



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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

MEMORANDUM

To: Jim Feeney, Town Manager

CC: Claire V. Ricker, AICP, Director, DPCD
Michael Rademacher, Director, DPW
Wayne Chouinard, Town Engineer, DPW
William Copithorne, Assistant Town Engineer, DPW
Officer Corey Rateau, APD

From: John Alessi, Senior Transportation Planner, DPCD

Date: August 9, 2023

RE: Medford Street Bicycle Lanes

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) requests that the Select Board approve the removal of on-street parking on Medford Street to accommodate the installation of bicycle lanes from Warren Street to Mystic Valley Parkway.

Purpose

Medford Street is identified in multiple planning documents as a priority for bicycle lanes. These include the Context Sensitive Bike Facility Design Guide Matrix's Proposed Network Map (2014), Connect Arlington's Recommended Bicycle Network (2021), and the Mystic River Path Connection to the Minuteman Bikeway (2022). Installing bicycle lanes on both sides of Medford Street will improve bicycle safety, create better transportation options, slow down vehicles on Medford Street, and link to the nearly complete Chestnut Street Safety Project and the future Mystic Valley Parkway connection to the Minuteman. It will also meet the goals of the Connect Arlington Plan to create more low-stress bicycle facilities throughout the Town.

Background and Existing Conditions

Medford Street is designated as State Route 60, which functions as a heavy trucking route between Route 2 and I-93 through Arlington and Medford. MBTA bus routes 80 and 95 carry passengers along Medford Street. Vehicle traffic count data collected between Thursday, May 12th and Saturday, May 14th 2022 as part of the Chestnut Street Safety Project show average daily vehicle traffic volumes between 14,700 to 16,500. During the same three-day period, a total of 613 bicyclists were recorded travelling along the corridor.

Medford Street between Warren Street and Mystic Valley Parkway was repaved in Summer 2022 and is currently painted with a double yellow line. Curbside use is allocated to on-street parking and several MBTA bus stops. DPCD's original plan was to work with Stantec in 2022 to design bicycle lanes along this corridor and then coordinate with DPW to install, but staffing shortages and turnover in DPCD put the

project on hold until a new Senior Transportation Planner was hired. The project is now ready to move forward if approved by the Select Board.

The Chestnut Street Safety Project is also near completion as final paving operations are underway. This project will include the installation of bicycle lanes from Mystic Street to Warren Street, where the lane will then merge with vehicular traffic on Medford Street with sharrows. The project outlined here will extend components of the Chestnut Street Safety Project to Mystic Valley Parkway via Medford Street and result in over 0.5 miles of new bicycle lanes for the corridor.

DPCD previously conducted a parking study and a resident survey to assess the feasibility of this project. Daniel Amstutz, the former Senior Transportation Planner, outlined his methodologies and recommendations in the attached November 2, 2022 memorandum. Findings from the report include:

- Parking utilization is low. The greatest number of parking spaces occupied during a single observation period was six (6).
- The number of parking spaces occupied never exceeded more than 10% of the total 77 identified.
- The residential nature of the area, off-street parking options, higher traffic volumes, and heavy trucking and buses help explain why on-street parking demand is low.
- Responses to the survey showed a majority support for bicycle lanes along the corridor both overall among Arlington residents and with project and neighborhood abutters.
- Although some abutters noted that they park on Medford Street 'frequently,' parking data gathered and anecdotal observations show very limited parking activity.
- All residences appear to have off-street parking and multiple side streets are available for visitors to park away from the busier Medford Street.
- The low parking demand on Medford St indicates that curb space can be repurposed to prioritize bicycle mobility, safety, and connectivity.

Next Steps

Town staff will utilize the services of Stantec Consulting Services to develop new pavement marking plans for Medford Street. Parking spaces will be retained where roadway width allows and MBTA bus stops will be integrated into the final pavement marking plan. DPCD staff will then coordinate with DPW to work with an on-call contractor to have the pavement marking designs installed.

Thank you for considering this request and please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions or concerns.