

**TRANSPORTATION BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, April 08, 2020 @ 5:00 PM
Room 103, Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street**

- 7:00 PM CALL TO ORDER
- 7:00 PM PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ISSUES NOT ON THE AGENDA
- 7:10 PM MEMBER UPDATE
- DPW UPDATE
- 7:20 PM DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS
- 5:00 PM 1. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RECOMMENDATION TO THE SELECT BOARD ABOUT OPENING MORE SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC WAY FOR USE BY PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS FOR RECREATIONAL, COMMUTING, OR HEALTH & WELL-BEING PURPOSES TO ENABLE SOCIAL DISTANCING ON A TEMPOR

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE AND THE BOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CALL ITEMS OUT OF ORDER. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU ARRIVE 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE TIME SHOWN ON THE AGENDA FOR YOUR ITEM OF INTEREST



T O W N o f B R O O K L I N E
Massachusetts
 Department of Public Works

Andrew M. Pappastergion
 Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Board

FROM: Todd M. Kirrane
 Transportation Administrator

Cc: **Select Board**
Melvin Kleckner, Town Administrator
Dr. Swannie Jett, Director of Public Health
Andrew Pappastergion, Commissioner of Public Works

DATE: April 7, 2020

SUBJECT: April 8, 2020 Special Meeting of the Transportation Board

Item # 2: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RECOMMENDATION TO THE SELECT BOARD ABOUT OPENING MORE SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC WAY FOR USE BY PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS FOR RECREATIONAL, COMMUTING, OR HEALTH & WELL-BEING PURPOSES TO ENABLE SOCIAL DISTANCING ON A TEMPORARY BASIS DURING THE COVID-19 STAY HOME ORDER BY GOVERNOR BAKER

In order to combat the spread of COVID-19 in the community, on March 23, 2020 Governor Baker ordered a Stay at Home Advisory and ordered all non-essential businesses closed for a two-week period. Prior to taking this action the Governor has ordered all schools closed and limited all restaurants to take out or delivery only as of March 17th until April 4th. Both of these initial periods were extended on March 31, 2020 by the Governor to last until at least May 4, 2020. Locally the Select Board and the Town Administrator's COVID-19 Task Force have been more proactive announcing the closing of playgrounds, schools, and restricting access to Town Buildings in advance of any closings announced by the Governor. Unlike a Shelter in Place order, the Stay at Home Advisory advises residents "to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel and other unnecessary activities", it does not restrict their movement or require them to remain in doors unless performing essential tasks like seeking medical services or buying groceries. When discussing and considering the Town's options within the framework of this request it is important to keep this distinction in mind as it directly relates to the observed actions by the residents of Brookline.

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Beginning the week of March 23rd the Transportation Division started to receive requests electronically via email and social media posts to consider opening portions of the public way in recognition of the decrease of motor vehicles and the increase of pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users and to allow them to practice social distance by keeping 6 feet apart from the nearest non-household member while walking, biking, or scooting on our streets and sidewalks for commuting, essential trips, recreation, and mental health reasons. These initial requests were brought to the Town Administrator on March 30th who in turn brought it to the Select Board on March 31st seeking guidance on whether or not this was something that the Select Board was interested in pursuing (attachment # 1). On April 1st the Transportation Division received the request from the Select Board, via Town Administrator Kleckner, seeking input and recommendation from the Transportation Board on the concept as a whole and perhaps identifying specific locations to target (attachment # 2). Since then staff in the Transportation Division have consulted with senior staff in the Department of Public Works, attended a webinar training on these ideas conducted by Toole Design Group, researched what other municipalities are doing regarding similar requests, and have formulated initial locations to target and how to potentially implement them.

As discussed earlier, people are out and about the community as allowed under the Governor's Stay at Home advisory for three main reasons including:

1. seeking essential services such as grocery shopping, trips to the pharmacy, commuting to work as essential employees, and seeking medical treatment;
2. exercise and passive recreation at local parks;
3. mental and physical wellbeing to combat isolation, depression, and domestic violence.

Rather than ignoring this fact, ignoring it, and simply recommending that everyone stay inside the Toole Design webinar, "Rebalancing Streets for People", focused on these reasons for initiating these types of requests and made recommendations on implementation strategies including quick build and tactical urbanism techniques. The video of the webinar is available at <https://tooledesign.com/insights/2020/03/webinar-rebalancing-streets-for-people/> staff strongly recommends reviewing it in advance of your meeting. As discussed in the webinar the reason for rebalancing the streets during this COVID-19 pandemic is not about piloting or testing more bike and pedestrian infrastructure or attempting to bypass normal planning and public input processes for long term changes or about creating locations for people to gather in a block party type atmosphere. Instead, it is solely about temporarily altering the allocation of space on our public ways, based on the realized demands caused by an increase in pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users and a decrease in motor vehicle traffic and their need to social distance on the currently limited sidewalk space that does not allow it to be done safely. While cyclists and micro-mobility users are allowed to operate in the street safely under these circumstances, pedestrian cannot do so safely. Based on the three reasons for people to leave their house and the recommendations by the Toole Design and other Transportation professionals staff has developed three sets of recommendations that the Town can take to meet these demands and support our residents and encourage social distancing while walking, biking, or scooting.

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Strategy # 1: The Commuters and Other 'Essential' Trips:

While some may argue that all trips should be done by motor vehicle, the reality is that over the last 15+ years the Town has invested in a multi-modal transportation system that prioritizes travel by walking, biking, public transit, and share services for work and recreation over single vehicle occupant trips. This economically and environmentally driven effort has resulted in over 27% of all households in Brookline (source: 2018 America Community Survey) and an estimated 60% of renter households in Coolidge Corner (source: 2012-2017 America Community Survey) not owning a motor vehicle. Therefore walking, biking, and scooting while socially distancing is the only option for a large percentage of our residents when making 'essential' trips throughout the Town. Based on knowledge of Brookline resident transportation trends, commuting and shopping destinations, recommendations by members of the public, and our knowledge of the constraints of the public way we have looked at creating additional space for non-motor vehicles, especially pedestrians, on our arterial roadways and within our commercial districts.

Harvard Street Recommendations:

As the Board is aware, Harvard Street is an important urban arterial for the Town providing access to three commercial districts (Brookline Village, Coolidge Corner, JFK Crossing), Stop and Shop, the Butcherie, Walgreens, and two CVS Pharmacies. In general, the roadway cross section includes

- 8 foot sidewalks with usable space reduced to approximately 6 feet by benches, parking meters, sign posts, street lighting, public shade trees, etc.,
- 7 foot metered parking lanes, where allowed,
- 5 foot street level door zone bike lanes, in each direction available, and
- 10 foot travel lanes, generally 1 in each direction, except at intersections.

Given that most businesses are closed until May 4th the on-street parking supply is far in excess of demand at this point and can be flexed to be made available for the increased demand of pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users to support their trips and allow space to socially distance since the limited space on the sidewalk does not allow for it. In fact, the public comment to date has included testimony that people are already walking or jogging in the parking lane, when available, to avoid being within 6 feet of other sidewalk users. The staff proposal (attachment # 3) proposes to manage the usage of our curb in a more responsible way by removing the parking lane on one side of Harvard Street for the entire length to provide this needed shared space.

Given the fact that some businesses are still open, and in recognition of the steps taken by our office and the Planning Department to create 15 minute temporary take out/delivery spaces to support them, the side where parking is removed changes at certain points in the corridor to minimize the impact on these business spaces and with all transitions happening at crosswalk locations. The specific recommendation is:

- Kent St to Holden St (eastern curbline)
- Holden St to Marion St (western curbline)

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- Marion St to Townline (eastern curbline)

With this recommendation there are two businesses affected that had the temporary zones created for them. The first is Union Square Donuts in JFK Crossing, which has since closed, and the second is Otto's in Coolidge Corner. For Otto's staff had created two zones, one on Harvard St and one on Green St. Under this plan, the one on Harvard St would be eliminated and the one on Green St would be enlarged from 2 to 4 spaces.

Longwood Avenue Recommendation:

Longwood Avenue is an important connection to the Longwood Medical Area. The roadway cross section includes

- 8 foot sidewalks with usable space reduced to approximately 6 feet by benches, parking meters, sign posts, street lighting, public shade trees, etc.,
- 8 foot westbound parking lane,
- 10.5 foot westbound shared travel lane for motor vehicles, bicycles, and micro-mobility devices,
- 9 foot eastbound travel lane, and a
- 4 foot eastbound bike lane.

Under normal conditions it carries a large number of pedestrians commuting to and from the Longwood Medical Area that overflow the narrow available sidewalks and forces westbound cyclists and micro-mobility users to share the lane with motor vehicle traffic. Under current circumstances, with medical personnel deemed essential and working extra shifts, combined with the fear of using public transit, the commuting demand placed on this corridor by these three travel modes has only increased. In order to provide additional space to this increased demand, while not limiting motor vehicle access to the location, staff is recommending the removal of the parking lane from the Townline to just before Sewall Avenue for shared use by pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users (attachment # 4). It is important to note in these attachments that the new streetmix image shows only a cyclist or a micro-mobility user in the new shared space due to a limitation of the software which will not allow us to show pedestrians walking in the roadway. This area will be broken up at 44 Longwood Avenue for 25 feet by a residential handicap space.

Brookline Avenue Recommendation:

Similar to Longwood Avenue, except with little residential properties abutting it, Brookline Avenue is an important connection to the Longwood Medical Area not only for local residents, but for the communities to the south and west of the Town. The roadway cross section includes:

- 9 foot multi-use pathway adjacent to the Emerald Necklace Park to the east of Brookline Avenue,
- 20 foot planting strip which is part of the Emerald Necklace Park,
- 2 7 foot metered parking lanes,
- 2 9 foot northbound and southbound inside travel lanes,
- 2 10 foot northbound and southbound outside travel lanes, and a

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- 9.5 foot sidewalk along the western curblineline with usable space reduced to approximately 6 feet by parking meters, sign posts, street lighting, public shade trees, etc.

In order to provide additional space to this increased demand, while not limiting motor vehicle access to the LMA, staff is recommending the removal of the parking lane from the Townline to just before Pearl St on both sides for shared use by pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users (attachment # 5).

Beacon Street Recommendation:

Beacon Street is one of two main east/west corridors within the Town and has both local and regional significance for commuting purposes. Like Harvard Street, it connects 3 major commercial districts (St. Mary's, Coolidge Corner, Washington Square), Star Market, Whole Foods, Trader Joes, and 2 CVS Pharmacies. Given that sidewalk widths varies throughout the corridor staff focused on only the pinch points in the heaviest used area Coolidge Corner between Centre/Webster to the west and Pleasant to the east where the dedicated street level bike lanes and median parking ends. The proposal (attachment # 6) is to remove the curbside parking lane and make it is shared space for pedestrians, cyclists, and micro-mobility users, to maintain parking for the local businesses that are open by reducing through traffic to the left travel lane adjacent to the MBTA tracks and making the right travel lane into the parking lane.

A possible second recommendation for the Beacon Street corridor, which is a combination of the commuter use and the recreational use (addressed later in this memo) is to remove median parking and activate the Bridle Path for use by non-motorized travel modes including walking, biking, and micro-mobility from

- Hawes Street to Pleasant Street east of Coolidge Corner,
- Westbourne Terrace to Winchester Street crossover west of Coolidge Corner, and
- Washington Street to townline.

Strategy # 2: Creating Space Adjacent to Local Destination Parks

Not only are we dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the isolation caused by the Stay at Home orders, but we are also coming off of the winter months and April is historically the month when we see more people coming out of their house and using our parks for active and passive recreational purposes. Both the CDC and the World Health Organization have recommended that people combat the negative social, mental, and physical side effects of the various Shelter in Place and Stay at Home advisories by seeking out physical exercise and fresh air outside of the house. In South Brookline and suburban communities, this could be accomplished in the privacy of a back yard or in a lightly traveled residential roadway with no interventions needed. However, in North Brookline, which has an urban density equal to parts of Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville with little private yard space this can only be done in nearby neighborhood parks or destination parks in Town such as Olmsted or Amory. In fact some of the earliest requests received for this in Brookline centered around over crowded pathways in our parks and the need for additional space to allow the area to be enjoyed by the number of people seeking it in nice weather and those communities that have

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implemented Open Street (for people) concepts to date have focused on roadways adjacent to parks. Examples include:

- Calgary (<https://livewirecalgary.com/2020/03/29/calgarians-get-out-to-enjoy-coronavirus-road-closures/>)
- Minneapolis (<https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/news/2020/03/26/minneapolis-park-and-recreation-board-announces-riverfront-parkway-and-road-closures-to-help-trail-users-maintain-social-distancing/>)
- New York City (<https://abc7ny.com/traffic/4-nyc-streets-closed-to-traffic-open-for-social-distancing-space/6052003/>)
- Philadelphia (<https://mailchi.mp/phila.gov/city-announces-closure-of-martin-luther-king-drive>)
- Winnipeg (https://winnipeg.ca/cao/media/news/nr_2020/nr_20200331.stm#3)
- Denver (<https://www.denverpost.com/2020/04/03/denver-streets-closed-coronavirus-covid/>)

In fact, at several press briefings on the Covid-19 pandemic Governor Baker has urged residents to go outside and enjoy the many parks throughout the state, but to ensure that they are practicing responsible social distancing while doing so. However this is becoming more and more difficult to accomplish in the urban areas within the Greater Boston area, including in Brookline, given the population density since not everyone has access to a motor vehicle to travel to a remote state or national park and instead are restricted to local parks to get this important outdoor time. This dilemma, which is being reported to Town staff, was the main feature in a recent op-ed article in the Boston Globe by Zip Car founder Robin Chase (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/03/31/opinion/roads-cleared-vehicle-traffic-should-be-open-foot-traffic-during-coronavirus-pandemic/?event=event12>) in which the author calls for local and state authorities to open “more streets for the safe movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and any kind of light, low-speed vehicles (scooters, skateboards, and rollerblades, too)” to help “reduce the strain of stay-at-home advisories and social distancing”. Local jurisdictions publicly joining Brookline in looking at doing this include, most recently, Cambridge and Newton.

Staff has identified 5 neighborhood destination parks that would benefit the residents seeking outdoor passive recreation (attachment # 7) including

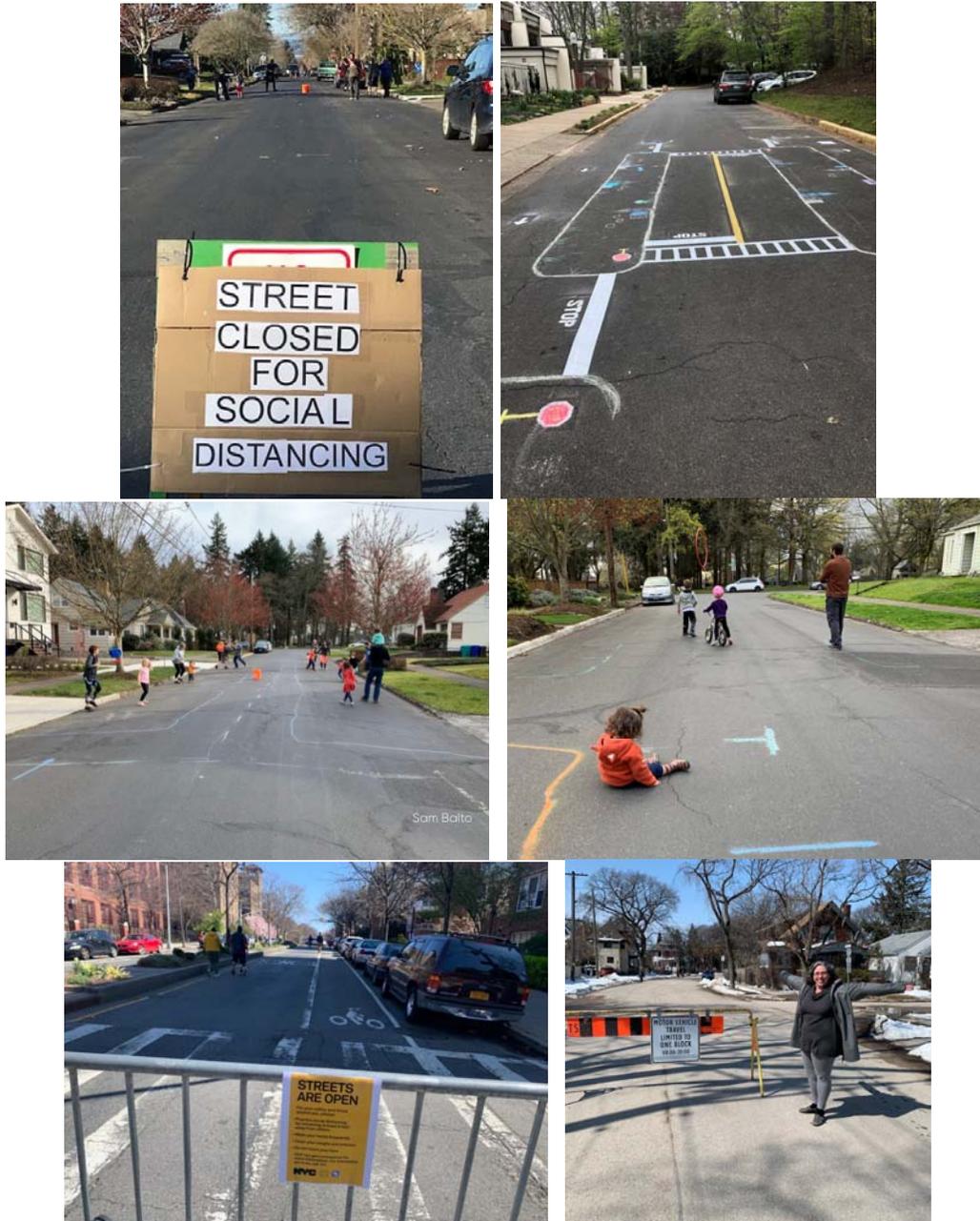
1. Olmsted Park (Pond Avenue)
2. Emerson Playground (Emerson Street, Waverly Street, and Davis Avenue)
3. Amory Playground (Amory Street)
4. Devotion Playground (Stedman Street)
5. Winthrop Playground (Still Street and Browne Street)

Extra space for those seeking to walk, jog, bike, scoot, etc. on the congested pathways can be given extra space to do these while practicing social distancing by converting streets into a one way pattern. This will free up the travel lane adjacent to the street for recreational use while maintaining access for residents, emergency vehicles, and other motor vehicle trips. For Stedman Street, already a one-way street, it means only removing the parking lane adjacent to the park with no need to alter the motor vehicle lane or parking on the residential side.

Strategy # 3: Designating Streets as Local Traffic Only

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A third strategy, closing streets to through traffic and establishing a shared street strategy, is being used in Portland, Winnipeg, New York City, and other communities to keep residents close to home while allowing them to get passive recreation and exercise outside using their residential side street.



Since your meeting was announced for Wednesday to discuss this issue, many of the positive emails that we have received as part of the public comment process has included the request for their residential side street to be closed to local traffic and be made into a shared street to be used as shown in the picture above. For these types of requests staff would recommend a by request strategy, similar to the block party process, where the resident could request it through the Department of Public Works and if no department objects for access reasons the request can be granted and the street can be made local traffic only using a single barricade and sign. Again, like strategy # 2, residential and emergency access would be maintained at all times.

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Since the Covid-19 pandemic started to really hit in the beginning of March the Town of Brookline has become a national leader in taking quick and decisive action to alter our public way to meet the safety and health needs of our residents and support our local businesses. Our office regularly receives inquiries from municipalities and transportation industry professionals throughout the United States asking for information on what we have done and how we have done it. Brookline was one of the first communities to relax enforcement of our parking regulations to limit the need to move vehicles around (now a national recommendation in the industry), one of the first to better manage our curbside spaces to support our businesses with the 15 minute take-out/delivery spaces, and the first in the nation to place all pedestrian signals on recall to limit the number of surfaces residents had to touch when walking around. All of these steps were taken to protect the health and safety of our residents and the request to implement the 3 strategies to implement the Open Streets concept to allow for safe passage outside while socially distancing is in line with all steps taken to date. Based on that staff recommends that the Transportation Board issue a recommendation to the Select Board that they endorse the Open Streets concept and to combat the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic by allowing staff to implement them based on our authority within the Traffic Rules & Regulations.

DPW RECOMMENDATION:

DPW-Transportation Staff recommends that the Transportation Board vote to approve a letter to the Select Board, drafted by staff and signed by Chair Dempsey, recommending that the Select Board endorse the Open Streets concept to combat the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic by allowing for safer walking, biking, and micro-mobility use and to allow staff to implement them based on our authority within the Traffic Rules & Regulations.

Attachments:

- 1) *Email to Covid-19 Task Force*
- 2) *Select Board request sent via Town Administrator Kleckner*
- 3) *Harvard Street Recommendation*
- 4) *Longwood Avenue Recommendation*
- 5) *Brookline Avenue Recommendation*
- 6) *Beacon Street (Coolidge Corner) Recommendation*
- 7) *Public Parks Recommendation*

Todd Kirrane

From: Todd Kirrane
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2020 12:04 PM
To: Melvin Kleckner; Swannie Jett
Cc: Andrew Pappastergion; Erin Gallentine; Kevin Johnson
Subject: FW: Using our public ways to improve social distancing

Mel & Dr. Jett,

Other municipalities in the US are taking steps to create larger areas for pedestrian use for either passive/active recreation and/or commuting purposes while maintain social distancing recommendations. Examples of this include closing off residential side streets to non-local traffic, blocking parking or travel lanes adjacent to parks to allow for additional pedestrian/cyclist space, etc. You can find examples of this here:

<https://nacto.org/program/covid19/>

<https://twitter.com/itsakev/status/1244403115295535104>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/amid-ongoing-covid-19-pandemic-governor-cuomo-announces-40000-health-professionals-have-signed> (NYC Plan to Address Lack of Adherence to Social Distancing Protocols Includes Pilot to Close Streets to Cars and Open Them to Pedestrians)

<https://bicyclecoalition.org/mlk-drive-closed-to-motor-vehicles-open-to-socially-distanced-people/>

There have been calls for similar action in Massachusetts and our office has received several requests, 3 are listed below, via email and social media. We have discussed this internally and believe that this can be done on Pond Avenue by making it one way (Washington to Paul Pender Circle) to maintain resident access while dedicating the travel lane adjacent to the park for pedestrian and cyclist use. There are other areas around town, adjacent to parks and playgrounds, that we believe we can take similar measures but we wanted the input of you and the Task Force before we move forward with any planning at this point.

Thanks,

Todd

From: Todd Kirrane
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2020 10:28 AM
To: Erin Gallentine <egallentine@brooklinema.gov>; Andrew Pappastergion <apappastergion@brooklinema.gov>; Kevin Johnson <kjohnson@brooklinema.gov>
Subject: RE: Using our public ways to improve social distancing

FYI. Just so you have everything on it that I have

Adam J Bindas

@bindas_j

@BlineTransport

Has Brookline investigated closing streets to car traffic to enhance social distancing measures? Sidewalks outside my apartment are still packed. If there is a concern for parking/access for disabled/quarantined people, perhaps restricting to one-way traffic.

Jennifer Bruni

@JenniferBruni

How about opening up more streets to pedestrians - Pond Ave is a good example. Ppl are too crowded on the paths

From: Todd Kirrane

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2020 9:47 AM

To: Erin Gallentine <egallentine@brooklinema.gov>; Andrew Pappastergion <apappastergion@brooklinema.gov>; Kevin Johnson <kjohnson@brooklinema.gov>

Subject: FW: Using our public ways to improve social distancing

FYI

From: Lee Biernbaum <lee@acrossb.com>

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2020 9:43 AM

To: Kate MacGillivray <kmacgillivray@brooklinema.gov>; Bernard Greene <bgreene@brooklinema.gov>; Nancy Heller <nheller@brooklinema.gov>; Heather A. Hamilton <hhamilton@brooklinema.gov>; Raul Fernandez <rfernandez@brooklinema.gov>; Ben Franco <bfranco@brooklinema.gov>; Todd Kirrane <tkirrane@brooklinema.gov>

Cc: Amanda Zimmerman <alzimmerman@gmail.com>; Matti Klock <matti@twonth.com>

Subject: Using our public ways to improve social distancing

Hello Brookline officials,

Amid the vast decrease in automobile travel and significant increase in people trying to use the sidewalks for exercise, some outdoor time, and non-transit/non-car access to essential services, it seems we have a bit of an imbalance in the demand for sidewalk vs road space.

During this time of social distancing, would it be possible to

a) turn over some of the parking area / lanes of our major streets to people on foot, people in wheelchairs, people on bicycles, scooters, etc who are looking to responsibly run essential errands or get exercise while also allowing them the necessary 6 foot distance from others?

b) close some streets to cars (other than local access) so that they may be used in their entirety for outdoor recreational use with sufficient social distancing.

c) (perhaps more speculative), close off a portion of some large parking lots in town for similar uses. For example, the TJ Maxx parking lot has a lot of excess capacity at the moment that could easily be used by

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families with younger children looking to bike/scoot/etc while maintaining sufficient space from other families and spreading out demand away from the limited paths inside parks.

I think we have lots of people in this town who want to respect the recommended social distancing guidelines while keeping themselves (and their families) healthy, but that can be difficult with the current allocation of space along our public ways. To the degree we can help them with cones and tape or other barriers during this time of severely reduced car traffic, I think it would be of great help.

Thank you,

Lee Biernbaum
7 Verndale Street

Todd Kirrane

From: Melvin Kleckner
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 3:59 PM
To: Todd Kirrane
Cc: Swannie Jett; Police Chief Andrew Lipson; John F. Sullivan, Fire Chief; Andrew Pappastergion; Erin Gallentine
Subject: Proposals to Expand Walking Areas

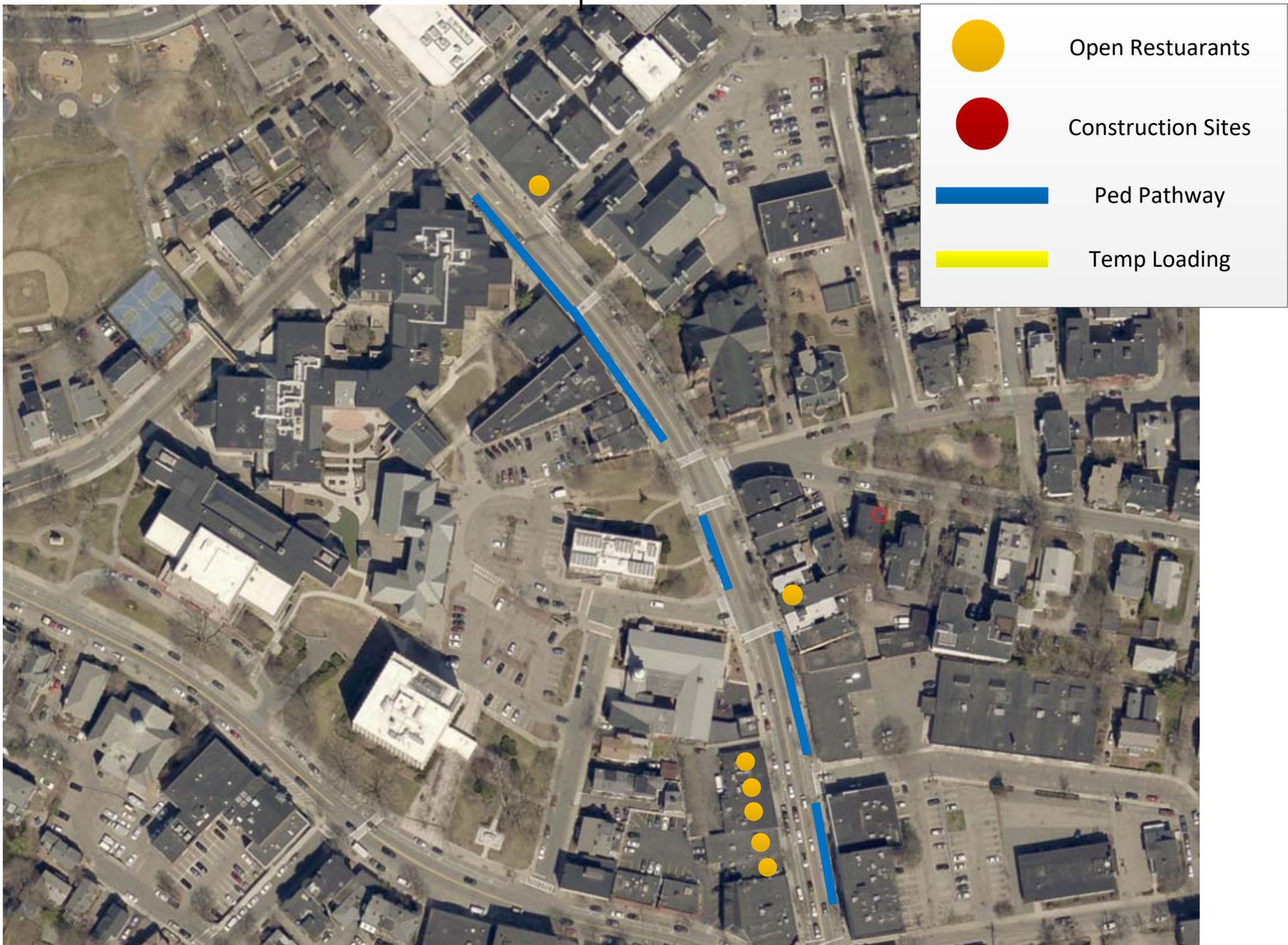
Hi Todd:

As we have discussed, there are concerns about the limited space within public sidewalks necessary to meet appropriate social distancing requirements for persons walking throughout the community. A proposal to expand the sidewalk area into the paved right of way dedicated for vehicular traffic has been discussed as a solution to create more space. Other proposals to close some streets altogether or to designate large paved areas for dedicated walking and other forms of passive recreation have been discussed.

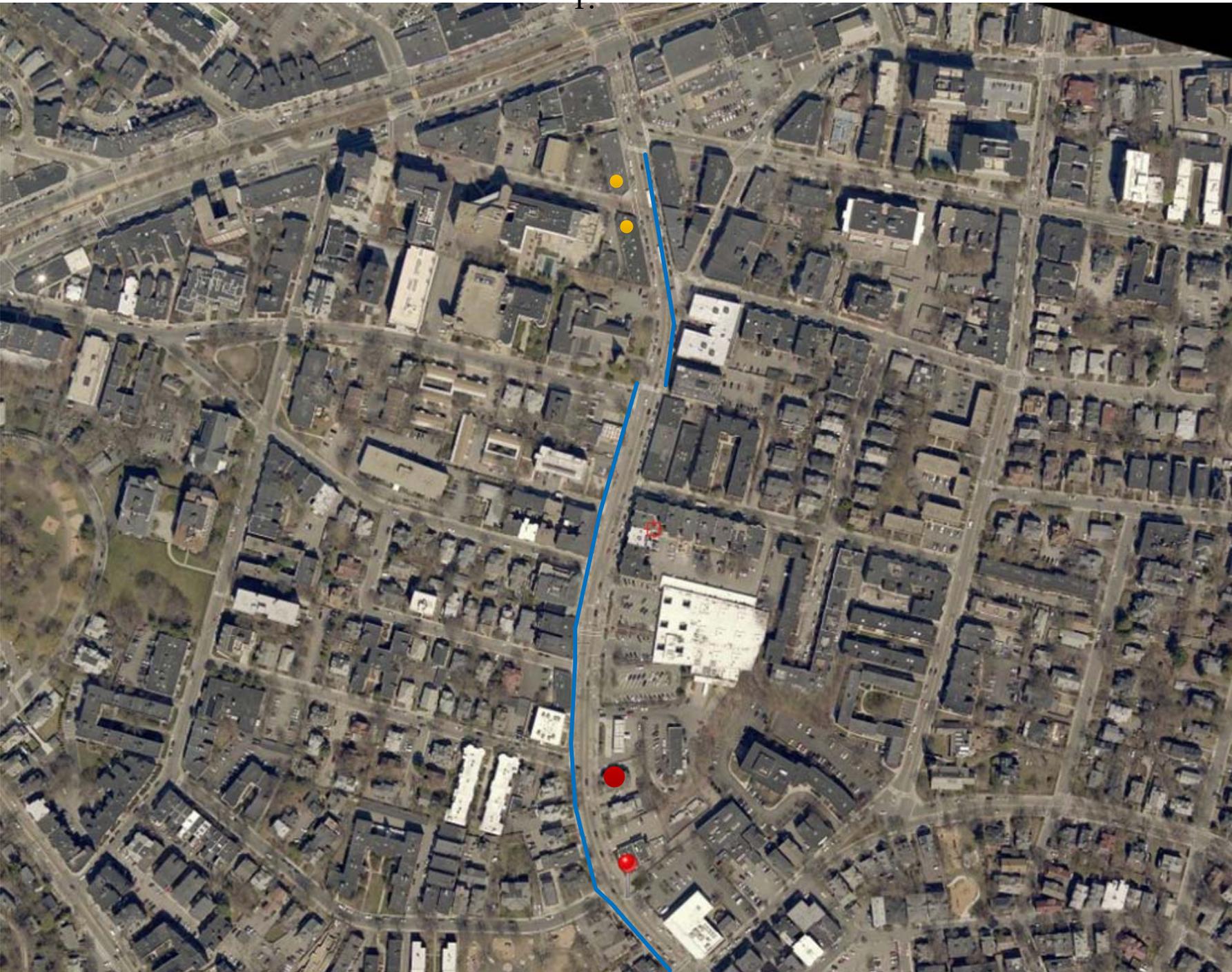
The Select Board had a general discussion of this matter at their meeting last evening. Board members noted congested sidewalks in some areas of the community and is supportive of strategic solutions that can create more separation. However, the Board acknowledged that an expansion of the sidewalk would likely reduce parking spaces on the affected streets and expressed some concern about the impact this would have on essential commercial activity, including the special pick-up and delivery zones that were created to facilitate safe purchases of food. In addition, the Board expressed concern about making new spaces so attractive that it would create more use and congestion than would otherwise be experienced. The Board requested that this matter be reviewed in more detail and a proposal developed for their consideration. In particular, the Board asked if the Transportation Board could consider this matter, with input from public health, public safety and parks officials.

Thank you for your cooperation in developing a proposal for the Board's consideration.

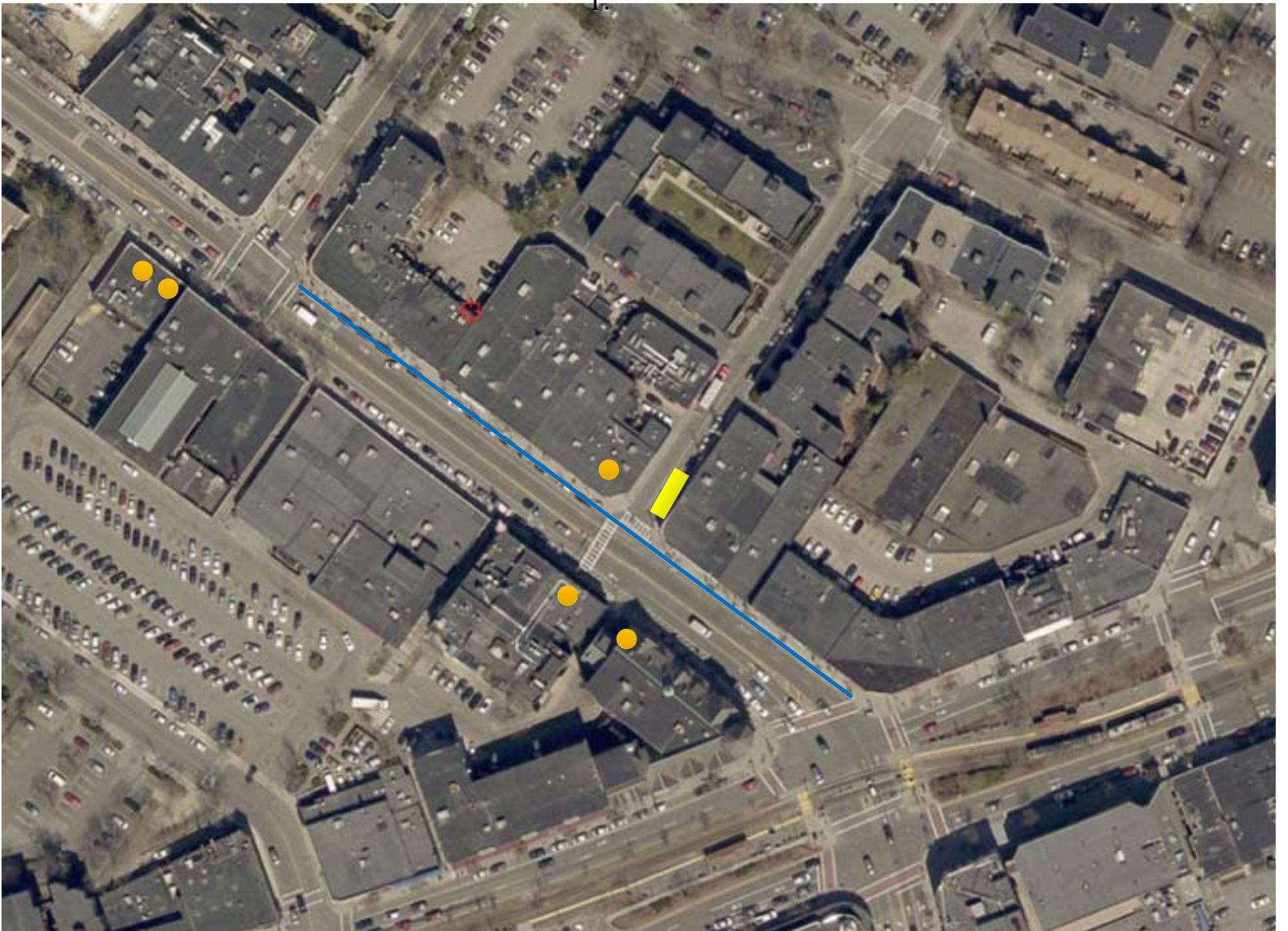
Mel Kleckner



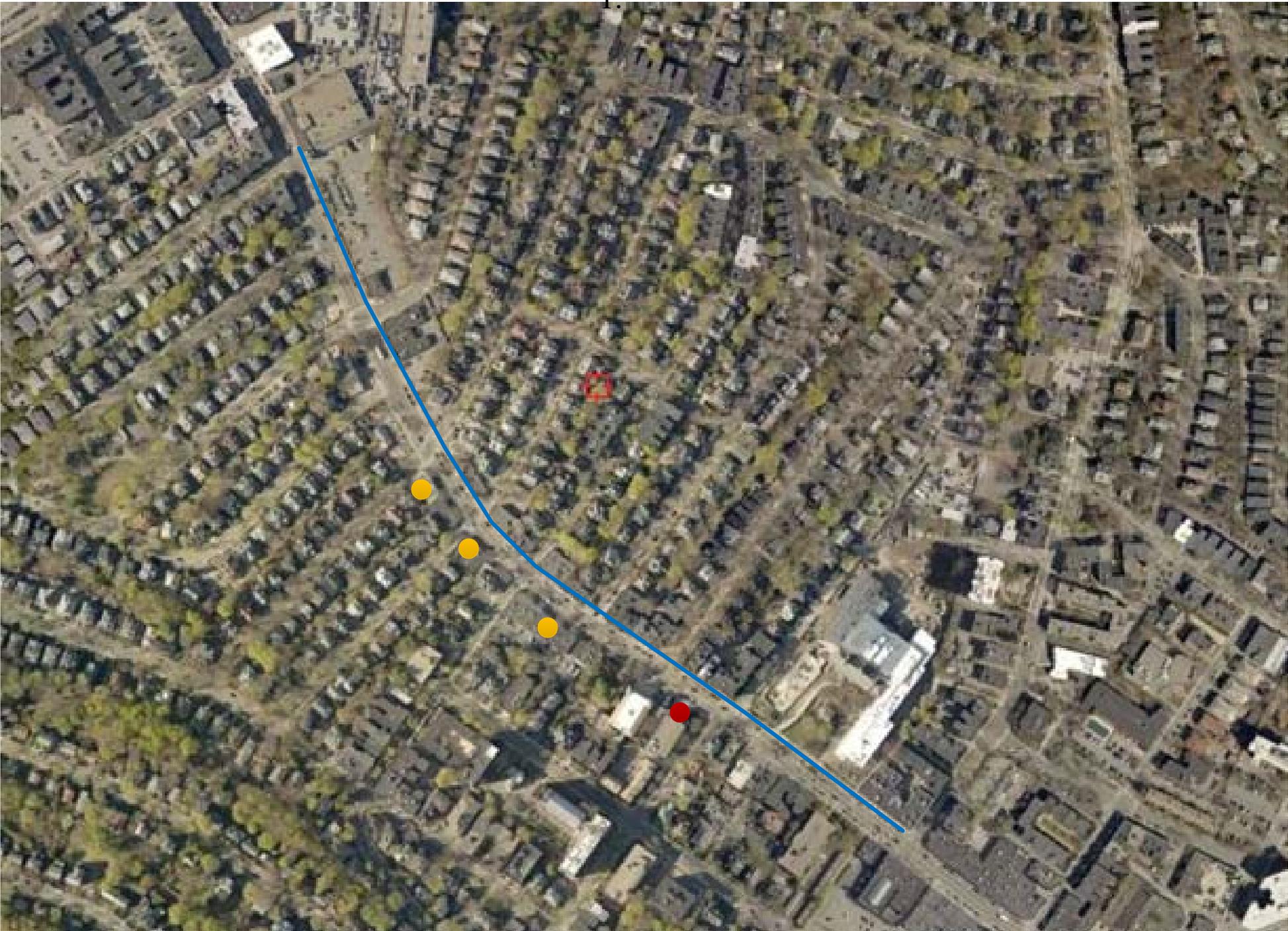
Harvard Street (School/Aspinwall to Kent)



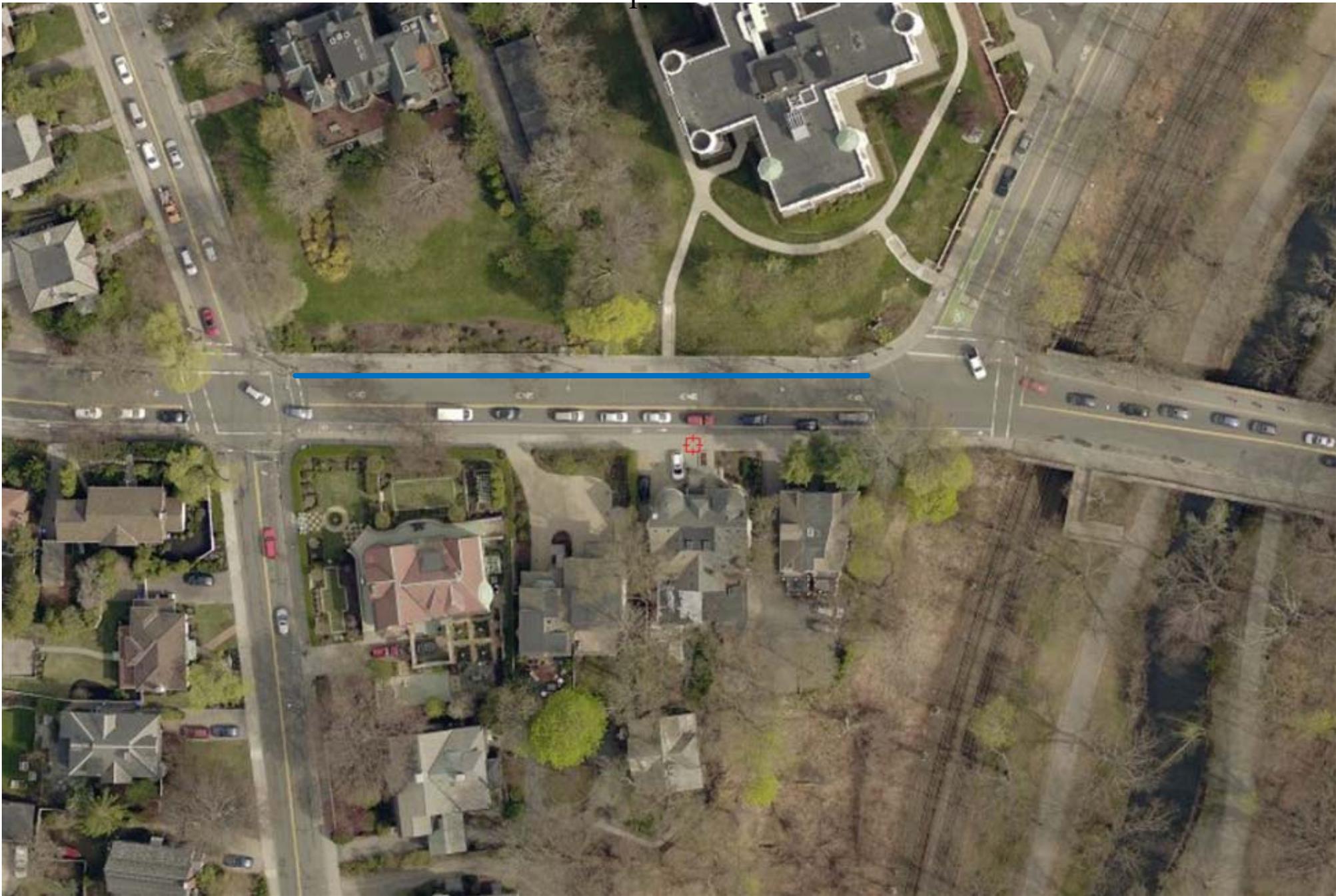
Harvard Street (Beacon to School/Aspinwall)



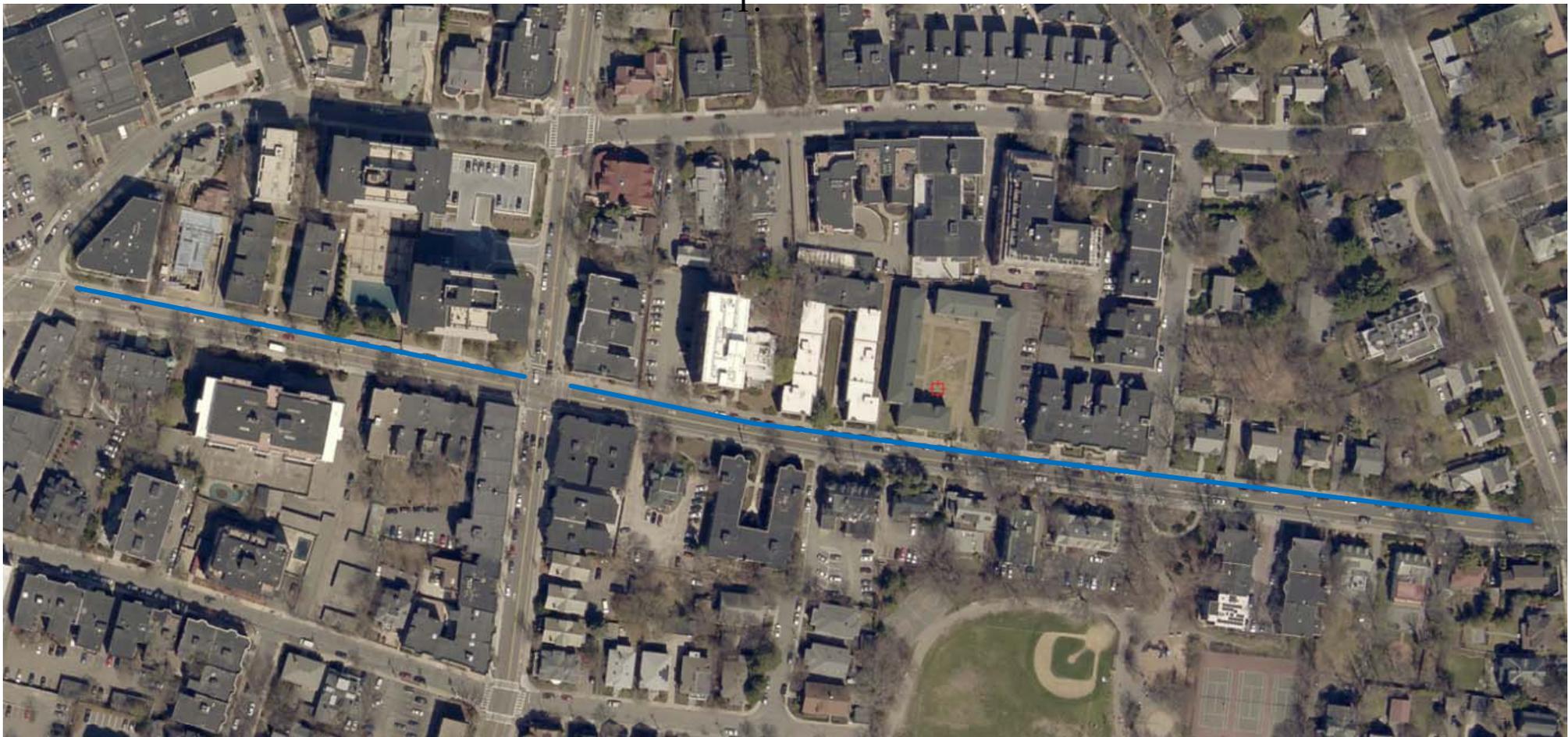
Harvard Street (Babcock to Beacon)



Harvard Street (Townline to Babcock)



Longwood Avenue (Townline to Kent St)

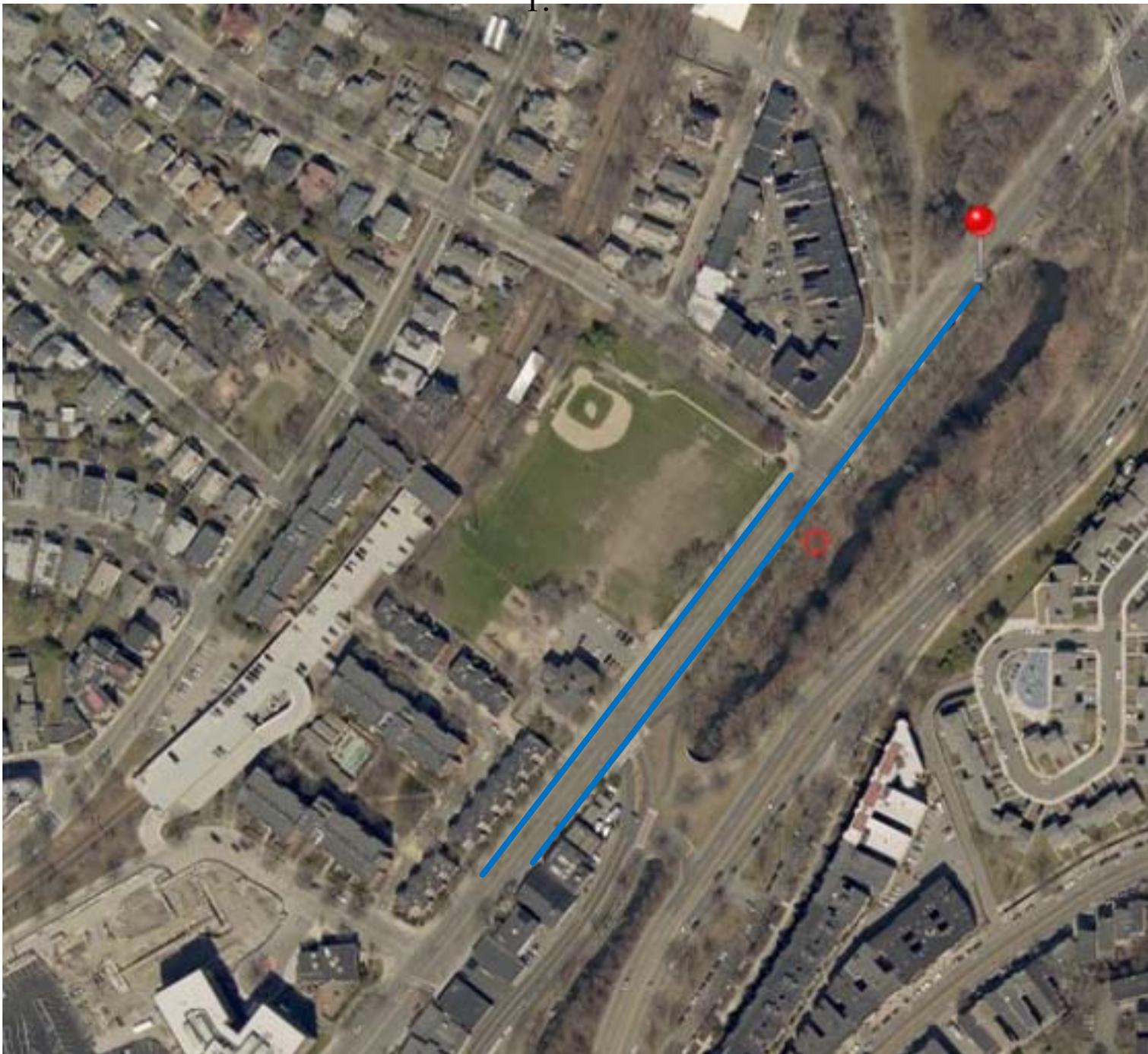


Longwood Avenue (Kent St to Sewall Ave)

Longwood Ave (west of Kent St)

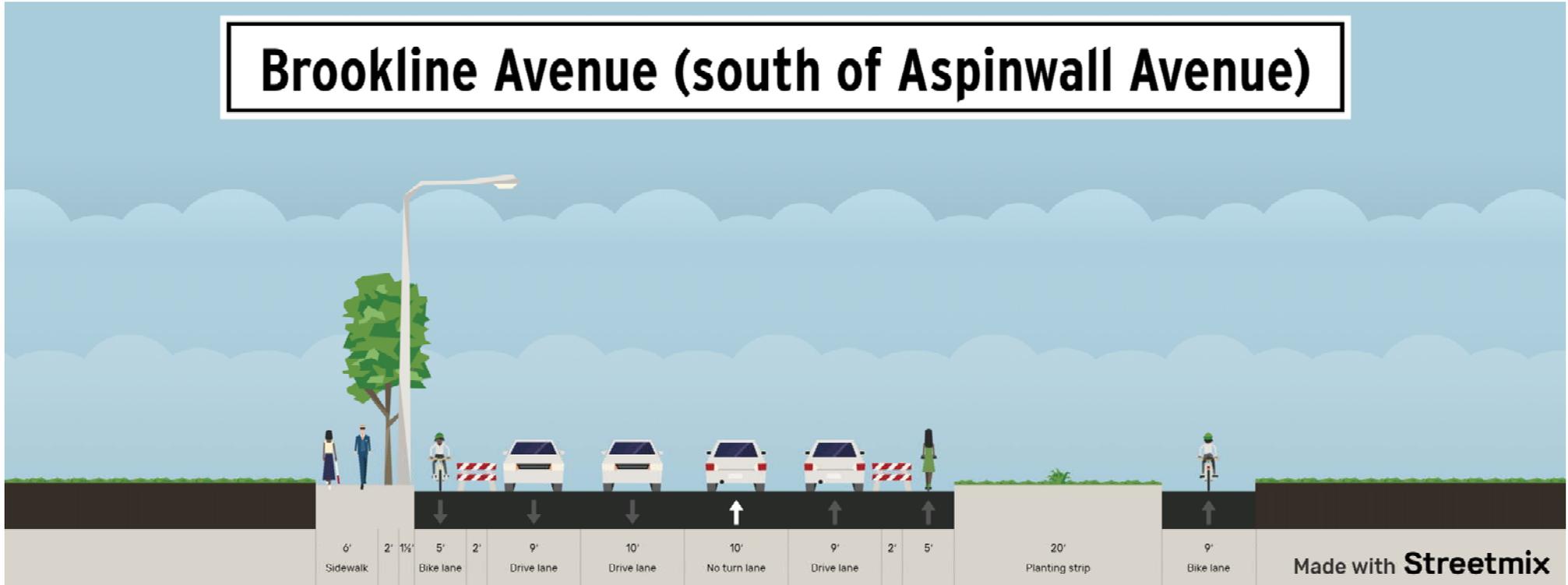


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Brookline Avenue

Brookline Avenue (south of Aspinwall Avenue)





Location where they will have to transition back up to the shared used pathway

Brookline Avenue (at Townline)

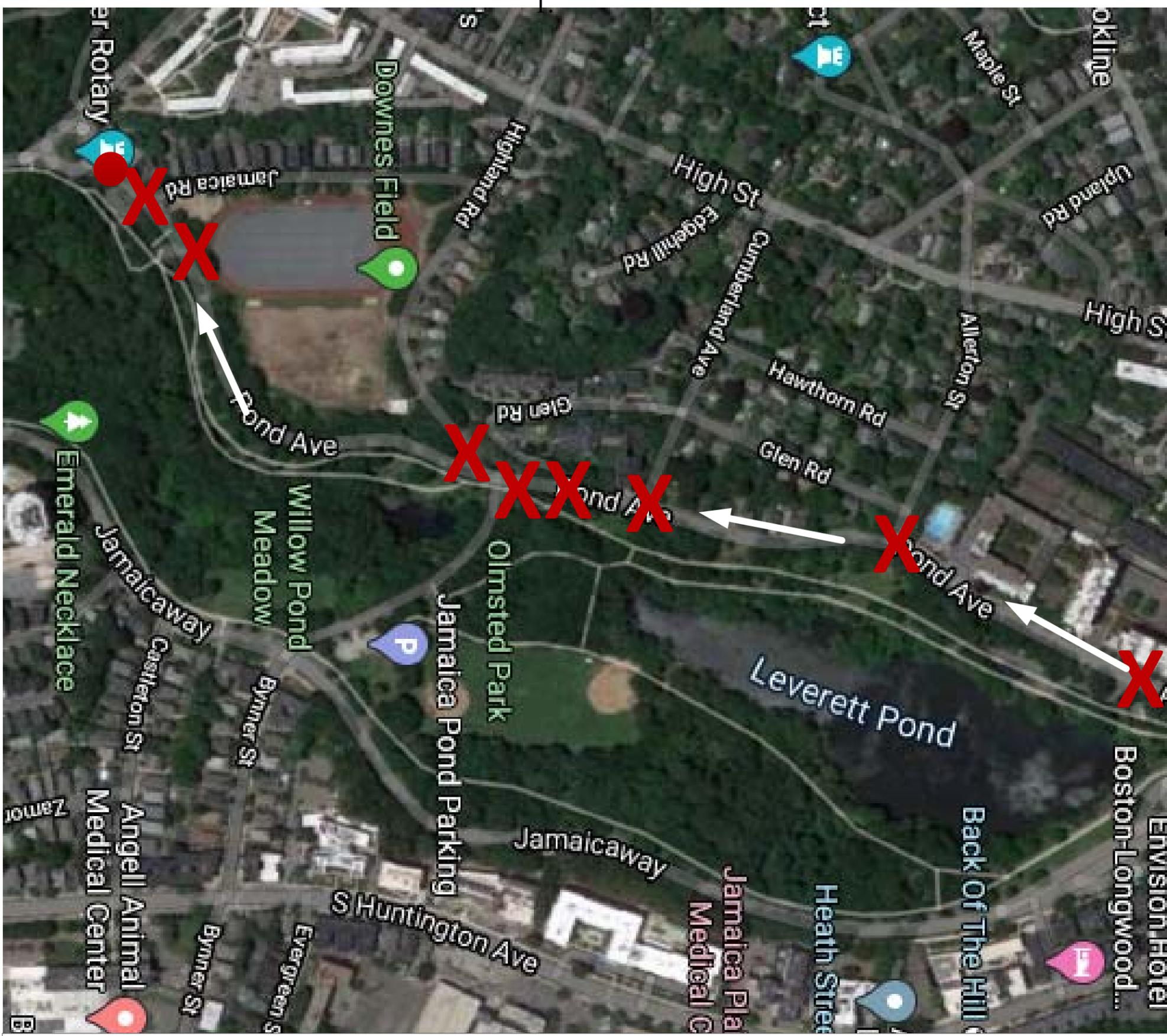


Beacon Street (at intersection immediately west of Harvard St)

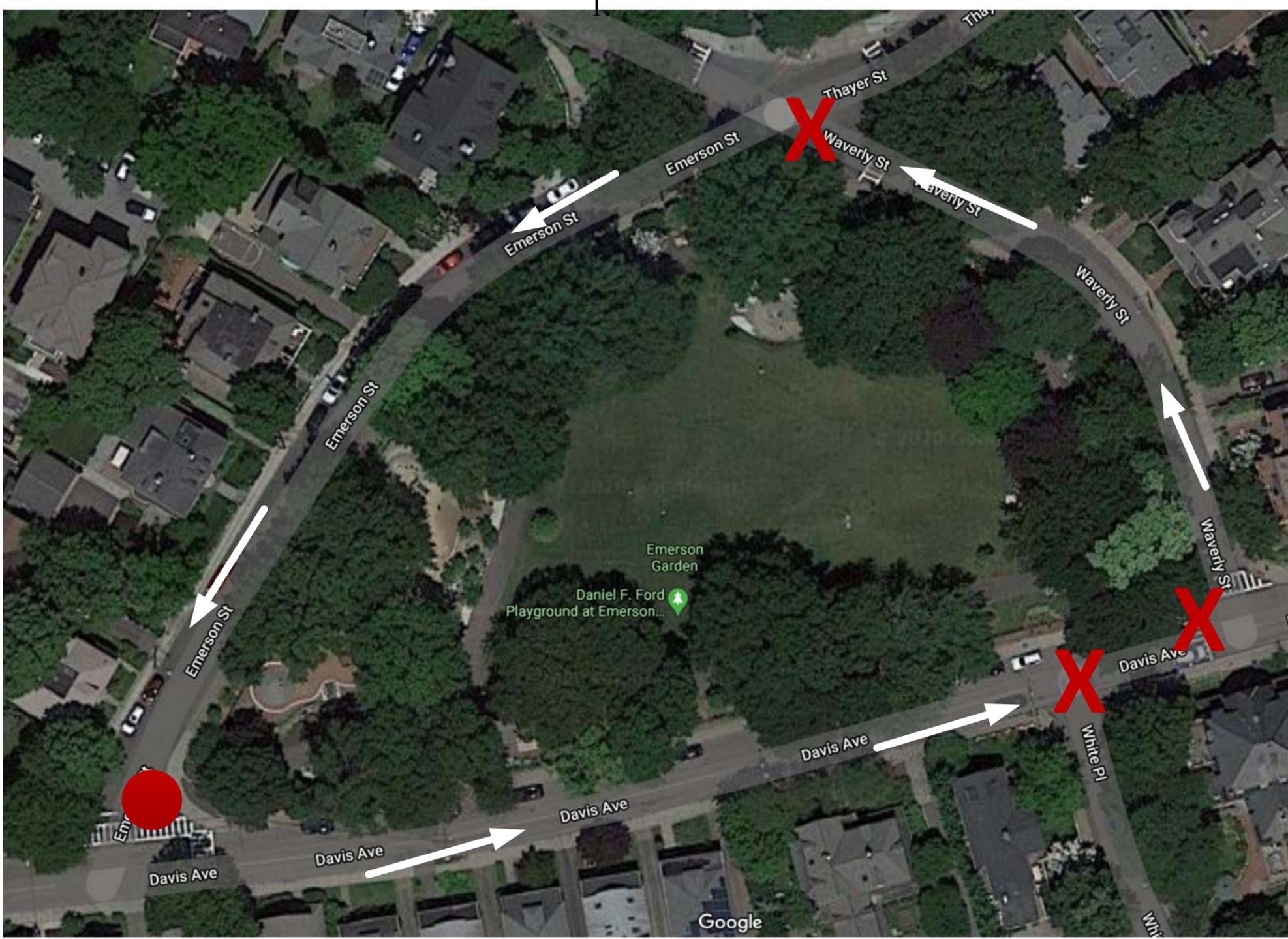


Beacon Street (in front of Trader Joes EB/Hops n Scotch WB)

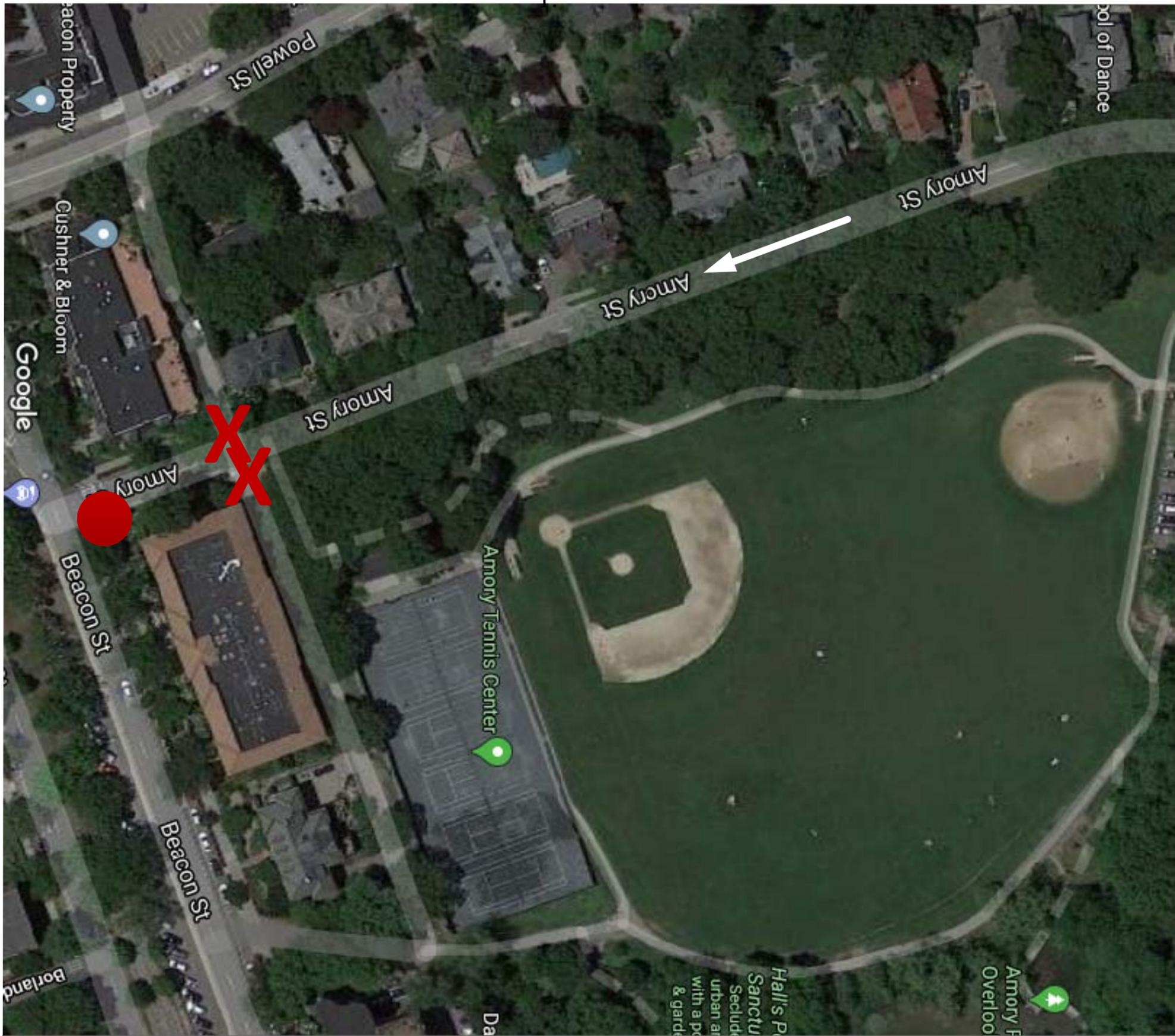




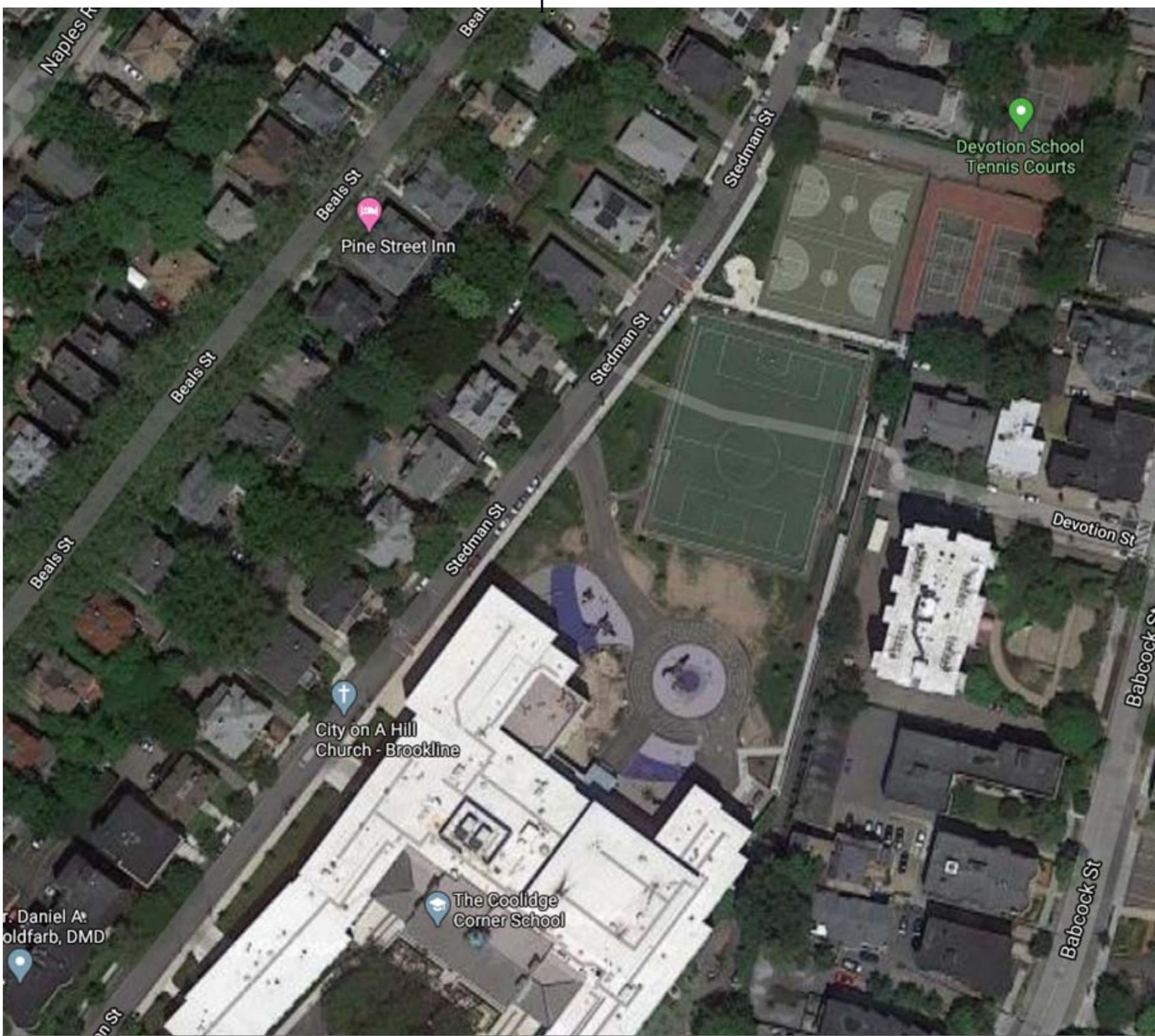
Pond Avenue (one way Washington St to P



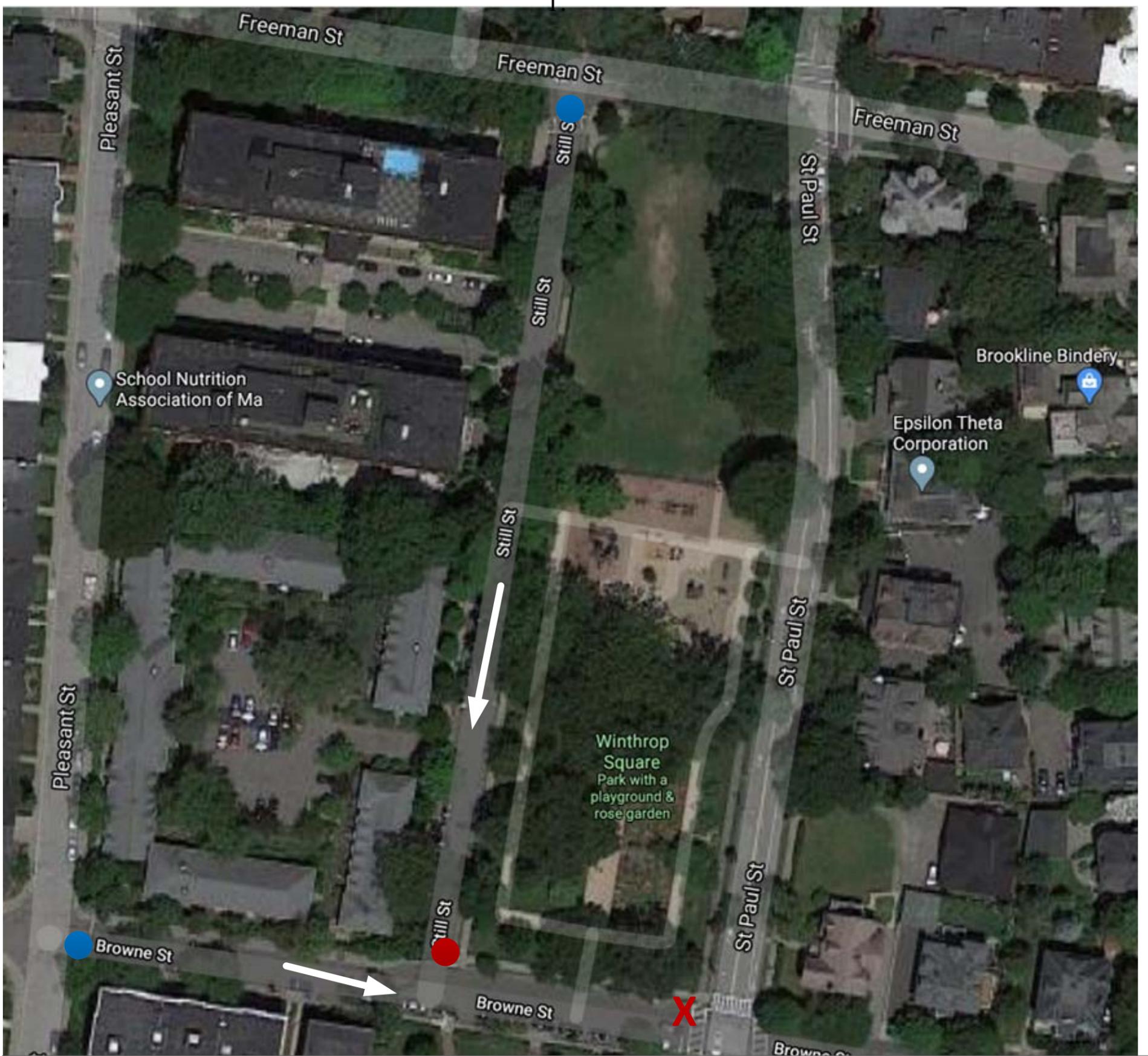
Emerson Playground (one way streets Emerson



Amory St (one way Freeman St to



Stedman St (remove parking adjacent to play



Stedman St (remove parking adjacent to play

1.

TO: Todd Kirrane, Transportation Administrator; Daniel Martin, Transportation Engineer; Chris Dempsey, Chair of the Transportation Board
CC: Bicycle Advisory Committee members
FROM: Elena Huisman, Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair
DATE: April 5, 2020
RE: BAC Recommends Temporarily Reopening Beacon Street Bridle Pathway

At the April 2020 Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting, the BAC discussed and voted to recommend to the Transportation Division and Transportation Board to **temporarily reopen Beacon Street's Bridle Pathway to people.**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, more and more Brookline residents are choosing to walk and ride their bikes to get to and from essential businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies. Residents are using parks and outdoor space for recreation and fresh air. This outdoor space to walk, jog, and cycle with six-plus feet of social distance is limited in North Brookline. Folks squeeze by on sidewalks and mix with cars in narrow and door lanes.

Though many daily outings to work and school have been curtailed currently, per 'stay at home' guidance from the Governor due to the Covid-19 emergency, people still venture out near their homes for fresh air, physical exercise, and peace of mind during this time of disruption and confinement. Equally important, many folks must still venture out for essential needs, like groceries and medicine. Beacon Street and Harvard Street serve both of these core needs especially.

By temporarily reopening Beacon Street's historical Bridle Pathway to people, it would both disperse and protect folks by providing a substantial (up to 32 feet wide) complement of space to Beacon Street's two outer-edge sidewalks (each 10 feet wide) and one-way door lane (five feet wide) for people to walk, jog, cycle, and the like, within the street's median reservation beside the MBTA trolley tracks.

And it could be enacted for the benefit of all of the neighborhoods and business districts along effectively the whole length of Beacon Street in Brookline.

This approach was piloted on two separate sections of the Bridle Path in May 2019 and October 2019 through collaboration between volunteers from the Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee and community organizations and staff in the Town of Brookline's Public Works and Police Departments. These events demonstrated the feasibility of temporarily opening the path for residents.

Further in our discussion, members of the BAC generally favored this approach to temporarily expanding accommodations for pedestrians and bicycle riders across town in a variety of locations.

Monday, April 6, 2020

Dear Transportation Board and Select Board,

Thank you for scheduling this meeting on this very important public health and safety topic and for the opportunity to provide comments.

For over 15 years, LivableStreets Alliance has advocated for streets that connect people to the places where they live, work and play.

Our programs include advocating for:

- **Better Buses:** systemwide improvements to optimize and prioritize bus transit
- **Emerald Network:** our vision for a 200-mile system of greenways in Greater Boston
- **Vision Zero:** the effort to systematically improve traffic safety in cities and towns

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand that it has been challenging for municipalities to balance the need for appropriate personal distancing while ensuring people have access to critical goods and services.

In this time of reduced automobile traffic and increased demand for public space for those on foot, in wheelchairs, running, biking, or using other personal mobility devices, we could and should maximize the space available to people so they can stay healthy throughout this crisis.

We are very supportive of efforts to widen sidewalks and to create temporary bike facilities through tactical means (ex. orange cones, signs, paint and other creative options) with the expressed purpose of providing safe access to essential services and businesses like grocery stores.

We do not recommend creating spaces that are designed specifically for recreation and gathering through the duration of the State at Home order. The highest priority should first be the health and safety of essential workers, vulnerable populations and those taking necessary trips.

We recognize that city workers are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response, so we encourage the City of Brookline to move at a pace that both meets the urgency of the crisis, but protects and respects worker constraints. We also recommend that any personnel involved with the implementation of these facilities be supplied with PPEs and any other appropriate protective gear.

Brookline has already taken the important first step of implementing automatic pedestrian recall at intersections throughout the city. We hope that Brookline will continue to be a leader in the region by implementing additional tactical interventions where they are needed most.

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Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Ambar Johnson, Program Director



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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Dr. Swannie Jett, DrPH, MSc
Director of Public Health
& Human Services

TO: Select Board

DATE: April 7, 2020

FROM: Advisory Council on Public Health (ACPH)

RE: Public Ways Recommendation

At our meeting on Monday, April 6, our council was informed that the town is giving consideration to expanding rights of way for walkers, joggers, and bikers so that they can continue to use outdoor spaces and exercise even during the COVID-19 crisis. In normal times we would be a strong proponent of this; unfortunately we are in the midst of a pandemic.

While we appreciate both the instinct to encourage our residents to enjoy the outside and exercise, and while we understand the appeal of expanding space so people might be able to do these things while maintaining social distancing, we recommend that such action NOT be taken.

One of the most important communication strategies to use during a public health emergency is consistency. Although people are allowed to leave the house for necessary errands and to engage in exercise if they can maintain social distancing, the key message to all residents of Brookline during this crisis is, "STAY HOME." Taking an affirmative action to make outdoor activity easier, even if it in some small way allows for greater social distancing, dilutes and may for some even contradict that message. We have no way of knowing whether widening rights of way will truly provide any greater protection, or if it would actually increase foot and bicycle traffic and congestion and lead to greater risk of transmission. Now is not the time to conduct an experiment to find out. We know from building highways that more does not lead to less congestion but leads to more use, and ultimately to more congestion. We have to assume this may be true for pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well.

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Both the maintain consistency of the shelter at home message, and to avoid the risk of encouraging more outdoor activity and person to person contact, we recommend that you not take action to expand rights of way for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists at this time We appreciate your consideration of this matter.