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Transportation Advisory Committee

June 26, 2019

Minutes

Committee Members Present: Dana Miller (Chair), Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Annis Sengupta (Clerk), David Coleman, Clifford Gaysunas, Jeremy Romanul

Ex Officio Committee Members Present: Glenn Clancy (Belmont Director of Community Development and Town Engineer); Sergeant Matthew Benoit (Belmont Police Dept. standing in for Ben Mailhot); Jay Marcotte (Director, Department of Public Works)

7:00 pm Meeting Opened

Chair provided introduction to committee and overview of its purpose and charge.

7:05 pm Approval of Meeting Minutes

TAC unanimously approved meeting minutes from April 25, 2019, May 2, 2019, May 23, 2019 with change proposed by Clifford Gaysunas to May 23, 2019 minutes.

7:05 pm Request for Handicap Parking Space at 18 Blake Street

Resident of 18 Blake Street is requesting a handicapped parking space on the street in front of her house due to medical needs limiting her ability to reach her front door. The topography of the land and root structures through yard contribute to the need. The applicant initiated discussions with the police department, which reviewed the situation and recommended a handicapped parking spot. The applicant has a State-issued handicapped placard for her car. She has completed the steps necessary to apply for and submitted all necessary paperwork for the handicap parking spot.

TAC unanimously passed a recommendation of approval to the Belmont Select Board to install a handicapped parking sign in front of 18 Blake Road. Once approved by the Select Board, the Department of Community Development (Glenn Clancy) and the Department of Public Works (Jay Marcotte) will make sure the sign is installed. The applicant noted that there is a pole in an appropriate location where a sign could be added to facilitate installation.

7:15 pm Common Street Public Meeting: Discussion of Potential Bike Lanes

Presentation by Glenn Clancy, Director of Community Development.

Common Street Repaving Presents an Opportunity. Because Common Street will be repaved this summer, there is an opportunity to think about restriping and options for striping bike lanes to calm traffic. The existing travel lane width of 12-15' increases speeding and creates safety hazards for pedestrians, bicyclists, and individuals exiting parked cars. Vehicles and bicycles currently coexist on the street, but there is an opportunity to improve safety and usability for all users.

Feedback on Common Street through Complete Streets Web Portal Highlighted Speed and Safety Issues. The Town is pursuing funding through the Massachusetts Complete Streets program; the Town set up a website portal to solicit resident comments and concerns related to driving, walking, bicycling. Comments submitted through that portal highlighted problems with vehicle speed and a lack of cycling accommodations on Common Street.

The goal of the Transportation Advisory Committee is to find ways to increase safety for all users of Belmont's roads - automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycles. Traffic calming is one way to achieve that.

Proposed Bicycle Accommodations on Common Street

The width of Common Street allows for two travel lanes and two bicycle lanes. The Town proposes to introduce a four- to five-foot bicycle lane on either side of Common Street, from Orchard Street to Washington Street and from Washington Street to Chester Road, with the addition of physical delineators where the geometry of the street poses safety hazards. Sharrows would be used past Orchard Street, through the Washington Street intersection, and from Chester Road to Payson Road. To accommodate the bicycle lanes, parking would be eliminated on Common Street.

Sharrows would be used through the Intersection at Washington Street because the intersection was previously narrowed to increase safety for pedestrians crossing - there is a high volume of children crossing to go to the school.

Proposal Summary:

- Concord Street to Orchard: Sharrows
- Orchard to Washington: 5' bike lane
- Washington Intersection: Sharrow
- Washington to Chester: 5' bike lane
- Chester to Payson: Sharrows

Public Comment

At least twenty-two members of the public, representing at least sixteen distinct

residential addresses, were present (as documented in the meeting sign-in sheet). Approximately sixteen individuals offered commentary on the proposal with the majority expressing reservations or opposition. The comments are summarized below by theme with specific comments called out where helpful to capture the resident experience.

- *Residents Oppose Loss of Parking*

In addition to strong opposition voiced for loss of parking between Chester and Warwick, residents provided detailed commentary about why loss of street parking for bicycle lanes would have a negative impact on their quality of life. The narrow width of driveways, the need to juggle cars, the lack of available parking to accommodate visitors or contractors, and the need to retain parking for businesses in Cushing Square were all named as important factors along Common Street.

A few residents confirmed TAC members' observations that on-street parking is rarely used along much of Common Street.

- *Sewer Infrastructure and Poor Road Maintenance are More Pressing*

Some residents who are also bicyclists expressed an interest in improving cycling conditions on Common Street but emphasized that the condition of the roadway and the danger of sewer grates were more pressing dangers than the lack of bicycle lanes. One resident noted that he had stopped riding because the low-standards for road repair made the roads unfriendly to bicyclists.

"Drains, road repairs, potholes and the slightly different heights of patches make the road treacherous and cause bicycles to veer into traffic to avoid the hazards."

"In winter, plows dump snow on the corners and it turns icy. [Resolving] these issues are more important than having a dedicated bike lane."

Residents would like to see a commitment to quality road repairs, and accountability for contractors repairing roads to create a level surface. They would like drains that do not create hazardous conditions for bicyclists and snow plowing that preserves safe pedestrian access through a town wide bicycle safety policy that is enforced.

- *Residents Want Better Data and a Bicycle Network Plan*

Without data about the role and importance of Common Street as a bicycle route, some residents are reluctant to support the trade-off of parking for bicycle lanes. The addition of bicycle lanes should be part of creating a town wide bicycle network: *"Common Street should be recognized as a vital part of the network - consistency is really important."*

"Part of [my] concern is lack of consistency and long-term vision. We do many important things in an ad-hoc way in this town."

Dave Colman, TAC member: There will be an effort this fall to take a more strategic look at bike safety and bike routes.

- *Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Access along Common Street is Important*

The TAC heard from residents in support of some bicycle infrastructure on Common Street to improve safety of bicycle and pedestrian access to the schools and between Belmont Center and Cushing Square. Concerns about bicycle safety were widely shared with a few residents in support of new infrastructure to improve safety.

"The traffic noise [here in Belmont] is unbelievable. It sounds like my house is on a highway. I am all in favor of traffic calming, in favor of increasing safety for bicycles and pedestrians."

A member of the Belmont Energy Committee voiced support for the proposal and offered for the TAC and the Energy Committee to work together on planning for bicycle infrastructure.

"Personally I am a cyclist, I ride with kids; it is unsafe; I have been honked at and threatened going down and up the hill; it is the cars that can be dangerous going down or up the hill; separation would be really safe and valuable for bicycles."

A student at the Roger E. Wellington Elementary School made the observation that elementary school students are riding their bicycles to school but currently have no safe place to ride - on the sidewalks they hit pedestrians, and on the street they risk being hit by cars.

Larry MacDonald, TAC member and traffic volunteer at Chenery Middle School observed: *"Middle Schoolers come up on the sidewalks and come across with me. The elementary school students will use the sidewalks. Parents might take children into the street with them on bicycles."*

In addition to bicycle infrastructure, there is an interest in increasing the number of crosswalks along Common Street.

One resident voiced concern that the volume of trucks on the road creates unsafe conditions for cyclists.

Some residents suggested using a Sharrow along the entire length of Common Street.

- *Residents are Concerned about Increased Traffic on Side Streets*

Residents are supportive of traffic calming but concerned that further reduction in speed will encourage more cut-through traffic along neighborhood streets. Already during rush hour it can take up to forty-five minutes to reach Belmont Center from Bay State Road. One resident noted that the decreased age of Chenery Students after the new Middle School / High School complex is completed will increase the number of parents driving to Chenery.

"I don't see speeding traffic as much on Common Street; after 6:30, it is an incessant amount of cars. Cars aren't going fast - it is saturated with traffic."

"I hear about traffic calming, [how you] want to slow traffic going through town. I commute to Harvard Square - my commute has gone up 15 minutes. Traffic calming is enraging drivers."

TAC Discussion

TAC members expressed a disinclination to recommend bike lanes. Because the physical geometry of the street is tight, residents are concerned about parking, and no one is interested in physical separation through stanchions. Glenn Clancy expressed that it is important to look at the town holistically, to develop a network of safe, acceptable bike routes through town that are not necessarily on a main road; you can get from your neighborhood to the library. The idea is to come up with a plan that appeals to all users. That is part of the work the committee is doing. TAC member David Coleman communicated his position that for bicycle infrastructure, protection needs to be the minimum with some kind of physical separation.

8:50 pm

TAC Motion to recommend sharrows on Common Street

Motion includes a note to include a more in depth study of Common Street as part of town-wide system of bike amenities and to explore the town policy of road repair to achieve a level condition for bicycle safety.

Motion passes 5 in favor, 1 opposed. TAC recommends that sharrows be painted as a signal to motorists to be aware of bicyclists without elimination of on-street parking.

Notes on motion from TAC members:

C. Gaysunas: Sharrows are a signal to motorists but do not provide any more of a bike accommodation than what bicyclists have today.

D. Coleman: Opposed to motion.

9:00 pm Public Questions

Q: When is the Common Street paving work scheduled?

A: The work may start as soon as July 15thish depending on the process for adjusting MWRA water main structures; conversations with National Grid and the paving contractor are moving along.

The Safe Routes to School project at Common Street is scheduled for 2021. It is currently in the engineering phase.

There is a lot more work to be done around getting a safer network - it is a multi-year process to get consensus.

9:06 pm Old Business

None.

9:07 pm New Business

None.

9:08 pm Adjourn

Sign in Sheet: June 26th

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Ann Keenan	350 Common Street
Mary Keenan	350 Common Street
John Pollack	383 Common Street
Lois J. Pollack	383 Common Street
Ted Dukas	236 Payson Road
Donna Goolkasian	389 Common Street
M... Abb...	242 Common Street
Arline Davis	12 Blake Street
Peter Dorfman	14 Bellevue Road
Al Bouchie	164 Common Street
Peter Bouchie	164 Common Street
David Bloore	37 Hastings Road
Susanne Bloore	37 Hastings Road
Ray Lemieux	57 Common Street
Travis Franck	102 Gilbert Road
Keegan Franck	102 Gilbert Road
Keith Thoresz	28 Raleigh Road
Heidi Leze	91 Channing Road
Darin Takemoto	91 Channing Road
Anna Churchill	9 Bay State Road
Margo Demijian	17 Bay State Road
Carolyn Wood	156 Common Street

June 26, 2019

TAC

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
ANN KEENAN	350 Common St
MARY KEENAN	350 Common St.
John J. Pollack	383 Common St
John J. Pollack	383 Common St
Ted Dukas	236 Payson Rd.
Donna Goodwin	389 Common St
Maria Goodwin	242 Common St
Arline Davis	18 Blake St
Peter Dorfman	14 Bellevue Rd.
Al Bouchie	164 Common St
Peter Bouchie	" " "
David Floore	47 Hastings Rd
Suzanne	" " "
Ray Lemier	57 Common St
Travis Frank	102 Gilbert Rd
Keegan Frank	" " "
Kath Thoresz	28 Raleigh Rd
Aleida Lege	91 Channing Rd
Darin Tate	" " "
Anne Churchill	9 Bay State Rd
Margo Demmyer	17 Bay State Rd
Carolyn Wood	156 Common St.



Transportation Advisory Committee

TOWN OF BELMONT

19 Moore Street
Homer Municipal Building
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478-0900
Telephone: (617) 993-2650 Fax: (617) 993-2651

Dana Miller - Chair
Laurence MacDonald - Vice Chair
Annis Sengupta - Clerk

Jessica Bennett
David Coleman
Clifford Gaysunas
Charles Hamad
Jeremy Romanul
Jeffrey Roth

Date: June 20, 2019

To: Members – Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Glenn R. Clancy, Committee Liaison

Subject: Agenda for Meeting on June 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM in Third Floor Gallery, Homer Municipal Building, 19 Moore Street. If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact me via e-mail.

7:00 – 7:05 Approval of Minutes (April 25, 2019, May 2, 2019, May 23, 2019)

7:05 – 7:15 Request for Handicap Parking Space

- 18 Blake Street

7:15 – 8:45 Common Street Public Meeting

- Discussion of Possible Bike Lanes

8:45 – 8:50 Old Business

- No Known Items

8:50 – 8:55 New Business

- No Known Items

8:55 Adjourn

Note: Times are tentative depending on the flow of the meeting, the time of any particular item may deviate ten to fifteen minutes from the schedule.

Cc: Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator
Sgt Ben Mailhot, Belmont Police Department
Jay Marcotte, Director, Department of Public Works
Richard McLaughlin, Belmont Police Chief

RECEIVED
APR 22 9 47
SELECTMEN

2019 APR 22 A 9:47

April 22, 2019

To: The Belmont Board of Selectmen
From: Arline Davis, 18 Blake St., Belmont
Re: Request for Handicap Pole

Sirs: After a recommendation and conversation with a member of the Belmont Police Dept., I am sending you documents to support a request for a Handicap pole to be placed in my front yard. It is to allow safe access to the front walk entry to my house at 18 Blake St. My property at the corner of Blake and Kilburn Streets slopes downward and the walk starts at an old town tree with its roots extending into the property. The street at that corner is narrow and is affected by a substantial increase of seasonal non-residents. There are no sidewalks in this neighborhood. A handicap pole would ensure I could access my walkway safely as medical issues are a considerable problem in this situation. I also have a state issued handicap placard. Enclosed is a supporting letter from my primary care physician; a photocopy of the handicap placard; and my reasons for requesting a pole for a senior resident with medical issues affecting safety.

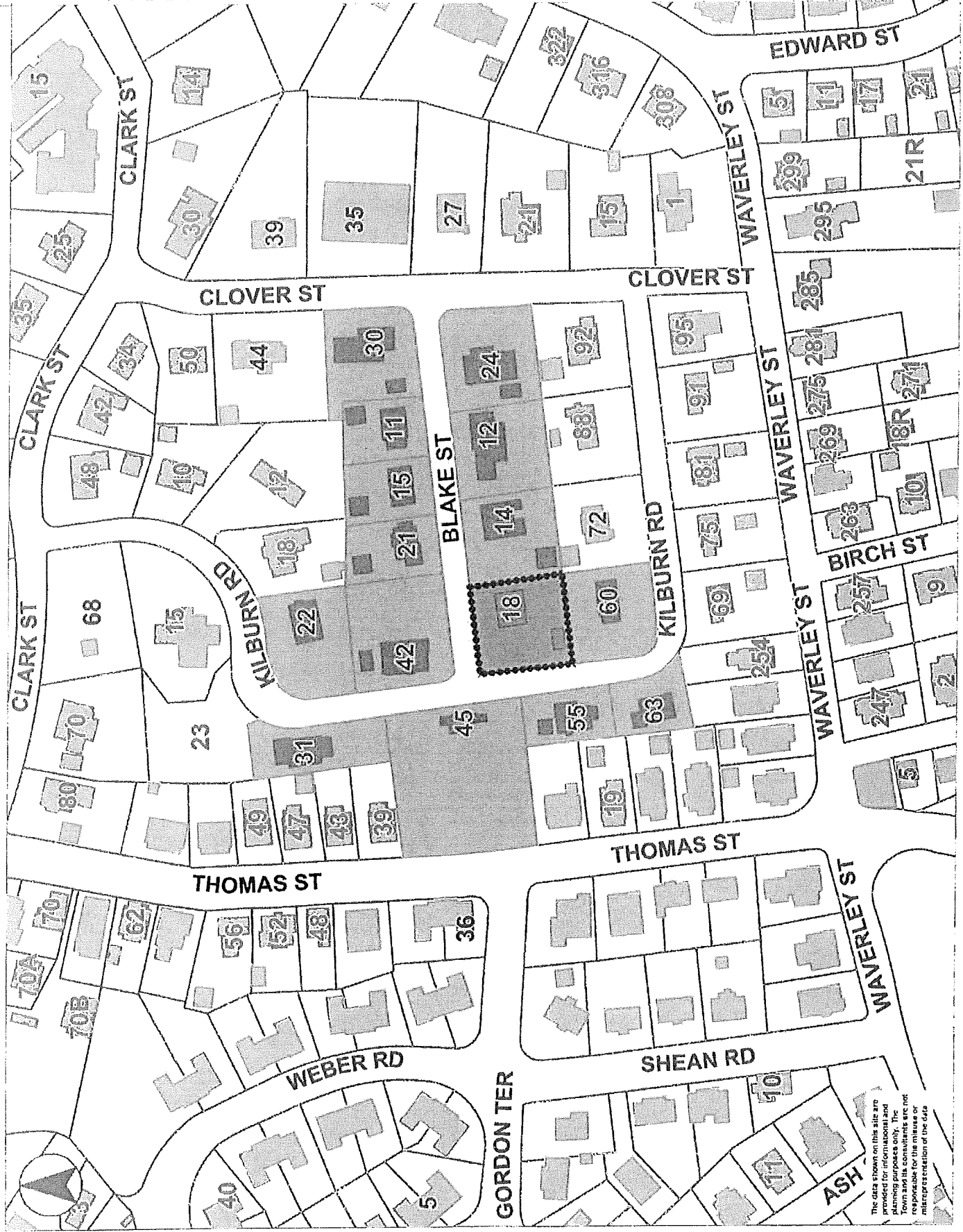
Sincerely, Arline Davis 18 Blake St. [REDACTED]

Arline Davis

*EMD to Clancy
+ Ben
4/22/19*



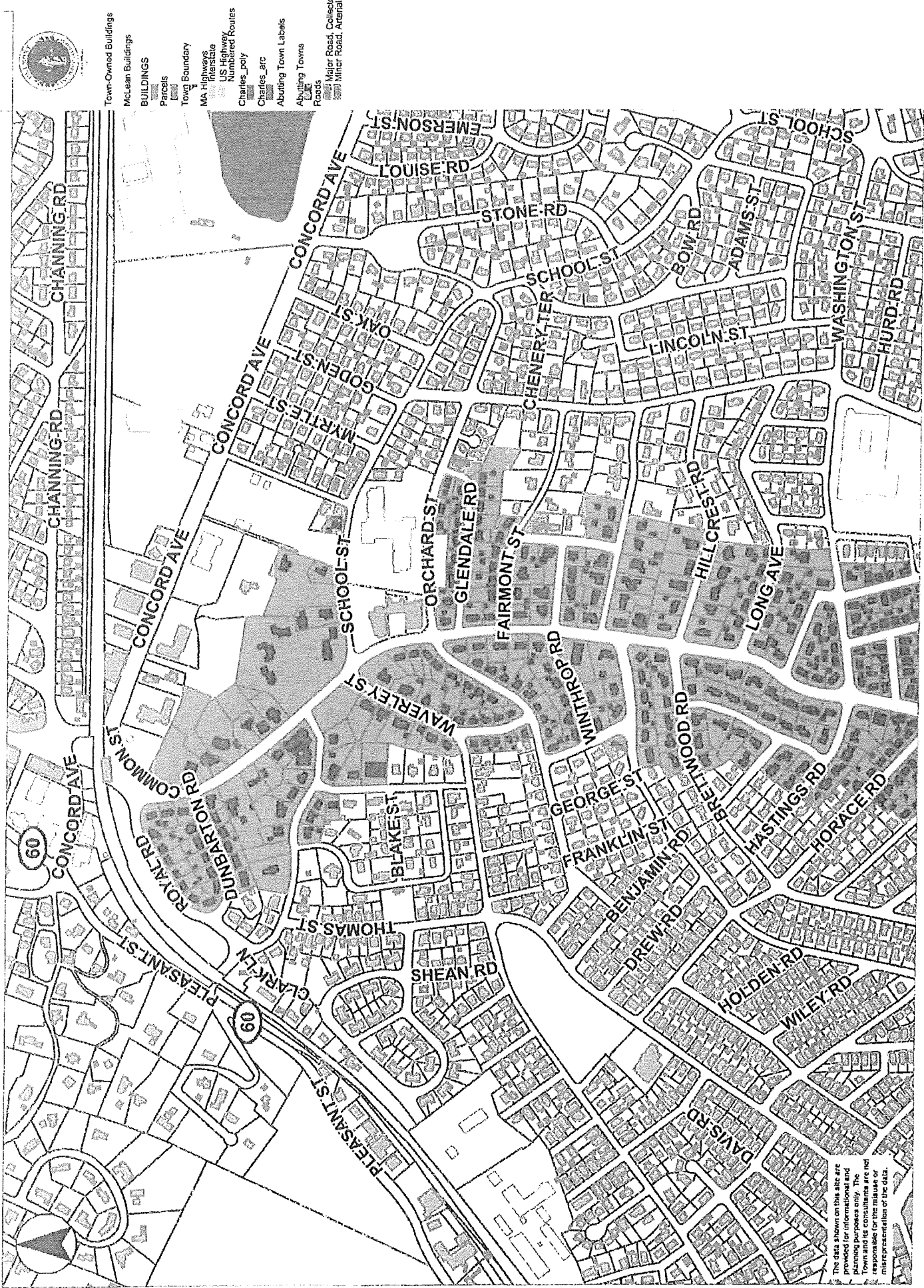
- Town-Owned Buildings
- McLean Buildings
- BUILDINGS
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Town Boundary
- MA Highways
- Interstate
- US Highway
- Numbered Routes
- Charles_pdy
- Charles_arc
- Abutting Town Labels
- Abutting Towns
- Roads
- Major Road, Collect
- Minor Road, Arterial



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Belmont, MA MapsOnline

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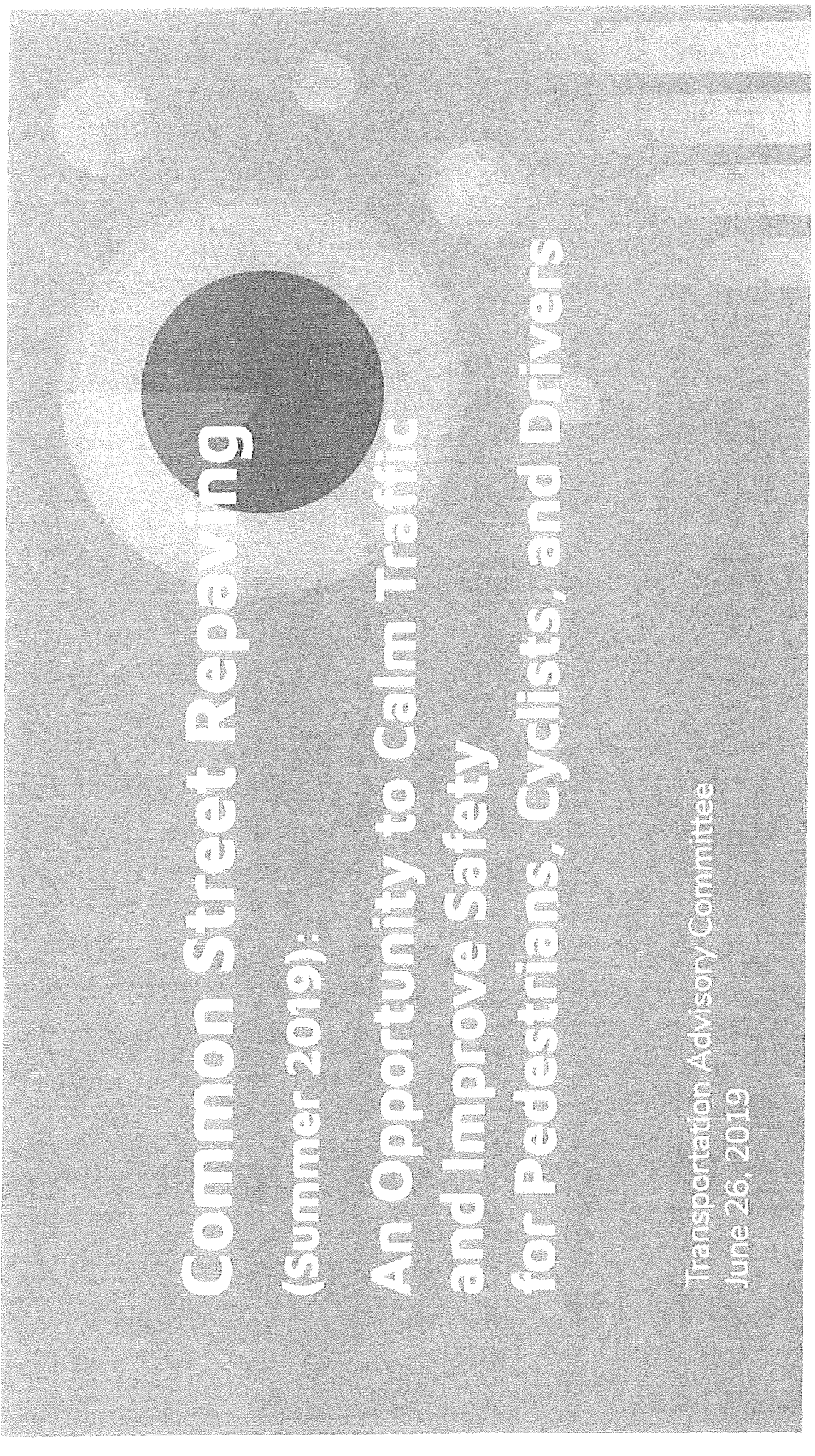
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McLean Buildings
BUILDINGS
Parcels
Town Boundary
MA Highways
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Charles_arc
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Common Street Repaving

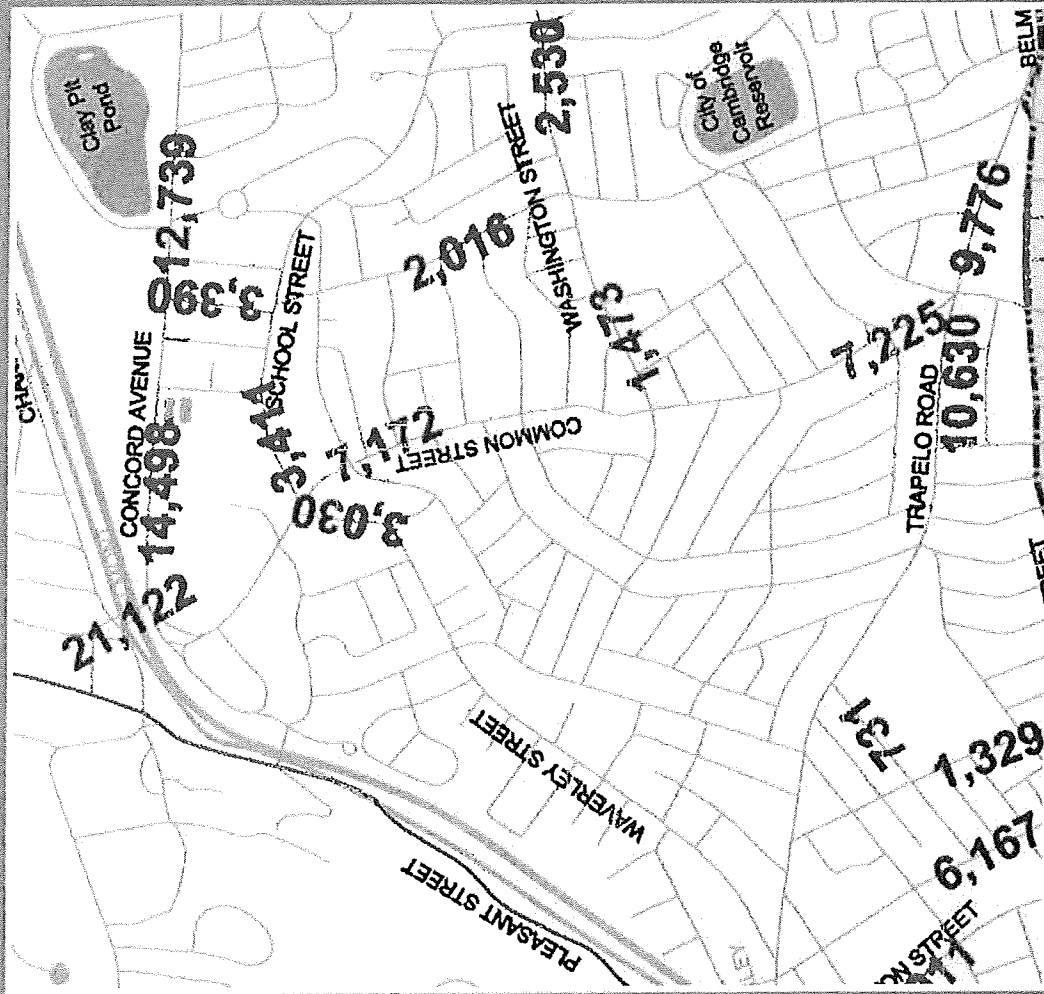
(Summer 2019):

An Opportunity to Calm Traffic and Improve Safety for Pedestrians, Cyclists, and Drivers

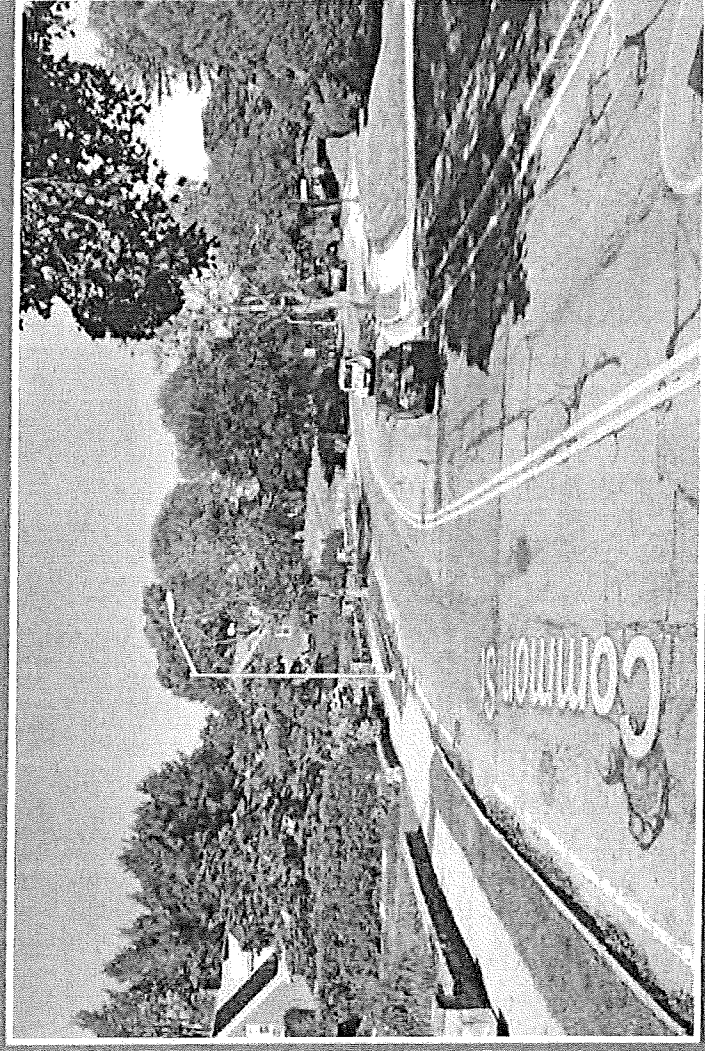
Transportation Advisory Committee
June 26, 2019

More than 7,000
cars travel down
Common Street in
a 12 hour period

Source: Town Wide Traffic
Study Presentation
4/2019



Existing Conditions



- ◆ 12-15' vehicle lanes encourage speeding and inattentive driving
- ◆ 12-15' vehicle lanes makes pedestrian crossing more dangerous
- ◆ Entering and exiting parked cars on Common is experienced as unsafe
- ◆ Absence of bicycle infrastructure increases risk for bicyclists

Residents are concerned about safety on Common Street

- ❖ Complete Streets Survey comments indicate that people are concerned about vehicle speed and crossing the street.
- ❖ Need for modification of driver behavior: slower speeds, more attention paid to other users.

Increasing safety for all users through Traffic Calming

- ❖ Increases safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users
- ❖ Reduces dangerous driving behavior
- ❖ Reduces the probability and severity of crashes.
- ❖ Results in more attractive streets and neighborhoods
- ❖ Makes walking and bicycling safer and more attractive options

Bike Lanes to Calm Traffic

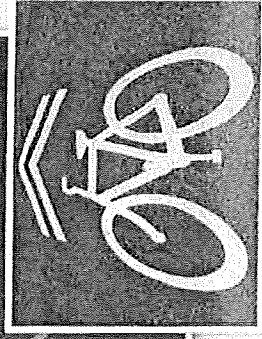
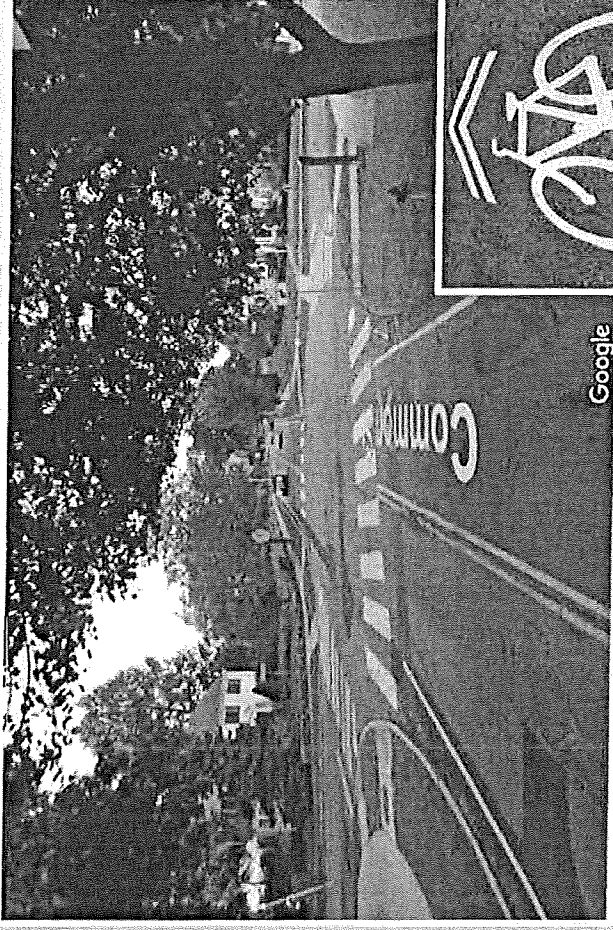
Slowing cars down through the narrowing of travel lanes so that the prevailing speed is closer to the speed limit (25 mph thickly settled law in Belmont).

- ❖ Decreases width of travel lanes through the addition of bicycle infrastructure
- ❖ Lane narrowing encourages slower vehicle speed.

Proposed Accommodations

- ❖ Addition of 4' - 5' bicycle lane on north- and south-bound sides of street between Chester and the Washington Street intersection and between the Washington Street intersection and Orchard Street
- ❖ Possible placement of delineators at key narrow points to slow drivers and provide more protection for cyclists--the area under consideration would extend two blocks from the Long Avenue intersection to the Washington/Hastings intersection
- ❖ Removal of parking from both sides of street, between Chester and the Washington Street intersection and between the Washington Street intersection and Orchard Street (continuing exceptions for funerals and church parking on Sundays)

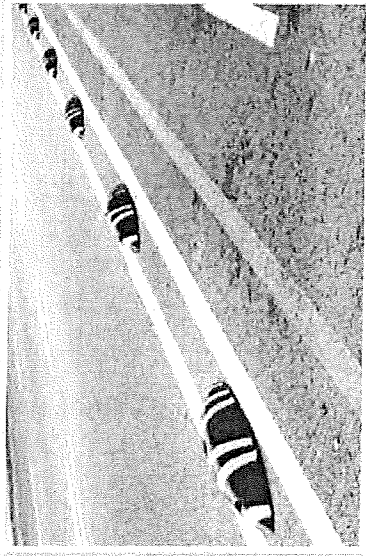
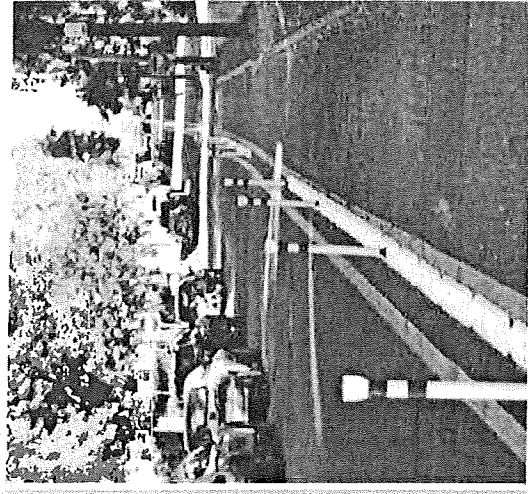
Pinch Point at Washington Street



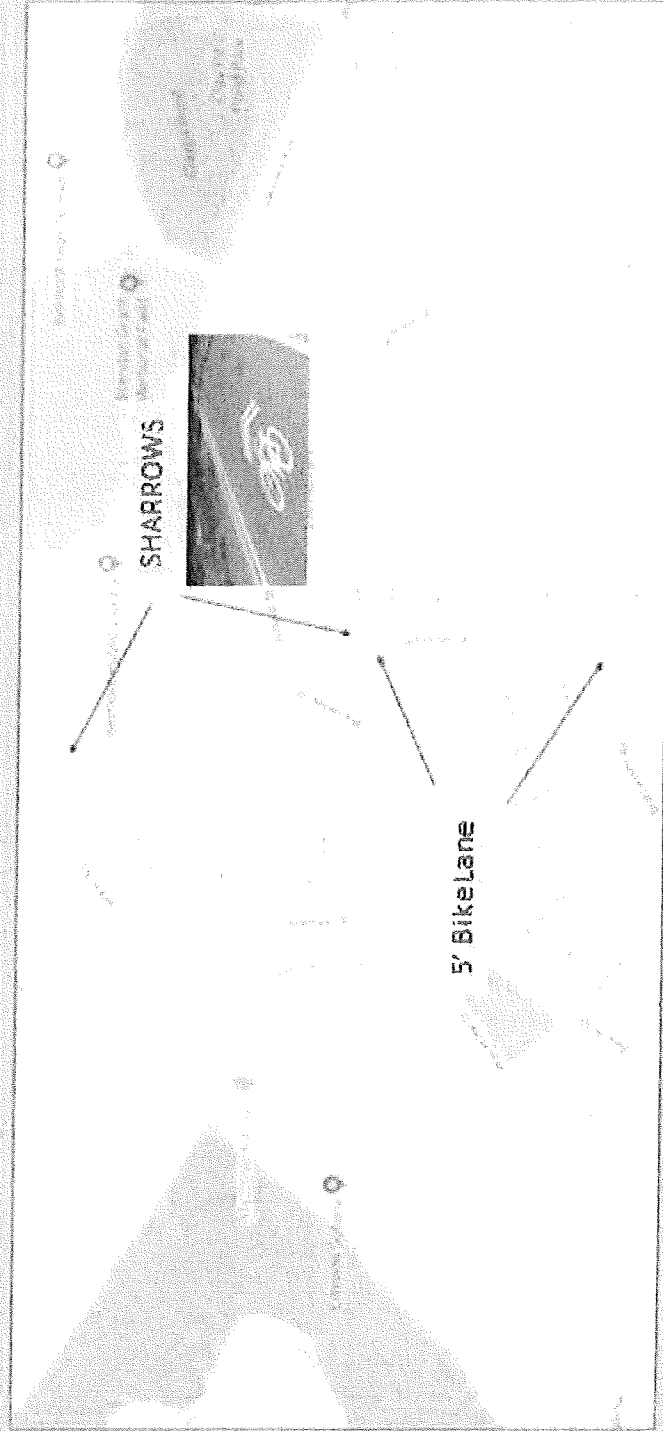
Too narrow to add a bike lane.

Would add Shared Lane Markings ("sharrows") to indicate shared use of roadway by both bicyclists and motorists in 25-mph zone.

Separated Bike Lanes: Delineators come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors; there are several cost-effective options



Common Street Bicycle Accommodation
Concord Avenue to Bretthwood Road



Common Street – Brettwood Road to Payson Road Bike Lane Alternatives

