



Transportation Advisory Committee, Arlington Planning Department,
730 Mass Ave, Arlington MA, c/o Laura Wiener

To: Board of Selectmen, Arlington, MA
From: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
Subject: Gray Street Crosswalks
Date: 30 September 2013

At the request of several residents, the TAC undertook a study of Gray Street to determine if additional crosswalks were warranted to improve pedestrian safety and mobility. The study was in concert with the Arlington Public Works Department, Brackett Safe Routes to Schools program and the Director of Transportation for the schools.

Two areas of Gray Street were studied: east of Highland Avenue at Churchill Avenue and Valley Road, and west of Highland at Scituate Street, Mt. Vernon Street and Coolidge Road. After collecting data and observations, the TAC unanimously voted in June to recommend the following:

1. Install a crosswalk on Gray St at the intersection with Mt. Vernon St.
2. Replace an existing 30MPH Speed Limit sign with a 25 MPH Speed Advisory sign on Gray St WB in advance of Churchill Ave.
3. Take no action on the Gray St crosswalk request at Churchill Ave.
4. Take no immediate action on a Gray St crosswalk at Valley Rd.

Please refer to the attached report for detailed information.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth Carr-Jones and Jeffrey Maxtutis – Working Group Leads
Howard Muise and Richard Turcotte – TAC Co-Chairs

Transportation Advisory Committee Members:

Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Wayne Chouinard, Jean Clark, Paul Kent, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise,
Officer Corey Rateau, Scott Smith, Edward Starr, Richard Turcotte, and Laura Wiener

Web site; www.arlingtonma.gov/tac

Report: Gray Street Crosswalks

1. Introduction

At the request of several residents, the TAC undertook a study of Gray Street to determine if additional crosswalks were warranted to improve pedestrian safety and mobility (refer to Gray Street Requests on pages 4-5). The study was conducted in concert with the Arlington Public Works Department, Brackett Safe Routes to Schools program and the Director of Transportation for the schools.

Two areas of Gray Street were studied: east of Highland Avenue at Churchill Avenue and Valley Road, and west of Highland at Scituate Street, Mt. Vernon Street and Coolidge Road.



Gray Street, circled intersections were part of study.

2. Analysis

The TAC formed a working group and conducted field observations and pedestrian counts at several non-signalized Gray Street intersections. Please refer to “About Crosswalks,” the TAC’s Guideline on arlingtonma.gov for our evaluation criteria.

Gray Street is an Urban Collector roadway, with an approximate Average Daily Traffic of 4,000 vehicles with 85% traffic speeds of approximately 35 MPH. It has a continuous sidewalk on the north side and a discontinuous sidewalk on the south side.

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East of Highland Avenue Intersections

Churchill Avenue is a Local Roadway, with an Average Daily Traffic of 700 - 800 vehicles with an 85% speed of 30 mph. It is a Public Way north of Gray Street with sidewalks on both sides, and a Private Way south of Gray Street with no sidewalks. At the intersection of Churchill Avenue, it was determined that there was insufficient pedestrian volume to warrant the installation of a crosswalk (refer to counts on page 6). The stopping sight distance is also insufficient for current traffic speeds on Gray Street. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines, the sight distance required for adequate stopping is 250 feet for traffic at 35 MPH. The sight distance from the west side of Churchill toward traffic from the east was measured at 213 feet. In order to increase safety for the pedestrians that do cross there, we recommend placing a 25 MPH speed advisory sign at the westbound approach to the intersection to reduce traffic speeds for adequate stopping distance.

Valley Road is a Private Local Roadway, with very low traffic and no sidewalks. There is a bus stop for the Bishop School at the Valley Road intersection. Sight distances are adequate for a crosswalk at this location. However, the Director of Transportation for the Schools reports a decrease in the number of students using this bus stop. Observations in June indicated one student using the stop, who did not cross Gray Street. The TAC would consider a crosswalk at this location if use of the school bus stop justifies it in the future.

West of Highland Avenue Intersections

The west section of Gray Street between Highland Avenue and Oakland Avenue is heavily used by Brackett, Ottoson and High School students (refer to crossing counts on page 7).

Mt. Vernon Street is a Public Local Roadway with sidewalks on both sides. The Mt. Vernon Street intersection is frequently used by Brackett School students. Counts in June indicated adequate pedestrian volume to warrant a crosswalk: 22 crossings during the half hour before the start of school. The sight distances at this intersection are also adequate for safe installation of a crosswalk. A crosswalk at this location also creates roughly equidistant spacing between the existing crosswalks at Highland Avenue, Pine Ridge Road and Quincy Street.

Scituate Street is a Local Roadway. It is Public with sidewalks on both sides between Gloucester Street and Eastern Avenue (including the intersection with Gray Street) and Private south of Eastern Avenue with no formal sidewalks. The Scituate Street intersection was also used by Brackett students to cross Gray Street, though less heavily: 5 crossings during the half hour before the start of school. Sight distances at this intersection are also adequate.

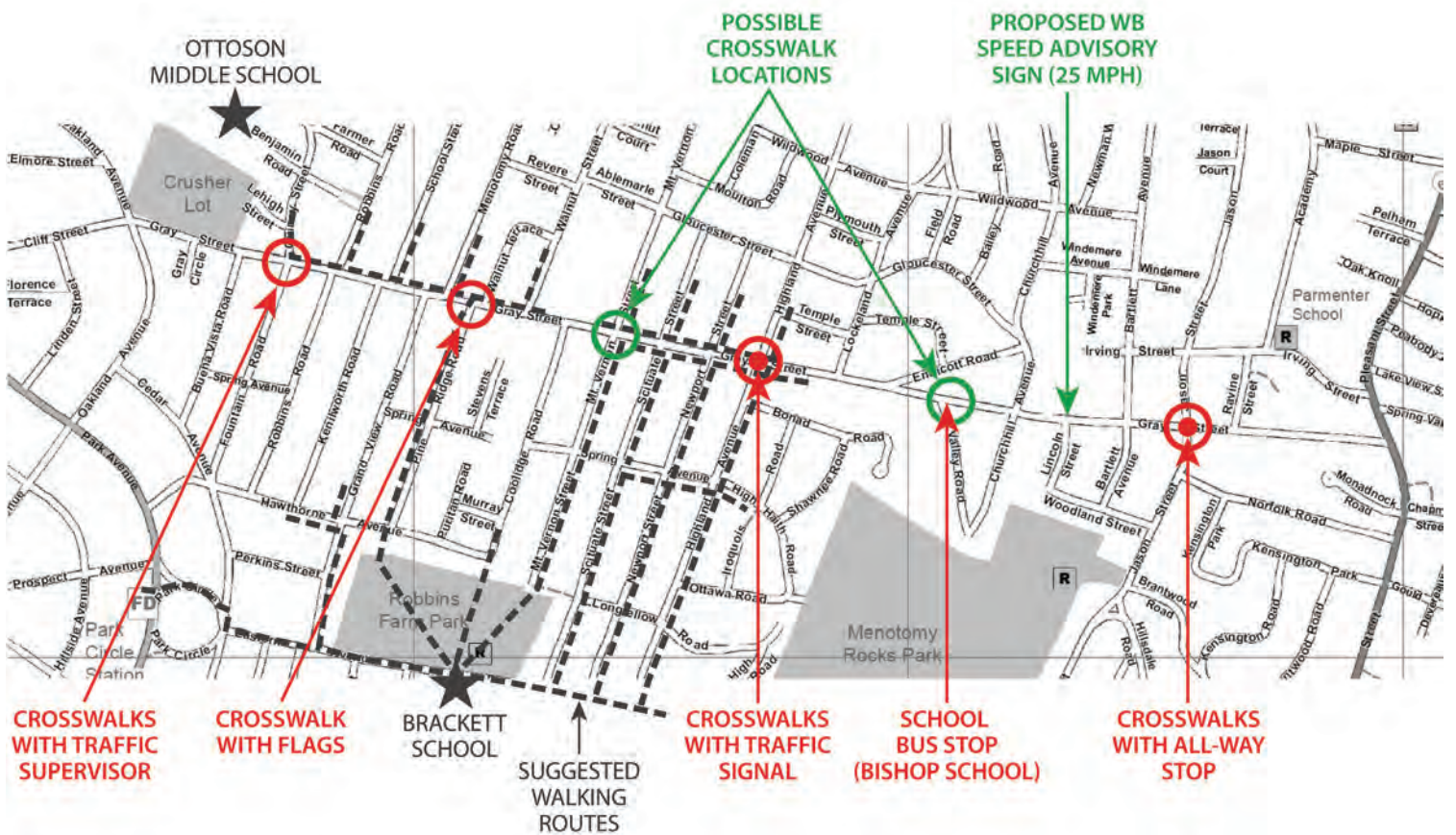
Coolidge Road is a Private Local Roadway with no sidewalks. The Coolidge Road intersection had nearly as many Brackett School crossings as Mt. Vernon Street: 17

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crossings during the half hour before the start of school. However, it is a less appropriate school route because it is a Private Way with no sidewalks.



Possible (labeled above) and Existing (labeled below) crosswalk locations on Gray Street.

3. Conclusions

A crosswalk is warranted on Gray Street at Mt. Vernon Street and we expect that it would be beneficial for pedestrian safety and mobility. We also expect that a 25 MPH speed advisory sign on the westbound Gray Street approach to Churchill Avenue would increase pedestrian safety at this location. If use of the Bishop School bus stop at Valley Road warrants a crosswalk in the future, a crosswalk could be considered. At our June meeting, the TAC unanimously voted the following recommendations:

1. Install a crosswalk on Gray St at the intersection with Mt. Vernon St.
2. Replace an existing 30MPH Speed Limit sign with a 25 MPH Speed Advisory sign on Gray St WB in advance of Churchill Ave.
3. Take no action on the Gray St crosswalk request at Churchill Ave.
4. Take no immediate action on a Gray St crosswalk at Valley Rd.

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School Crosswalk Assembly (for Mt. Vernon St.) and Speed Advisory sign (east of Churchill Ave).

Gray Street Requests

Request through the Town's Request Answer Center on 11/11/2012

Street Signs
Other signage concern

There is no stop sign at the corner of Gray Street and Churchill Avenue
Gray street & Churchill Ave

There is no stop sign at Gray street where it intersects with Churchill avenue (top of hill). Cars speed up the hill from Jason st, sometimes at what appears to be 40 miles per hr. Meanwhile lots of moms, babies and strollers (including myself with my two kids) try to cross Gray street there to get to Menotomy Rocks Park - or if we are just out on a walk, and it is very dangerous. Cars don't want to stop there and they forget that it is a residential area. Even when I stand there with a baby in tow, cars whiz by as if it were Route 2. There is a school bus stop also on Gray one block up, so I think placing stop signs on Gray in both directions where they hit Churchill would make this whole road a lot safer and would also decrease the number of cars that speed. Thank you for your consideration, I look forward up hearing from someone. Sincerely, Shana

Shana Yansen
W029550-111112

Request through the Town's TAC page web site contacts on 5/09/12

Subject: input on additional crosswalk on Gray Street: Scituate or Mt. Vernon

Ms. Carr-Jones,

I am a precinct 14 resident and parent of a child who walks back and forth (from Walnut Court, crossing Gray) to the Brackett School. I heard from a neighbor that the Transportation Advisory Committee was considering adding an additional crosswalk across Gray Street (somewhere between the light at Highland Avenue and the existing crosswalk at Pine Ridge Road). I don't see it listed explicitly on the agenda for tonight's meeting, but thought I should send along my comments.

I would heartily endorse this idea, because walking to school during rush hour in the morning especially, it is always a challenge to safely cross Gray Street.

To that end, I would like to give the input that I think that any crossing added should be at either Scituate Street or Mount Vernon Street. Scituate is the one that runs all the way through to Eastern Avenue, while Mt. Vernon would be fine as well (closer to our house and fine for us to cross the park at the end).

(Note: we avoid the most "direct" route to school from our house (going up Walnut Street and then Coolidge Road), because both of those streets lack sidewalks for a good proportion of the time)

Thank you for taking my input and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Katherine McNeill

Request through the Town's TAC page web site contacts on 4/12/12

Subject: Crosswalk on Gray St for Brackett commute

Dear Ms Carr Jones,

I am a resident of Walnut St and a Brackett parent. I walk with my son to school just about every day. A few months ago on Brackett's "Jingle Bell" walk to school day, I met and spoke to John Lentz. He mentioned that the TAC was looking into adding a crosswalk somewhere along the 1/3 mile stretch between Highland and Pine Ridge. I am writing to inquire about that effort and to see if it is still moving forward.

We have two main routes to school: the first is to walk up Walnut, cross Gray, and continue up Coolidge and walk across the park (we go this way when we have a stroller or if we're in a hurry). The second route is to cut over to Mt Vernon St on Albemarle, go up Mt Vernon all the way to the park, climb the steps and cut across the park (we go this way because it provides a sidewalk the whole way up, but it can't be done with a stroller unless you cut back over to Coolidge). Both routes involve crossing Gray St without a crosswalk.

If we want to use a crosswalk, we must go out of our way in either of two directions. The controlled intersection at Highland is significantly out of the way and just isn't feasible. The crosswalk at Pine Ridge, while only about 300' out of the way of route 1 (600' roundtrip), is made worse by the fact that we have to climb an extra hill to use it. This may sound like a small issue, but I can tell you that everyone on Walnut St who walks (approximately 7 walking families) walks up either Coolidge or Mt Vernon and does not use the crosswalk at Pine Ridge. I realize that is our choice and most of us know that it would be better to cross at Pine Ridge, but for a variety of reasons not one of us walks that way.

For those of us who walk up Mt Vernon (which includes maybe 3 families on Walnut plus 4-6 that I know of on Mt Vernon, Albemarle, and the Plymouth/Coleman area), the crosswalk is over 725' up Gray and adds a significant elevation gain. The Mt Vernon route is preferred by many families since it allows us to walk on the sidewalk for the entire length of the walk (Coolidge and Pine Ridge do not have a sidewalk the entire length of the street). When I think about how I'd like my son to walk when I no longer accompany him I do not like having to choose between having him cross Gray St at a crosswalk and having him walk on a sidewalk the whole way.

Sure, I could ask him to cross Gray at the Pine Ridge crosswalk and then backtrack to Mt Vernon, but that's asking a lot.

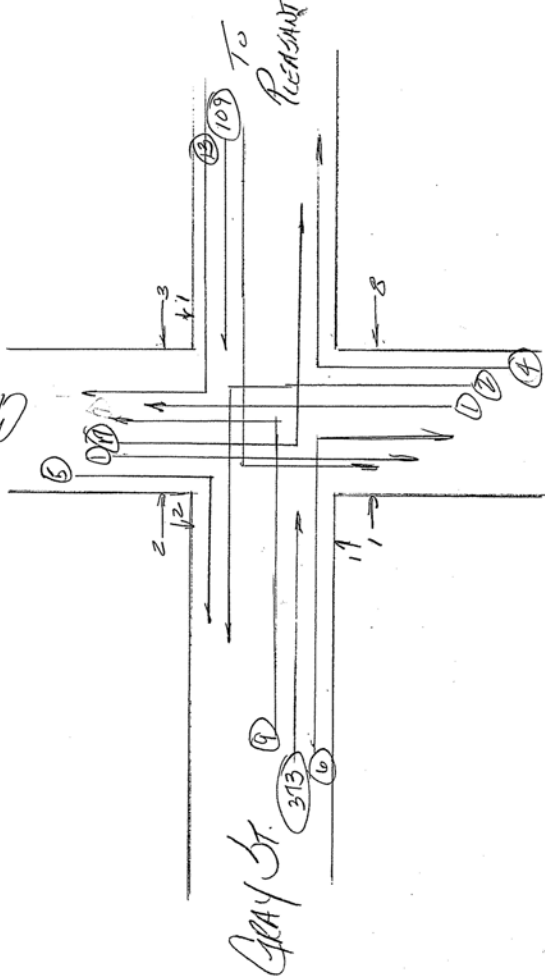
I am amazed at the speed and carelessness with which commuters drive on Gray St in the morning. While I understand drivers are under no legal obligation to stop for pedestrians who aren't in marked crosswalks, I am perplexed by the number of drivers who do not at least feel a moral obligation. There are times when a group of children and adults with strollers or kids in backpacks stands at the corner for several minutes as car after car whizzes past us (many of them with kids of their own in the back seat!).

I know that adding a crosswalk involves a lot more than simply painting some white lines on the street. I hope that the TAC/BoS is continuing to explore that possibility and gather data so that we can possibly see a new crosswalk before the start of the next school year. Please let me know if the residents in my neighborhood can do anything to move this process along.

Thank you for your time in reading this and for serving as the Precinct 8-14 representative to the TAC,
Sarah Hugenberger
Precinct 14

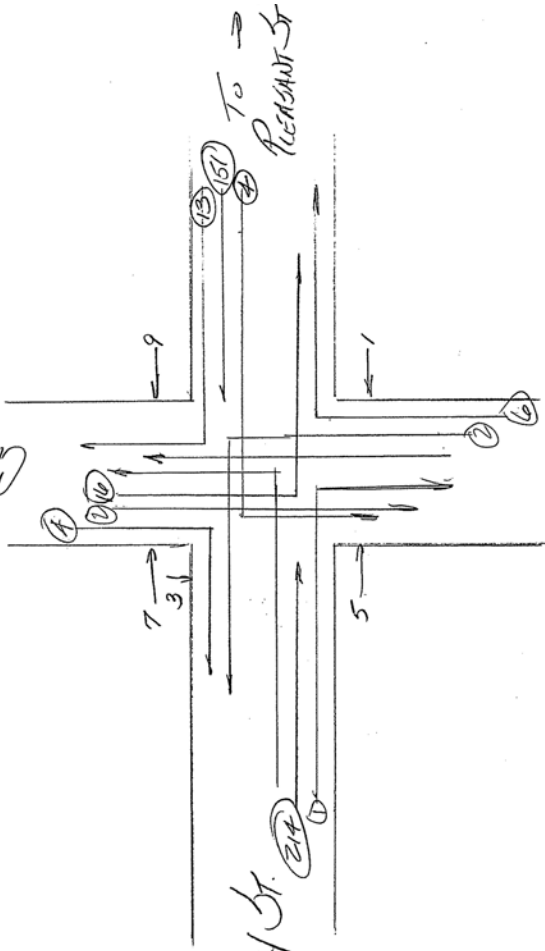
4-4-13
7:30-8:30
Ped. Crossing 18

Church Hill
A16.



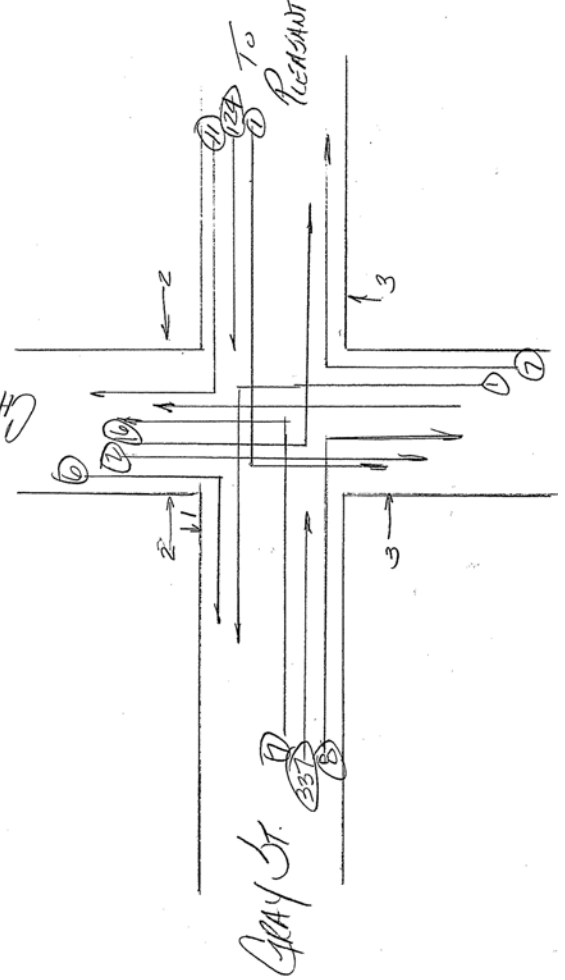
4-4-13
2:00-3:30
Ped. Crossing 25

Church Hill
A16.



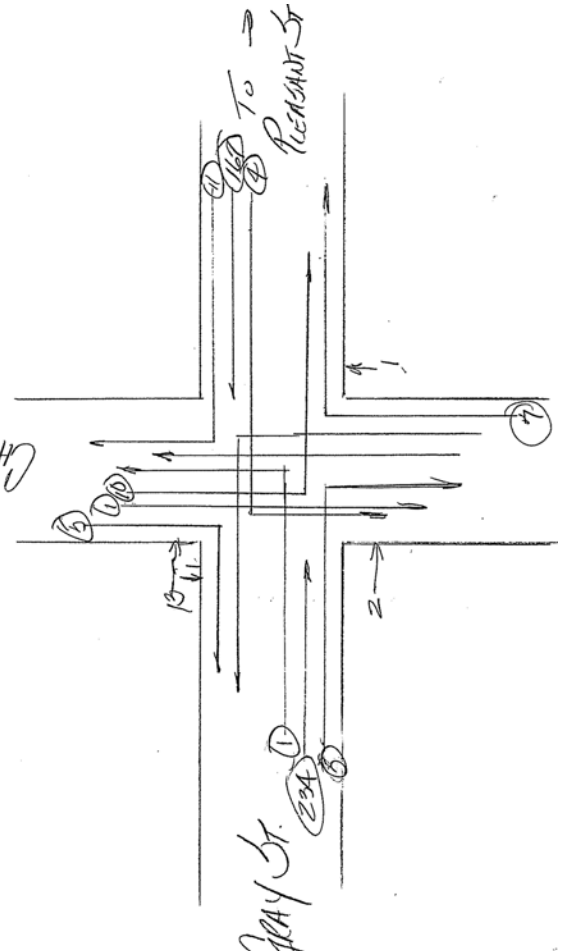
4-10-13
7:30-8:30
Ped. Crossing 11

Church Hill
A16.



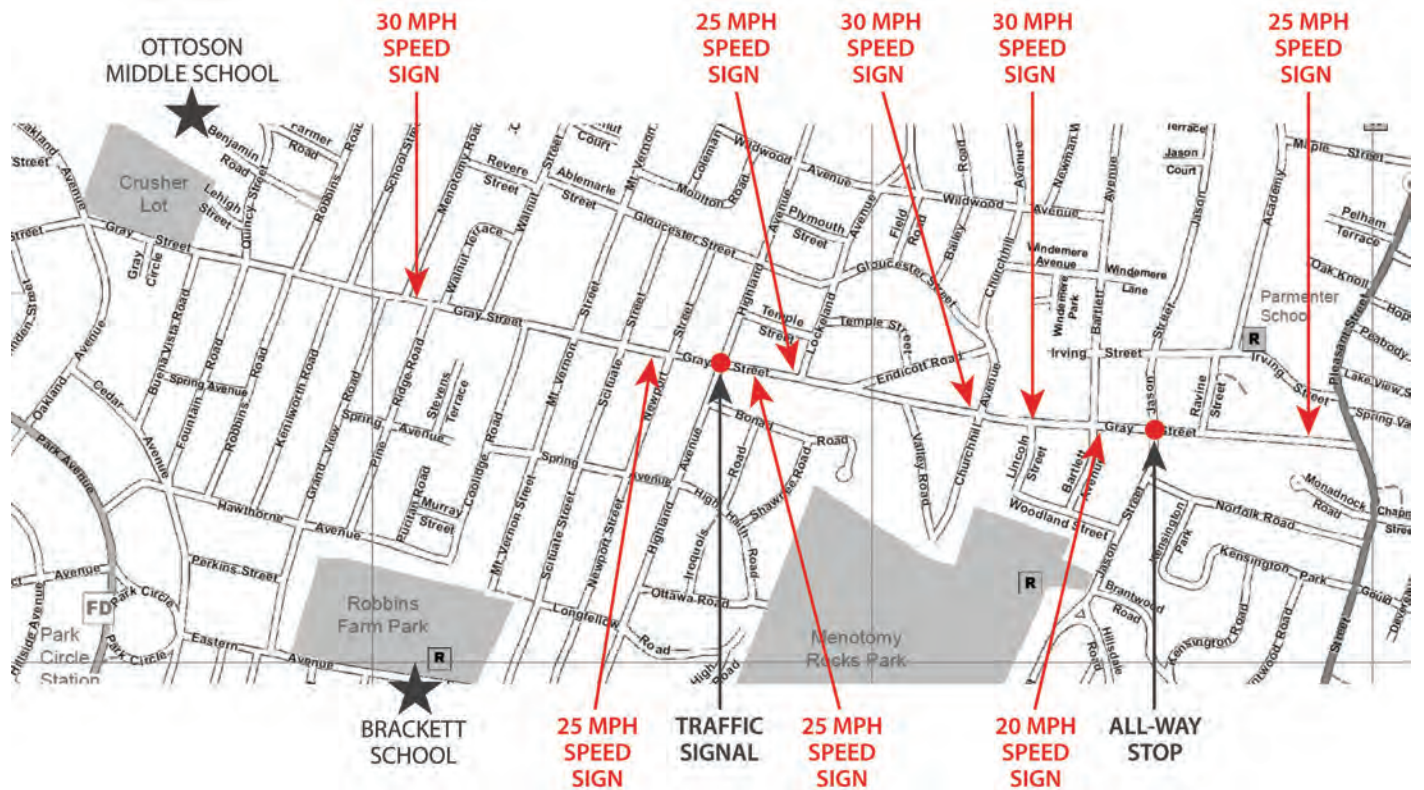
4-10-13
2:00-3:30
Ped. Crossing 17

Church Hill
A16.





Pedestrian crossings (AM peak 30 minutes) west of Highland Avenue.



Existing traffic signal, all-way stop and speed limit signs on Gray Street.