



To: Department of Conservation and Recreation

From: Melrose Pedestrian and Bicyclist Committee

Re: Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street

Date: December 9, 2020

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation:

The Melrose Pedestrian and Bicyclist Committee (PBC) is a volunteer group of Melrose residents who collaborate with residents, City staff, and Elected Officials, to advocate for safer streets and public space in the City of Melrose, with a special emphasis on walking, bicycling, and accessing transit.

Our members represent a broad cross section of residents from all walks of life, and include professional engineers, planners, architects, and others with a skillset that allows our group to provide technical recommendations to the City, typically aligned with existing and proposed State and local funding opportunities, including MassDOT's Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, and Safe Routes to School grant programs.

In 2017, the PBC developed a North-South Bike Route and Pedestrian Safety Improvement Plan with specific recommendations for Main Street, to be implemented as part of a MassDOT Complete Streets project. The concept plan (see attachment) depicts the northern segment of these recommendations, which overlap with Lynn Fells Parkway, and the intersection of Melrose Street that is the topic of DCR's upcoming public meeting. While the City implemented many of the recommendations we made, our plan through this section of Main Street includes several changes to DCR-controlled right-of-way and signals along Lynn Fells Parkway, which have been delayed while DCR conducted traffic studies and developed projects at these locations.

As part of the current effort to study improvements to Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street, we request that DCR work with the City of Melrose to implement the other improvements we recommend in these plans, including:

- Continuous bike lanes connecting the existing bike lanes on Lynn Fells Parkway west of Vinton Street and east of Bellevue Avenue;

- Signal modifications at the intersection of Lynn Fells Parkway and Main Street, as well as adjacent signal(s), that improve traffic flow, encourage adherence to the City's 25 mph speed limit, and facilitate the introduction of bike lanes along Main Street;
- Signalization or other reconfiguration, including studying the potential for a roundabout, at the complex, multi-legged intersection of Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street.

Our recommendation at the intersection of Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street include potential reconfiguration of the direction of travel on Melrose and/or Crystal Street, and potential closure of the eastern leg of Melrose Street. These are concepts that we developed that do not necessarily consider signalization. We are not opposed to other potential solutions that would make traffic movements more predictable and improve pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety through this intersection, including signalization. To that end, we respectfully submit the following observations and requests for the eventual design solution to clarify our design intent:

Problems and Safety Issues

- Visibility is poor for all roadway users, which contributes to dangerous driving behavior and puts people, especially vulnerable road users, at heightened risk of injury or death
- Existing crossing distances are long and expose vulnerable road users to considerable risk of injury or death with little to no protection from motorists
- Current, multi-legged intersection configuration results in too many concurrently allowable vehicle movements, contributing to a large number of conflict points and crashes (head on, t-bone, side swipe, rear end)
- There are no dedicated bicycle facilities through this intersection, at a location with our Middle and High School, a major commercial hub, and recreational designations, that could significantly benefit from safer, more convenience bicycle access

Solutions and Desired Condition

- Melrose Middle and High Schools should be recognized as primary walking and bicycling areas where walking and bicycling should be prioritized over vehicle flow
- Add continuous bike lanes along Lynn Fells Parkway from Vernon to Bellevue to bridge existing gap
- Reduce and consolidate commercial driveways along Lynn Fells Parkway
- Add raised median refuges at all crosswalks along Lynn Fells Parkway
- Reduce allowed concurrent vehicle movements at Melrose/Lynn Fells Parkway
- Study the potential for a roundabout to reduce vehicle, pedestrian, and bicyclists delay and reduce the risk of injury
- Consider closing the eastern leg of Melrose Street to Lynn Fells Parkway and connecting Crystal Street as a one-way loop, with parking/drop-off areas on the northern side of Melrose for the existing preschool
- Consider closing the eastern leg of Melrose Street to Lynn Fells Parkway and making Crystal Street two-way to facilitate access to the neighborhood from Main Street
- Implement a consistent speed limit of 25 mph along all of Lynn Fells Parkway within Melrose and coordinate signals to encourage adherence to this speed limit
- Reconfigure Main Street at Lynn Fells Parkway to make all left turn movements from left turn only lanes, and right turns from right turn/straight lanes;
- Implement No Turn on Red at all signals
- Coordinate with the City of Melrose to add a center turn lane, pedestrian median refuges, and bike lanes on Main Street

The PBC recognizes and appreciates the thoughtfulness DCR has given to projects along Lynn Fells Parkway in the recent past. These include the striping of buffered bike lanes on the eastern segment of the Parkway, and the recent intersection improvements made at Nelson Road and Lincoln Street. These projects clearly demonstrate the interest and capacity within DCR to develop projects that consider and accommodate local context and community goals. We look forward to continuing to participate in this public process around the intersection of Melrose Street and Lynn Fells Parkway, and working collaboratively with our partners in the City staff and Elected Offices to ensure the final proposals help us advance our collective goals of reducing tailpipe emissions and improving the comfort and safety of people traveling on foot, by bicycle, and on transit.

Sincerely,

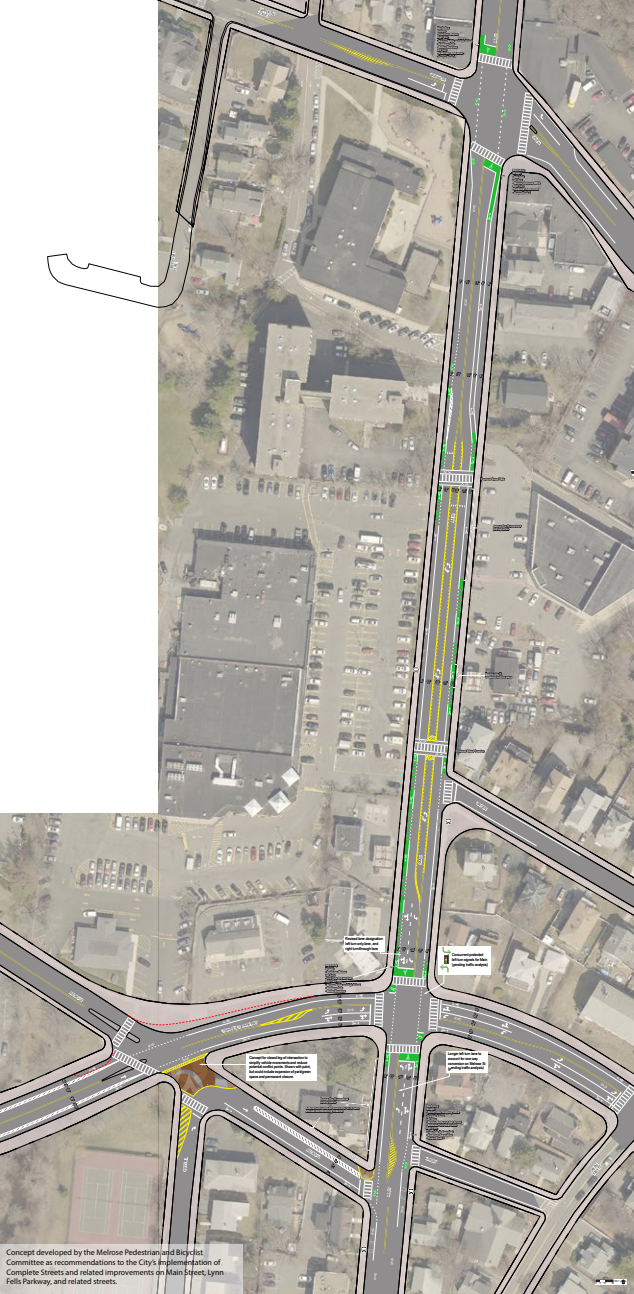
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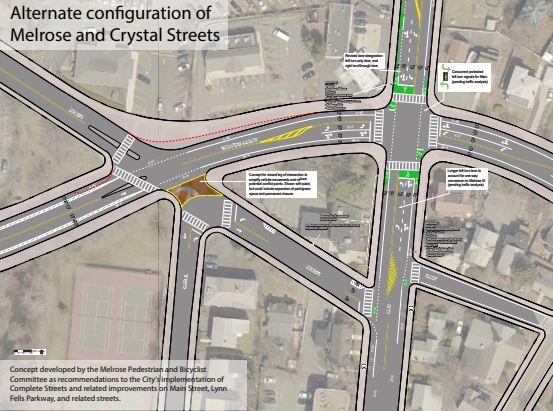
Finn McSweeney, Communications Officer mcsweeney.f@gmail.com,

And our members.



Concept developed by the Melrose Pedestrian and Bicyclist Committee as recommendations to the City's implementation of Complete Streets and related improvements on Main Street, Lynn Fells Parkway, and related streets.

Alternate configuration of Melrose and Crystal Streets



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