosswalk warning signs on both approaches to the crosswalks at Chestnut Terr. and Medford St. Advanced warning signs would help increase driver awareness of the crosswalks and are commonly used at other crosswalks in Arlington. This recommendation also includes moving the crosswalk sign on the south end of the Chestnut Terr. crosswalk from the east side of the crosswalk to the west side where the sign typically would be located.

STATUS: Signs installed.

3. Install “No Turn on Red” (NTOR) sign on the right turn lane from Chestnut St. westbound to Mystic St. northbound.

STATUS: Signs installed.

4. Install curb extensions on both ends of the Chestnut St. crosswalks at Chestnut Terr. and Medford St. The extensions will shorten the length of the crossings requiring less time needed for pedestrians to cross and be exposed to on-coming traffic. Temporary extensions should be implemented this year and, if successful in improving pedestrian safety without negatively impacting bicycle or vehicular operations, should be installed permanently when Chestnut St. is repaved (expected to be done in 2022).

Estimated cost for permanent implementation is approximately \$45,000 for four extensions.

STATUS: Plastic flex-posts have been placed at the Chestnut Terrace and Medford Street crosswalks.

Mike Rademacher: The design (size, location, etc.) is part of the ongoing comprehensive design.

*5. Install a five-foot center island *in the middle of the Chestnut Terr. and Medford St. crosswalks to provide pedestrian refuges in the middle of the roadway. A temporary island should be implemented this year and, if successful in improving pedestrian safety without negatively impacting bicycle or vehicular operations, should be installed permanently when Chestnut St. is repaved (expected to be done in 2022). With the recommended curb extensions and center island, there would be 15.5 feet of roadway width to accommodate vehicles and bicycles at the crosswalks. Estimated cost for permanent implementation is approximately \$10,000-\$15,000 for each island.

STATUS: Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine wrote on December 15, 2021 that the town’s intention was to have construction drawings ready for the 2022 construction season so that work can be coordinated with the planned roadway repaving work. There has been no further action on this item.

Mike Rademacher: The recommendation for these islands is what originally caused the project to pause. There is not enough room in the roadway to accommodate these as well as the other elements (parking, bump outs, bike lanes.) The MassDOT commented on this, and it is one of the reasons we decided to have a professional engineering firm develop drawings (as well as perform a ground survey to determine how much space we actually have for improvements.)

6 Install a pedestrian-activated warning signal (such as a Rectangular Rapidly Flashing Beacon - RRFB) or an automatic flashing warning signal at the Chestnut Terr. crosswalk. This would help focus drivers' attention on the crosswalk and pedestrians in it. Estimated cost is approximately \$25,000.

STATUS: Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine wrote on December 15, 2021 that "the installation of the RRFB will go forward during the 2022 construction season as part of the implementation of the other permanent improvements. It will not be contingent on the further analysis."

There has been no further action on this item.

Mike Rademacher. The location of these beacons is also dependent upon the final design currently in process.

7. Restripe Chestnut St. to include the following:

- a. 11-foot travel lanes in each direction. In conjunction with the recommended improvements in b. through d. below, this would narrow the travel way, encouraging drivers to travel at lower speeds.
- b. 7-foot parking lanes on the both sides of Chestnut Street with 4-hour parking permitted, which is typical for on-street parking throughout Arlington Center and was recommended as part of the Arlington Center Parking Study.
- c. 5-foot bicycle lanes on each side of Chestnut Street.
- d. 2-foot buffer lanes between the parking travel lane and bicycle lane on both sides of Chestnut Street.

STATUS: "No parking" signs were replaced with 4-hour parking signs. Existing striping was repainted in 2022 with none of the changes described in Item 7.

Mike Rademacher: We restriped the crosswalks for better visibility. Final roadway striping will be contingent upon the ongoing design process.