

## Livable Streets grant coming to American Legion

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*American Legion Parkway could see traffic and street improvements in the coming years from a technical assistance grant. File Photo*

Last week, the Mount Hope/Mount Canterbury Neighborhood Association (MHMC) announced that the American Legion Parkway corridor was awarded a technical assistance grant from the Livable Streets Alliance.

The grant would allow engineers to look at the whole of the corridor – from Hyde Park Avenue to Blue Hill Avenue – to try to figure out what redesigns and improvements could be made to make the Parkway safer for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

MHMC Member Lisa Beatman said the grant will allow for many of the improvements they as a neighborhood – and the coalition of neighborhood associations along American Legion – have been seeking for many, many years.

“It is to provide technical assistance to look at some redesigns of the corridor so that it would be safe and more pleasant,” she said. “Things like barrier-protected bike lanes, extended sidewalks, etc. I believe that this is the first time our corridor, in its entirety, has been publicly acknowledged as an entity and as desirable.”

Beatman added that in the past, the American Legion Parkway has been used in a manner that is less than sightly.

“It’s not just a dumping ground as it was seen before,” she said. “We firmly believe that this will help to get the improvements that we’ve all been looking for.”

Issues have been cropping up for decades, according to Beatman. Many drivers have been using the side streets along American Legion as cut-throughs to avoid the rush hour traffic that can make travel on the corridor arduous.

There have also been so many accidents at the intersection with Cummins Highway that the City of Boston named it one of the 10 most dangerous intersections in the city. The MHMC has also been pushing for a protected bike lane there for years, running into the chicken and the egg argument in terms of usage. The city, for example, has stated in the past that not enough people use American Legion as cyclists, but Beatman and many members of the MHMC have said that no one uses it because it’s unsafe due to the facts that speed limits are not maintained and that there’s no protected bike path.

Beatman said that the American Legion corridor study grant was one of six projects selected. The MHMC membership agreed that the grant will be a great help to getting the improvements that they have been pushing for over many years.

“We’re not just a cut-through or a drive-thru area,” Beatman said.