

Stowecroft Road/Bishop Elementary School March 21, 2006 TAC Meeting

Request

To close Stowecroft Road between Columbia Road/Kimball Road and Ridge Street for one-half hour before school opens and one-half hour after school closes to provide greater protection to walkers during periods of snow and ice. The street is a route children take to reach the Bishop Elementary School (see air photo) but the roadway has no sidewalks. In the winter, when snow and ice restrict the roadway, children and parents are at greater risk from cars. The person making the request indicates that this block of Stowecroft Rd. is private and therefore the Town can not provide sidewalks.

Observations (January and March 2006)

- The pavement is approximately 40 feet wide (see photos #1-3), there are no sidewalks, and there is parking on both sides of the street.
- Drop-off for the Bishop School takes place on Columbia Road in front of the school (in the westbound direction – the street is temporarily one-way) and on the east side of the school building in the parking lot (see photo # 4).
- A 25-minute morning traffic count was conducted in March. The weather was clear, dry, and cold.
- Fifty-one vehicles traveled northbound on Stowecroft Road to drop off children at the Bishop School. Twenty-three vehicles used Columbia Road and 28 vehicles used the school parking lot. Six other vehicles also used Stowecroft Road northbound to travel past the school or turn right onto Kimball Road.
- During the same 25-minute period, 23 vehicles traveled southbound on Stowecroft Road. Almost all were vehicles that had dropped off children in the school parking lot. Eight turned right at the end of Stowecroft, five went straight through and ten turned left.
- During the March count, 16 children used Stowecroft Road to walk to school (all were accompanied by adult escorts). Most used the east side initially but crossed to the west side in the middle of the block.
- There is a crossing guard at the intersection of Ridge Street and Stowecroft Road/Edgehill Road.
- Almost all of the traffic on Stowecroft Road during school hours appears to be school related. No conflicts between walkers and vehicles were observed.

- The pavement was not completely cleared of snow and ice in January, narrowing the area available for cars and walkers

Recommendation

Closing Stowcroft Road is not recommended because it will require vehicles traveling to and from the school to divert onto Mystic Street which is a heavily used commuter route in the morning. This diversion will require some vehicles traveling to the school to make a difficult left turn across the heavy northbound flow on Mystic Street at an unsignalized intersection (Ridge Street). Since almost all the traffic on Stowcroft Road is school related, drivers are aware of the presence of children walking to school and the need to be especially careful.

To reduce potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts the following actions are recommended:

- The Bishop School should request that the crossing guard at Ridge Street and Stowcroft Road/Edgehill Road escort walkers from the east side of Stowcroft Road to the west side at Ridge Street. This will eliminate pedestrians crossing in the middle of the block and will have pedestrians walking against traffic.
- The school should asked residents not to park on the west side of the street for an hour during school opening and closing. This will provide pedestrians with a place to walk off the travel way. The roadway shoulder should be kept free of snow during the winter.

Stowecroft Rd. looking north toward Columbia Rd.





School Entrance on Columbia Rd.

