

To: Town Manager Sandy Pooler and Arlington Select Board Members: Stephen DeCoursey, Eric Helmuth, Lenard Diggins, John Hurd, and Diane Mahon

From: Phil Goff and Catherine Farrell
Everywhere Arlington Livable Streets (EALS) Coalition

Date: March 14, 2023

CC: Mike Rademacher PE (Public Works Director), Claire Ricker (Director of Planning), Laura Swan (Chair, Transportation Advisory Committee), Chris Tonkin (Chair, Bicycle Advisory Committee)

Re: **Implementing bicycle recommendations in the Connect Arlington Plan**

To Town Manager Pooler and members of the Arlington Select Board:

On behalf of the EALS Coalition and its hundreds of supporters in Arlington, we are writing this letter for inclusion into the formal record of the March 20, 2023 Select Board Meeting.

As you know, the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan was adopted in late 2021. The Plan sets out an ambitious, yet realistic, blueprint to promote walking, bicycling, and transit use in Arlington and improve safety for all road users. One of the Plan's featured items is the Recommended Bicycle Network, which lays out a system of on-street and off-road bicycling facilities. The development of the network aspires to encourage more residents to bicycle for commuting to work or schools and/or to do errands rather than driving. While arguably the Minuteman Bikeway and other shared-use paths are the network's backbone, existing and future bike lanes are an integral part of a successful townwide bike network.

It is concerning to us that the Town has moved forward with repaving/restriping streets that are part of the recommended network without the facilities recommended by Connect Arlington (see map on the next page). This includes Bates Road and River Street where shared lane markings (aka 'sharrows') were installed last year rather than the Plan's recommended bike lanes. Currently, the Public Works Department intends to repave and restripe Warren Street this spring in the same manner¹. We recognize the challenges of providing bike lanes on all three of these streets since their width requires the restriction of on-street parking to one side only to provide space for the bike lanes. Due to understaffing in the Town's Planning Department, conducting a parking utilization study and outreach to abutters and nearby residents would likely be a challenge as well.

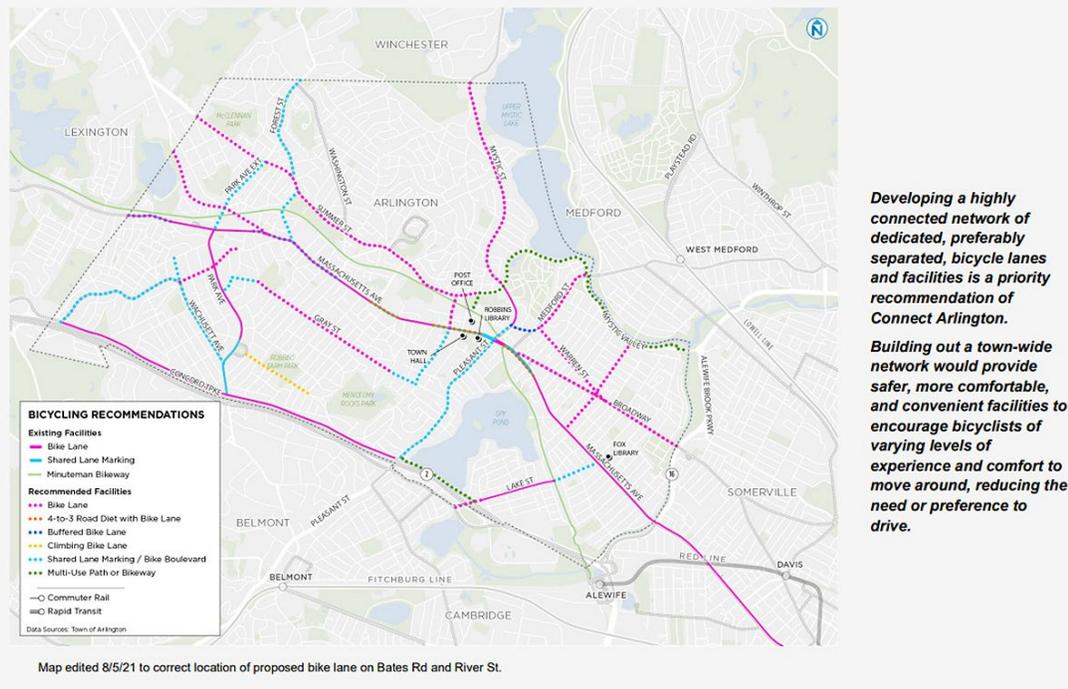
Despite the challenges described above, we encourage the Town to move more aggressively with implementation of the bike network recommendations in the future. The perfect place to start is on Medford Street. In 2022, Medford

¹ If bump-outs are to be included in the Warren Street project, a minimum clearance of 28' is required (14' for each travel lane) between bump outs to avoid a hazardous pinch point for bicyclists and passing motor vehicles.

Street was repaved between Warren Street and the Mystic Valley Parkway. As of today, only a double yellow center line has been striped. This provides the golden opportunity to fulfill the Connect Arlington Plan’s recommendations and install bike lanes, since:

- Medford St. is the most direct bicycle link between the Mystic River Greenway (MRG) and Arlington Center
- They will connect to the bike lanes planned as part of the 2023 Chestnut Street safety project
- The \$1 million earmark for the Town’s MRG-to-Minuteman Path Plan brings us one step closer to having a safer connection to the Mystic River and across the DCR rotaries to West Medford
- Data from the Town’s 2022 Medford Street parking utilization study has shown how infrequently residents park on the street throughout the day

RECOMMENDED BICYCLE NETWORK



In summary, EALS Coalition hopes to see more of the Connect Arlington Plan’s pedestrian, bicycle, and transit recommendations implemented in the coming years. While we recognize that designated bike lanes along Bates, River, and Warren may need to wait for the next round of restriping, we strongly recommend the Town to move forward with creating designated bike lanes on Medford Street this year and in coordination with the Town’s Chestnut Street project.

Thank you.

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