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DATE: August 26, 2022  
TIME: 8:54 AM

## Belmont Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

Minutes for Thursday, 2 June, 2022

**Present:** David Coleman (Chair), Chip Gaysunas (Vice Chair), Jeffrey Roth (Secretary), Ken Lind, Chip Gaysunas, Daniel Eldridge, Laurence Macdonald, Larry Link, Charles Hamad

**Also present:**

**Town Staff:** Glenn Clancy (Belmont Office of Community Development (CD) Director), Sergeant Paul Garabedian (Belmont Police Department (BPD)), Chief David DeStefano (Belmont Fire Department), Patrice Garvin (Belmont Town Administrator) Jay Marcotte (Belmont Department of Public Works Director), Roy Epstein (Belmont Office of Selectboard)

**Town Public Residents:** Brendan O'Leary, Heather Barr, Heidi Wickersham, Judy Crocker (Massachusetts Safe Routes to School)

*Final* minutes, compiled on date: 2022-06-02; finalized on 7 July, 2022.

### Announcements

1. Tonight's public meeting occurred online using zoom video conference.

*In keeping with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" — The Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting of 1 April, 2021, was held by Remote Access through Zoom.*

The meeting was called to order at 7:06p by Chairperson David Coleman.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*05/05/2022*

The Committee reviewed the draft meeting minutes from the TAC meetings on 5th of May, 2022. These TAC meeting minutes were reviewed, and minor corrections were suggested by Larry MacDonald and Ken Lind. Larry MacDonald made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Dan Eldridge seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was made to approve these minutes as amended, and this measure was voted on favorably with a unanimous vote.

### DISCUSSION ON CROSSWALK SAFETY REQUESTS

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman discussed the input from a Facebook survey by the Belmont Police Department about crosswalk safety issues in Belmont. The map in Appendix 1 summarized locations of Facebook posts, and was put together by Dan Eldridge using this data.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy mentioned the difference between protected and unprotected crossings, as well as those crossings that have stop signs. He discussed the typical number of cars it sometimes takes to stop for walkers in crosswalks. He said that drivers need sufficient time to react and stop for walkers.

*Jeffrey Roth (TAC)* — Jeffrey Roth mentioned that there is an important difference between cars stopping before people have entered a crosswalk, versus not stopping for people already walking in some segment of the crosswalk. The latter can be more hazardous, since the person is already vulnerable in the street.

*Chip Gaysunas (TAC Vice-Chair)* — Chip Gaysunas said that sometimes signalized crossings are needed if motor-vehicle speeds are higher, as signalization forces drivers to stop and pay attention. He also said that speed is an important consideration in how to address crossing safety.

*Laurence Macdonald (TAC)* — Larry Macdonald said that there should be some education of people walking to use caution before entering into a crosswalk.

*Dan Eldridge (TAC)* — Dan Eldridge said that speed testing of car traffic by the Belmont Police Department might be helpful to address some of these safety areas.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman added that people are not always aware that the speed limits are 25 mph on some roads in Belmont. He said that as problems are reported, we can evaluate what the actual cause is, and can then determine the solution to address that. He said that temporary setups are sometimes an option, to save cost and allow rapid implementation of safety measures.

*Larry Link (TAC)* — Larry Link discussed what criteria we would want to use to determine whether action should be taken. He said that the volume on Pleasant St. might be above the necessary threshold for the Munroe St. crosswalk. He said that if intersections pop up as problematic, we could do an observation by TAC members. In addition, low-cost options like crossing flag stations, or painting crosswalks more visibly than just the “zebra crossings’ ” white stripes, could be considered. He added that Safe Routes to School identifies high-volume routes for walking and cycling, and we could use those routes to prioritize how to address safety issues.

*Laurence Macdonald (TAC)* — Larry Macdonald made a comment about painting crosswalks brighter or more unique colors, and suggested using yellow or some other high-visibility color. He said this has been done elsewhere.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman presented a set of slides entitled “Criteria for Prioritization of Crosswalk Improvements.” These slides are shown in Appendix 2. In developing this briefing, David looked at what other towns are doing in this area. He noticed that there are two general approaches used: (1) A top-down approach, with action based on a holistic, municipality-wide system assessment; and (2) a bottom-up approach in which improvements are made in reaction to citizen complaints. David listed a set of trial criteria which the Committee reviewed and discussed.

*Ken Lind (TAC)* — Ken Lind said that the example discussed on Trapelo Road followed a top-down approach.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy said that the approaches to walking safety have evolved, and that currently they are mostly updated in response to situations. He said that he is trying to get ahead of the pavement management schedule, so he can get plans in

place for walking improvements earlier on. He suggested that these approaches should be data driven. He added that the Pavement Management Plan for each upcoming fiscal year is publicly released every year, and that people should review it to see if walking or other safety measures should be considered.

*Dan Eldridge (TAC)* — Dan Eldridge suggested that in the briefing presented by David Coleman we should add visibility and sight-lines to the criteria list.

*Ken Lind (TAC)* — Ken Lind also suggested also adding speed and traffic-volume studies to the evaluation criteria.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy said that Munroe St. was added as a school route, and so the criteria should recognize if a crosswalk is on school walking route. He reminded us that we need an updated, town-wide set of school walking routes.

*Heidi Wickersham (Resident)* — Heidi Wickersham echoed the importance of sight-lines, and also pointed out the numbers of cars parked near a crossing which can complicate the crossing and reduce visibility for both the persons walking and driving. She said that there is a “crosswalk desert” on Beech St. in Waverley Square that should be addressed. She asked if there would be considerations for adding new crosswalks there, or setting a maximum distance between crosswalks there and elsewhere in town.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy said that parked cars are required to be certain distances from crosswalks, and that there are standards for minimum spacing between crosswalks (but not maximums). He said that there must be sufficient visibility to provide enough time for drivers to stop, and that this minimum distance is approximately 200 feet for 30-mph vehicle. This is usually an appropriate benchmark to also use for 25-mph roads, as it adds in a margin of safety.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman asked about priority ranking of the criteria list. He said he can also prioritize them offline, and review them again with TAC. He added that to be prepared to apply for funding, we need to prioritize locations and apply a set of criteria like this.

*Sergeant Paul Garabedian (BPD)* — Paul Garabedian said that he can check whether the “Black Cat” traffic-monitoring systems can measure people walking and cycling.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman responded that if not, we may be able to do manual counts using volunteers.

## REVIEW OF FUNDING PROGRAMS

*Judy Crocker (SRTS)* — Judy Crocker discussed the funding options for the Safe-Routes-to-School (SRTS) Program. She said there are two primary funding modes. One is the “Signs and Lines” program, which is limited to pavement lines and markings and roadway signs. This category has a maximum funding amount of \$6K, and everything must be done in the calendar year that the funds are awarded. These items are usually focused on school zones and on school properties. The second option is for larger, school infrastructure programs, usually >\$1M, and these typically take 4 – 6 years to apply for funding and implement construction.

Judy Crocker also discussed the Shared Streets Program, which has two cycles per year. This is also a quick-install program, though is more money than the “Signs and Lines” pro-

gram. She said that Shared Streets applications receive more favorable scores when they align with SRTS routes. The MassDOT website has more info on this program. Some examples of this are flashing beacons for street crossings for students. Another key objective of this program is trying to get people outside for healthy activities. Finally, she mentioned the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) program as another funding avenue that can be used to improve areas around schools, and is a coordinated effort between a school and the town.

Judy Crocker continued to speak on some of the points made in the earlier discussions at tonight's meeting. She appreciated the map showing the locations of concerns for walkers, and said those types of graphical exhibits are effective at illustrating issues. She also said that she presented student school route maps to the School Committee in the winter time-frame, and these are currently in draft form and could be shared with the TAC group soon. She is waiting for permission of the School Committee to release the data in these maps. Judy also discussed pedestrian education safety programs, which is not currently active. Furthermore, she has requested to do professional development for physical education (PE) curricula, which would allow PE teachers to get accredited in teaching cycling and walking safety, and allow for universal provisions for these topics in school PE programs. Judy added that the SC also recently amended the wellness policy to include active transportation, so that walking and biking to school are now included in those initiatives.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — The Committee next moved into a discussion about funding approaches and the application processes for them. David mentioned that mature SRTS programs in Belmont can be leveraged in applying for new programs. Education programs can also benefit from leveraging this support.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy presented the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, and listed the Tier 3 Projects that were submitted recently. This list is provided in Appendix 3, and includes Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, and SRTS programs. He said that he is planning to resubmit this same list in the October cycle since they were not awarded funding. He also said that Complete Streets are often limited to things not on school property, and that the Burbank Elementary path Jeffrey Roth mentioned may not be eligible under that program but perhaps on other programs. He said he would send around the spreadsheets for the Complete Streets projects to the TAC members.

## NEW BUSINESS

### *MBTA Bus Expansion*

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy said he would like to hold a July 7th public forum at the next TAC meeting, in order to get feedback about the potential #54 MBTA Waverley Street intra-town bus route. The MBTA staff have requested this date, and would be available to participate in this meeting to solicit feedback from the Belmont community about this potential bus route.

*Laurence Macdonald (TAC)* — Larry MacDonald added that this would be a resurrection of the old Boston and Middlesex bus route, which occurred during the 1940's – 1950's.

### ***Partridge Lane Closing***

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy gave an overview and history of this topic. He said this could be similar to the Horne Road change in Cushing Square, and is proposing a similar treatment for Partridge Lane. He said that it would still allow for people to walk and bike through that road, but would no longer allow for motor-vehicle cut-through traffic.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman reiterated the importance of maintaining an at-grade pass-through for people biking and walking, and one that would be consistent with Complete Streets initiatives.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy said that an opening for walking and biking could be included, and may also simplify the drainage approach by providing an opening in a strategic place. Glenn said that he wishes to target a public forum discussion on this topic also at the July 7th TAC meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Roy Epstein (Belmont Office of Selectboard)* — Roy Epstein offered a comment under new business in regards to feedback from residents along Concord Ave. that car parking has been crowding some intersection corners. He said that signs have been posted for no parking 20 feet from a corner. However, he said there has been a large proliferation of signs along Concord Ave., starting with the intersection at Goden St. Roy said that an alternative may be to paint these sections of granite curbs a different color to signify that they are no-parking zones, instead of using signs. He said that “sign crowding” of these corners is a growing issue.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that there are setbacks for the Concord Ave. striping plan to be implemented this summer, and that we can make it clearer where the no-parking zones lie by delineating these buffer segments with markings on the asphalt.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy also said that Bill Schwartz had brought up this point earlier, and that his idea was to delineate the no parking areas with paint on the asphalt, which will make it clearer to drivers. He said that this painting of the pavement at the ends of the side streets should help with this issue.

*Glenn Clancy (CD Director)* — Glenn Clancy made one additional comment about Fire Chief DeStefano, who is on board with the Partridge Lane closing but needs to comment formally and confirm fire truck operation at the Horne Road example.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Jeff Roth motioned to adjourn, and Larry MacDonald seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:34p.

These minutes were respectfully submitted by Jeffrey Roth.

**Appendix 1: Belmont TAC Areas of Concern in Google-My-Maps**

181 views  
Published on June 2

SHARE

Intersections and Crosswalks

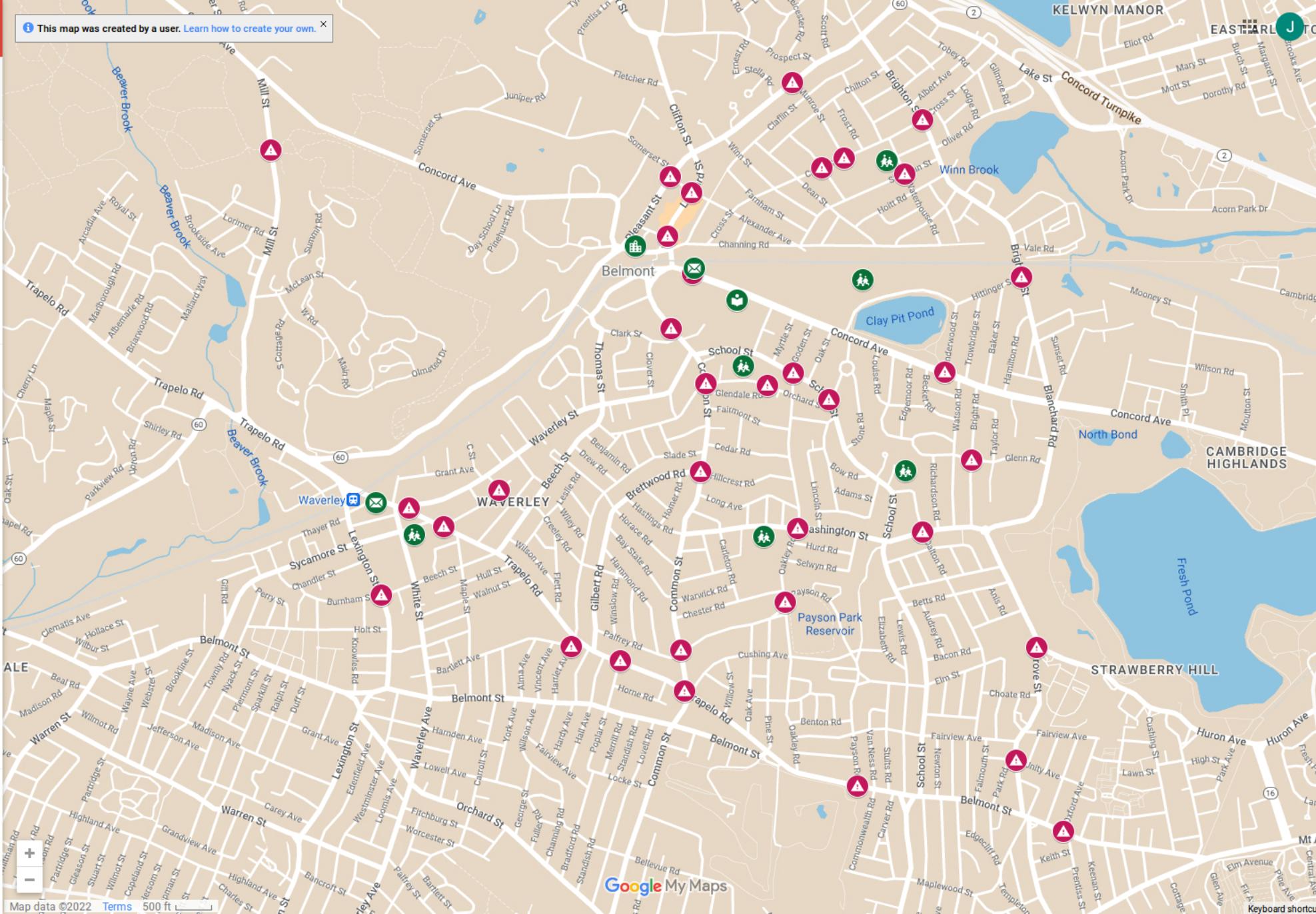
- Belmont @ Oxford
- Bright @ Gale
- Brighton @ Cross
- Trapelo @ Hawthorne
- ... 30 more

Schools

- Butler School
- Winn Brook School
- Belmont High School
- Burbank School
- Wellington School
- Chenery School

Other

- Library
- Post Office
- Post Office
- Town Hall



## **Appendix 2: Criteria for Prioritization of Crosswalk Improvements**



# Criteria for Prioritization of Crosswalk Improvements



## Two approaches observed Top down and Bottom Up

Top Down: Crosswalks included as part of an overall assessment of a Street or Square where walking, cycling, driving patterns are considered as a system. The result of a more mature integrative design process; longer term and higher cost. (Example: Inman Square Redesign)

Bottom Up: Crosswalk improvements made in reaction to citizen complaints, public comment, etc. Good for areas not covered by an overall plan. Good data to use for planning.



## Trial Criteria for Belmont Crosswalks

- Criteria for Safe Crossings should embrace the planning that the town has already done and serve a common set of goals.
- Safe Access to Schools and town facilities like the Post Office, Senior Center, Parks
- Geographic Equity: prioritize crossings in each part of town on a rotational basis, depending on funding



## Trial Criteria: Score a set of criteria based on points

1. Number of Pedestrians using a crossing: Measured by manual/automated counts
2. Connector to Schools, Town Facilities?
3. Connector to Business Districts, Shopping?
4. Reported Severity of crashes, encounters with vehicles
5. Number of Reports, How many people are complaining about a particular crossing?
6. Speed and Volume of Cars (Ken) - speed study
7. Road Characteristics (Ken)- Town data
8. Visibility- Sight Lines (Dan)
9. Distance to next Crosswalk; setback of parked cars from crosswalk (Heidi-public)
10. Has the crossing already been identified through another planning process as needing work?
11. Does the crossing score low on based on MassDOT, NACTO, USDOT-FHA guidance?



## Bottom Up Prioritization can work if:

- Equity: Priority crossings are evenly distributed around town
- We maintain a robust reporting mechanism (BPD Facebook, Wikimap) and publicize the use of it.
- We obtain and match crossings to funding.

**Appendix 3: Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, and SRTS Programs Applied for in Belmont**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Targeted Purpose/Eligibility</b>	<b>Grant Amount Limit</b>	<b>Application Window</b>	<b>Decision Window</b>	<b>Implementation Deadline</b>	<b>Who Applies</b>
Complete Streets		\$400,000.00	October 1 2022			Town Administration
<b>Shared Streets and Spaces</b>	See link in Comment		March 1	2 months following	December 1 2023	
SSS-Full Project		\$200,000.00		TBD		Anyone with School Sign-off
SSS Equipment Only		\$50,000.00		TBD		
<b>Safe Routes to School</b>						
SRTS - Infrastructure						
SRTS - Signs and Lines	Description in Comment	\$6,000.00	8/18 - 9/17/2021			
MassWorks						Town Administration
MassTrails						
American Rescue Plan Act						
MassDOT						