



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7 Twin Circle Drive, Arlington, MA 02474

To: Board of Selectmen, Arlington, Mass

From: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Subject: Winslow Tower Residents Transportation Concerns

Date: 14 December 2009

Recently the TAC undertook a brief study of transportation issues affecting residents of Winslow Towers. This initiative stemmed from a prior request for a crosswalk at the mid block intersection of Winslow Street and Mystic Street. A similar request was denied in 2005, but this new request stimulated further interest to identify the transportation needs and concerns of Winslow Tower residents. To gain a broader perspective, a TAC representative attended a June 24, 2009 meeting of the Winslow Towers Tenant Association seeking input on the subject. See attached report for details.

The recommendations below were voted unanimously by the TAC on 4 November 2009 in response to the concerns expressed by the Winslow Tower Residents:

1. **Pedestrian Crossing at Mass/Mystic/Pleasant.** We strongly recommend the installation of count-down pedestrian signals at this intersection. These are being successfully used in Cambridge and elsewhere. Three of the four crossing have pedestrian refuge areas in the middle. The displayed time would allow the crossing seniors and handicapped pedestrians to judge whether to stop at a refuge area or to complete the crossing before the light turns. It is estimated that a full installation at the intersection would cost about \$12,000.
2. **Repair holes and cracks in sidewalks around Winslow Towers.** We recommend Public Works repair those areas on Town property and the Housing Authority repair onsite areas.
3. **Shelters at some bus stops.** This would be a significant improvement for all residents at heavily used bus stops such as those in the center. Cambridge does this by allowing advertisements in/on the structure, but Arlington has a bylaw that may prevent this. TAC will recommend to the ARB that a warrant article be prepared for the 2010 town meeting allowing participation in the MBTA's Cemusa bus shelter program.
4. **Cyclists on sidewalks.** TAC will work with ABAC to make recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Clark – Working Group Lead

Ed Starr - Chair

Transportation Advisory Committee Members:

Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jean Clark, Steve Kurland, Officer Corey Rateau, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Michael Rademacher, Scott Smith, Edward Starr, and Laura Wiener

Web site; www.tac.arlington.ma.us/

Winslow Tower Residents Transportation Concerns

Recently the TAC undertook a brief study of transportation issues affecting residents of Winslow Towers. This initiative stemmed from a prior request for a crosswalk at the mid block intersection of Winslow Street and Mystic Street. This request for a crosswalk was reviewed and declined in 2005 because it would be unsafe and there are other safe signalized crossings nearby. The new request stimulated a further interest to explore the transportation needs and concerns of Winslow Tower residents.

To gain a broader perspective, a TAC representative (Jean Clark) attended the June 24, 2009 meeting of the Winslow Towers Tenant Association seeking input on the subject. With the approximately thirty residents in attendance, a lively discussion occurred, resulting in a list of transportation concerns and/or possible remedies. The following represents the most pressing issues as expressed by the tenants. These are rank ordered by the TAC in order of their judged importance.

1. **Pedestrian Crossing Time at Mass/Mystic/Pleasant.** Many Winslow Tower residents feel that the crossing light times at Mass Ave/Mystic and Pleasant Street are too short for the seniors or disabled residents. The signal starts flashing negative shortly after the light signals “walk”. Their request is for a longer pedestrian phase of 30-45 seconds with a visual count-down timer. TAC has previously reviewed the pedestrian timing at the intersection and found that it is the best it can be with the current design. In its present configuration, little extra time is available for alteration without compromising overall Level of Service.
 - o TAC Recommendation: We strongly recommend the installation of count-down pedestrian signals. These are successfully used in Cambridge and elsewhere. Three of the four crossings have pedestrian refuge areas in the middle. The displayed time would allow the crossing pedestrian to judge whether to stop at a refuge area or to complete the crossing before the light turns. The estimated cost for this is estimated at twelve thousand dollars for the eight signal heads needed. MassDOT is a possible funding source.
2. **Improve the safety of the crosswalk at Water Street and Library.** Several of the TAC’s recommendations for this crosswalk have been implemented. These include eliminating two parking places to improve motorist visibility of pedestrians, installing more visible thermoplastic crosswalk and advance yield markings, and cutting back trees and shrubs for visibility. Major reconstruction is needed to make the remaining improvements detailed in Phase II of the October 2005 TAC report.
 - o No TAC Recommendation. To be addressed under Mass Avenue Corridor Project Phase II.

3. **Repair holes and cracks in sidewalks around Winslow Towers.**
 - TAC Recommendation: refer to Public Works those areas on Town property and to Housing Authority for onsite issues.
4. **Shelters at bus stops.** Residents of Winslow Towers and of the greater Arlington Community dislike waiting for buses in the rain and snow. Providing shelter from the elements as well as seating would be a significant improvement for all transit users in Arlington. The MBTA, in a public-private partnership with Cemusa street furniture, offers a self-managed, self-funded (via advertisements) bus shelter program that has operated in other communities around Boston since 2005. Although the advertisements may conflict with a town bylaw, the program does generate revenue for participating communities.
 - TAC Recommendation: This would be a significant improvement for all residents at heavily used bus stops such as those in the center. Cambridge does this by allowing advertisements in/on the structure, but Arlington has a bylaw that may prevent this. TAC will recommend to the ARB that a warrant article be prepared for the 2010 town meeting allowing participation in the MBTA's Cemusa bus shelter program.
5. **Cyclists on sidewalks.** Cyclists coming off the bikeway at Mystic Street mostly do not dismount and instead ride around pedestrians on sidewalk, ignoring the posted sign. Residents feel that the sign telling cyclists to dismount is too small and that this regulation is not enforced. This conflict creates an unsafe and unwelcoming sidewalk area for the senior and disabled residents of Winslow Towers who wish to walk to the Mass Ave area.
 - TAC Recommendation: Refer this issue to ABAC for recommendations. TAC will work with ABAC and DPW to make recommendations.
6. **Housing Authority parking** at the top of Winslow Street needs improvement. Maybe bigger signs, brighter lines, and planters to better mark boundary with road.
 - No TAC Recommendation: Refer this to Arlington Housing Authority. Town may consider painting suitable lane markings on Town Property.
7. **Crossing the bike path** near the opening in fence (near rear of Not Your Average Joe's at Municipal Parking Lot). Winslow Tower residents would like a painted crosswalk on the bike path.
 - No TAC recommendation. A cross walk is not warranted at this location.