

Winchester Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee Report to 2022 Spring Town Meeting

The Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) advises the Select Board (SB) and the Town Manager in the conduct of the interdepartmental Traffic and Transportation Program, which the Select Board directed the Town Manager to create and supervise.

TTAC's focus: Positively impact how the town plans, builds, and maintains public spaces and public ways to better support the movement of all residents, in all modes of transportation.



Primary areas of advocacy:

- 1. Traffic calming and resident safety; promoting multi-modal transportation*
- 2. Connecting neighborhoods and providing access to 'green and blue spaces'*
- 3. Supporting local businesses by encouraging improved access for all including improved parking arrangements and foot traffic*

Committee Report for Spring Town Meeting '22

TTAC is an advocate for the development of a long-term transportation plan for the town and is also focused on ensuring that our current transportation environment is safe and stable. MBTA & Eversource-related construction is top of mind for the committee and we continue to advocate for the town to take advantage of improvement opportunities that come just as invasive and expensive projects are being completed (ex. Winter Pond corridor, Woodside Road).

TTAC has three strategic priorities in the coming year:

1. Supporting development of the **Transportation Plan** (active, funded project run by Toole)
2. Helping the town assess the transportation-related needs of the **new Lynch School** and construction-related impacts
3. Engaging with the SB and Winchester's state delegation to improve the process of establishing **Safety Zones** in our town

Transportation Plan – The town has engaged Toole Design to help develop a bold vision for the way our town moves in the future. TTAC is engaged with Toole and Town Staff and look forward to establishing a plan that balances the need for a connected vision and clear action. Our committee was initially established to help create a town "Roadbook" so establishing a plan that intentionally addresses all forms of people movement, not just roads, is a win.

Our goal for the Transportation Plan is to create a program of projects, similar to the town's flood mitigation program that can be advanced sequentially towards a larger goal. TTAC will continue to advise the Select Board to **think big** as it relates to this plan for the benefit of our residents and visitors. For example, a town-wide shuttle service and advance planning for an influx of autonomous vehicles are worthy of further discussion. We encourage town meeting members

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and residents to participate in upcoming Transportation Plan engagement events, facilitated by Toole, to make your opinions heard.

In addition, if the town is to be successful in advancing towards our goals, this Transportation Plan must address “**who and how,**” not just “**what.**” We have a list of projects in the capital queue that are worthy of funding including improvements at Lockeland and Ridge near Wright-Locke Farm, median work on Highland Ave., among others. This Transportation Plan must address who and how the town intends to maintain this plan going forward so that all future work, strategic or tactical, can be performed in alignment with the town’s broader vision. If the plan results solely in a list of previously discussed ideas and more studies, we will have missed an opportunity.

Lynch Reconstruction – TTAC wholly supports Article 28 of Spring Town Meeting - funding a transportation review for the new Lynch school. The longer-term plan for transportation to/from/around the school will help optimize use of the new school, amenities, and connect the school with nearby paths and recreation areas. The reconstruction project will also create a myriad of transportation issues for all during construction so a sound, interim plan is an imperative.

Leading on Safety Zones – The town has interest in establishing **Safety Zones** in critical areas where many forms of transportation connect and/or conflict. Safety Zone area candidates include bike path crossings on Bacon St. near Wedgemere, Swanton St., and Cross St., in addition to opportunity areas like the Wright-Locke and Mullen field area. Our committee is urging the Select Board to utilize the same Massachusetts state law that allowed for “Town-wide 25” ([MGL Chapter 90 Section 18B](#)) to establish special zones, typically comprised of a combination of lower speeds and other traffic calming techniques, to help in these areas.

Today, the rule itself allows municipalities to establish Safety Zones without having to notify or receive approval from the MassDOT but the actual mechanics of the process end in MassDOT advising municipalities to conduct expensive and potentially counter-productive speed studies anyway. TTAC believes this goes against the legislation’s intent and is advocating for the Select Board to engage the state delegation to clarify the rule so the town can add another powerful tool to our transportation ‘toolbox.’ This would be a win for Winchester and an opportunity for the town to lead and improve conditions across the commonwealth.

Lastly, TTAC would like to advocate for the town to consider expanding the definition of eligible efforts for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to include transportation paths and roadways. Peer towns are adopting a broader interpretation of the guidelines for eligibility and funding transformative investments in transportation infrastructure and green spaces. A transportation “windfall” is not realistic but the town should be able to tap these funds to drive already identified needs or priority efforts as outlined in the upcoming Transportation Plan.

Thank you for Town Meeting’s continuing support of TTAC and for improving Winchester’s transportation infrastructure!

Ben Keeler - Chair, Winchester Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee

Note: TTAC is supported by three town departments including Planning (Brian Szekely), DPW (Jay Gill), and Engineering (Beth Rudolph/Bryan Manter). Our committee thanks the town staff and their respective departments for their partnership in helping to create a safe, accessible, and welcoming town.