



TOWN OF LEXINGTON
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GROUP

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To: Jim Malloy; Town Manager
Cc: Kim Katzenback, Executive Clerk Select Board
John Livsey, Town Engineer
Carol Kowalski, Assistant Town Manager for Land Use Health and Development

Fr: Transportation Safety Group - Sheila Page, Assistant Planning Director

RE: Recommended Budget Request for the Cedar Street Sidewalk

The Transportation Safety Group recommends that design and construction funds for the Cedar Street sidewalk be included in the FY 2023 Capital budget. The estimated \$940,000 cost will be used to design and construct a sidewalk on one side of Cedar Street from Massachusetts Avenue to Denver Street; approximately 0.5 miles.

Although long desired, the Cedar Street sidewalk request formally began in 2017 with a presentation to the Transportation Safety Group (TSG). In the original petition, 136 households signed the petition; 127 were in support and nine against. Thirty of the “in support” households and four of the “against” were direct abutters.

TSG decided the sidewalk request warranted further exploration and funded an existing conditions survey which was completed in 2018 and is posted on the sidewalk request page. DPW typically aims to build one new sidewalk a year. As Cedar Street’s “turn” approached, TSG further analyzed the request and held a public meeting on September 1, 2021 via zoom to gauge neighborhood support and need and to understand the neighborhood’s concerns.

Cedar Street runs from Massachusetts Avenue to Pine Meadows Golf Course. The pavement width varies from just less than 18 feet to 30 feet wide and the town owned right of way varies from 25 feet to 40 feet wide with the narrowest part towards the north by the golf course. Since 2010, there have been six reported crashes; three of which were near the Cedar/Hill/Paul Revere intersection. A speed study was conducted for one week in August. The average speed was 20.24 MPH, the 85th percentile was 24.31 mph; while the maximum speed was 38 mph. While the vehicle speeds were under the town-wide limit of 25 mph, the vehicle speeds feel faster than 25 mph due to the narrowness of the street and the sometimes lack of pedestrian refuge.

Over two hundred households received a letter inviting them to the public meeting. Fifty-five people logged into the meeting. TSG presented a conceptual plan to illustrate potential impacts to walls, trees and fences. The residents asked questions and made thoughtful comments.

Residents expressed concern for the need to remove many trees. Not all agreed, however that the impacts to the trees and the abutters' yards overcame the need to build a sidewalk. Many expressed safety concerns of speeds inappropriate to the scale of the street, blind intersections, difficult sight lines at the bottom of Cedar Street near Massachusetts Avenue and difficulty navigating the Cedar/ Hill/ Paul Revere intersection. Many pointed out the need for a safe pedestrian space while others felt there was plenty of room in yards and driveways for pedestrian refuges.

In addition to comments said during the meeting, TSG received over 27 emails. Most emails expressed support of the sidewalk but several households in the northern part of the street are against the sidewalk.

TSG met to review the conceptual plan and neighbor comments. A Cedar Street sidewalk, particularly from Mass Ave to Hill Street, fills a missing gap that would provide safe passage from the Cedar Street and Hill Street neighborhoods to Hastings Park and the High School. However, a sidewalk would take away trees and potentially change the character of the street. While the surrounding neighborhood would benefit from a sidewalk, TSG was mindful of the opinions of the immediate abutters.

TSG ultimately decided to recommend a sidewalk from Massachusetts Avenue to Denver Street. A sidewalk in this location provides safe passage in the busier section of lower Cedar through the Cedar/Hill/Paul Revere intersection, provides access to Poor Farm Conservation Area and provides access to the quieter streets that parallel Cedar.

The exact location of the sidewalk will not be determined until the design phase. The final design endeavors to stay within the town-owned right-of-way and will work with the impacted abutters