

Complete Streets: Report of the LBNA task force on traffic calming

Disclaimer: *This is a report of traffic problems within our neighborhood, not a project proposal to remedy them. However we have found the Project Proposal format in the city's Complete Streets document to be a very helpful framework in which to articulate the traffic problems in critical need of remedy. So that is the organizational structure of this report.*

Name: Lincoln Bradley Neighborhood Association (LBNA)

Location and Limits: Pearl Street between Orange and the School of Management back fence; all of Lincoln Street; and Bradley Street between Orange and Whitney.

Contact: Norman Chonacky (norman.chonacky@yale.edu), president of the Lincoln Bradley Neighborhood Association. In developing this report we have consulted with District 9 Alderperson Jessica Holmes.

Brief Description: Using the "Complete Street" guidelines, we propose to make Pearl, Lincoln, and Bradley Streets "Slow Streets," reducing the speed limit to 20 mph, encouraging bicyclists, pedestrians and local automobile traffic, while discouraging large delivery trucks, construction vehicles, and commuter traffic that use these streets as shortcuts between Orange, Trumbull, and Whitney, especially during peak rush hours. We are particularly concerned with:

- Pearl Street between Orange and Lincoln,
- The intersection of Lincoln and Bradley, and
- Sidewalks on Pearl, on the north side of Bradley between Orange and Lincoln, and on the west side of Lincoln south of Trumbull.

We look forward to discussing these ideas and others with engineering consultants from the city.

Impetus: Pearl, Lincoln, and Bradley are "urban local roads" that have come to be used as "urban minor arterials." They are residential roads populated by families with small children, a public school, a nursery school, and professional offices. They attract large and welcome numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists. But they are increasingly used by commuters as high-speed shortcuts, and by commercial and construction vehicles seeking to avoid the traffic lights at Orange/Trumbull and Trumbull/Whitney.

This is not a new problem. A decade ago Bradley was made one-way from Lincoln to Orange and Lincoln to Whitney, but a report titled "Lincoln Bradley Association Traffic & Parking Issues and Proposed Solutions" concluded that, "The Bradley direction change has not solved the speed problem. Neither Lincoln nor Bradley should be through-ways." Since that time the situation on Pearl Street has been made more dangerous by the great success of Romeo's Café, with large delivery trucks on Pearl frequently making that block a one-lane street with two-way traffic. Inadequate sidewalks, in one case obstructed by illegally positioned dumpsters, pedestrians usually use the street and invite an accident waiting to happen.

Estimated Cost (if known): Not known

Funding Sources (if known): It may be possible for the city to seek cost-sharing for Pearl Street modifications, from Yale/SOM, the New Haven Lawn Club, and businesses on Orange Street.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPLETE STREETS POLICY & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Context, including adjacent land uses, neighborhood character, and existing transportation system:

Lincoln and Bradley are primarily residential streets, with a high school (New Haven Academy), the Little Theater (currently being rehabilitated), a church and nursery school at Bradley and Whitney, a large apartment building at Pearl and Orange, a residence for Dominican nuns, and some commercial property (Romeo's Café and JJ dry cleaners at Pearl and Orange, professional offices on Bradley and on Lincoln south of Trumbull. The neighborhood is abutted on the west by Yale's new School of Management and commercial properties on Whitney, on the north by the New Haven Lawn Club, and on the east by commercial and professional buildings on Orange Street.

The neighborhood has a quiet residential feel, despite the variety of uses. Its streets are shaded by large trees, and the houses and offices are landscaped and well kept. The neighborhood is served by city bus lines on both Orange and Whitney, and by the Yale shuttle buses, also on Orange and Whitey. The Yale shuttle buses also use Lincoln at night.

Classification of affected streets: Pearl, Lincoln, and Bradley are "urban local road(s) -- provide(s) primary access to residential land and abutters. Through traffic is discouraged." But they are being used as "urban minor arterial(s) – serve(s) to interconnect with principal arterials and other roads."

Guiding Principles for Complete Streets:

Safety and slow vehicle speeds: We are especially concerned for our families with young children. Traffic calming measures would discourage vehicular through traffic and reduce vehicle (including bicycle) speeds to a maximum of 20 mph. Slower and fewer cars and trucks will improve safety, and limiting heavy trucks will reduce destruction of the pavement.

Connectivity: Close proximity to downtown, to Yale Campus, to Peabody Museum, Lawn Club, Yale School of Management, and New Haven Academy. Cyclists, pedestrians, and commuting drivers have long considered our neighborhood streets a means of avoiding congestion on thoroughfares. We hope to encourage cyclists and pedestrians by making our streets safe and inviting to them, while discouraging high-speed through vehicular traffic.

Human Health: Health is enhanced by encouraging walking and bicycling, as well as by reducing noise and dirt pollution by passing vehicles. Reduced vehicle size and speed will make accidents less likely, and will reduce pavement damage, which is hazardous to bicyclists. Good sidewalks will discourage pedestrians from walking in the street.

Livability: Quality of life for local residents and for walkers and bicyclists will be improved by less noise, and less and slower traffic. As the number of cyclists and pedestrians increases, there will likely be a reduced danger of crime.

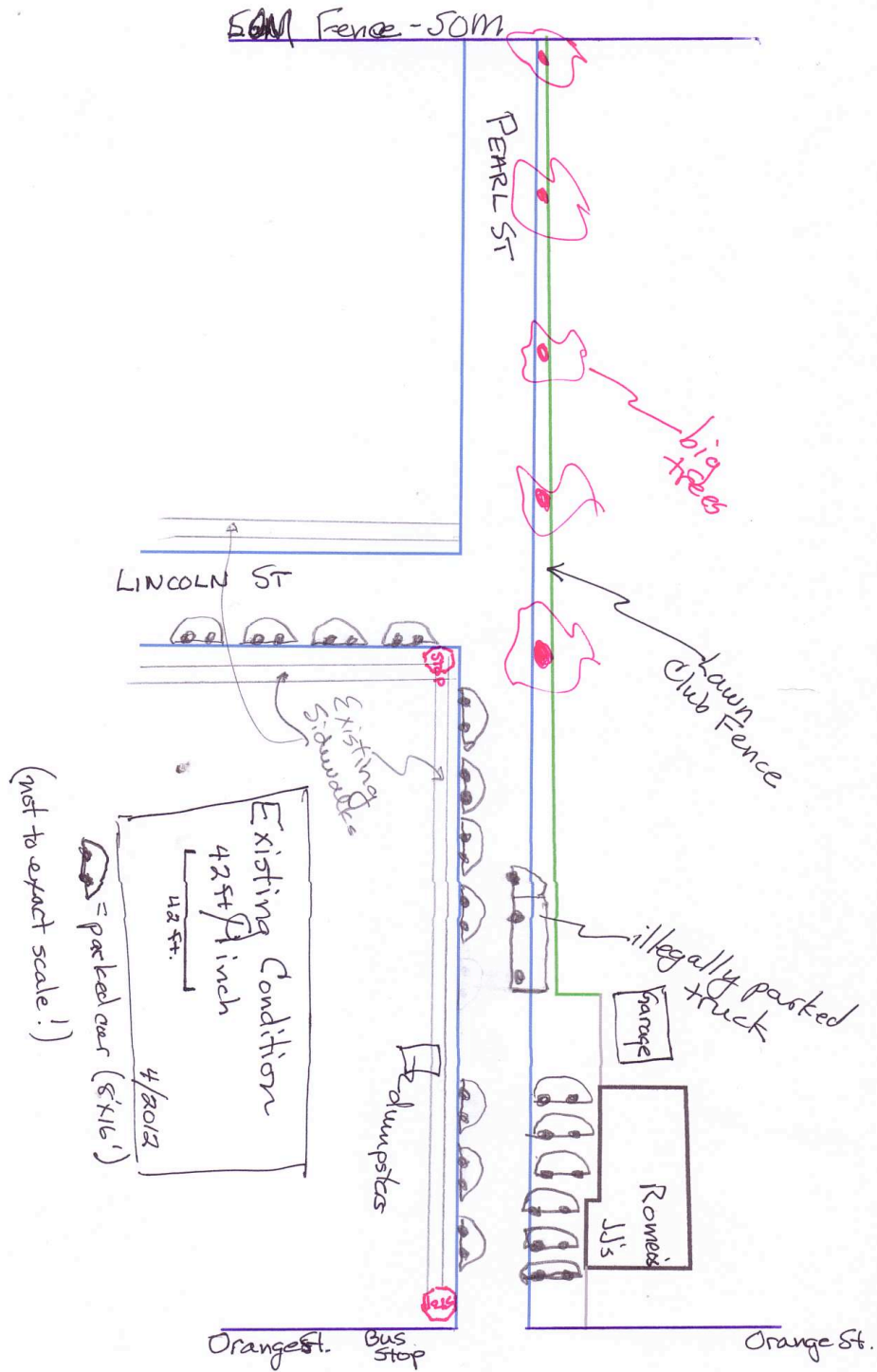
Context: We are a small mixed-use community with residences, schools (high school and nursery school), commercial properties, a private club, a theater, and offices. There are very few communities like ours. It is tiny and peaceful, yet it's surrounded and penetrated by the pulsing life of the city. Having "Slow Streets" ("local streets that make extensive use of traffic calming measures to discourage vehicular through traffic, reduce vehicle speeds, green and beautify the streetscape, and create a comfortable environment for bicycling and walking") would be completely compatible with the character of this neighborhood.

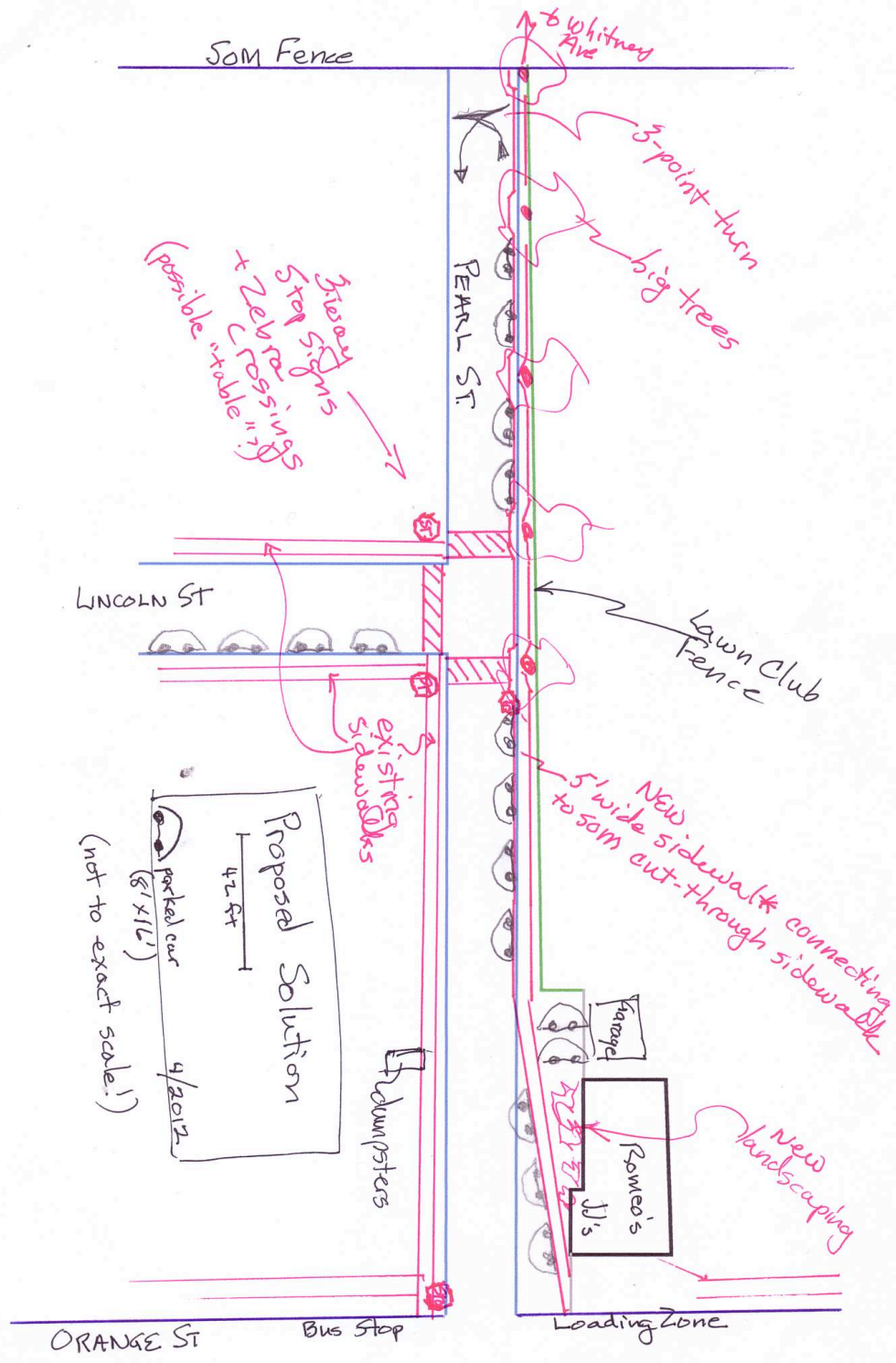
Equity: Residents and users of these streets are entitled to safety and to appropriate peace and quiet. Making these streets Complete Streets will create greater balance among motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Aesthetics: Improvements on Pearl Street would have a positive impact on the beauty of the neighborhood. Reduction of high-speed traffic will allow greater enjoyment of nature and of the environment.

Economic Development: Improvement in neighborhood quality of life will help to sustain residential property values, support the city's tax base, and provide an attractive venue for professional offices and appropriate small businesses.

Environment: Physical improvements of the streets will reduce traffic noise and emissions. Encouraging walking and bicycling will reduce the number of cars on city roads.



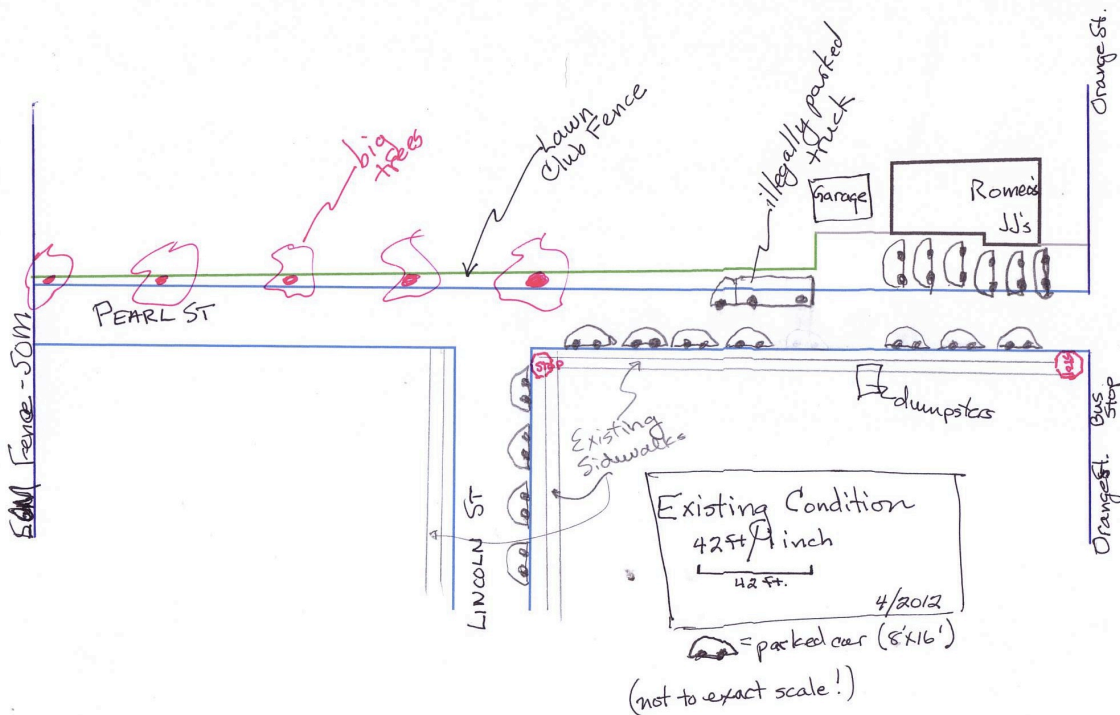


LBNA Complete Streets Proposal: problem analysis and possible approaches to solutions

Pearl Street between Orange and Lincoln:

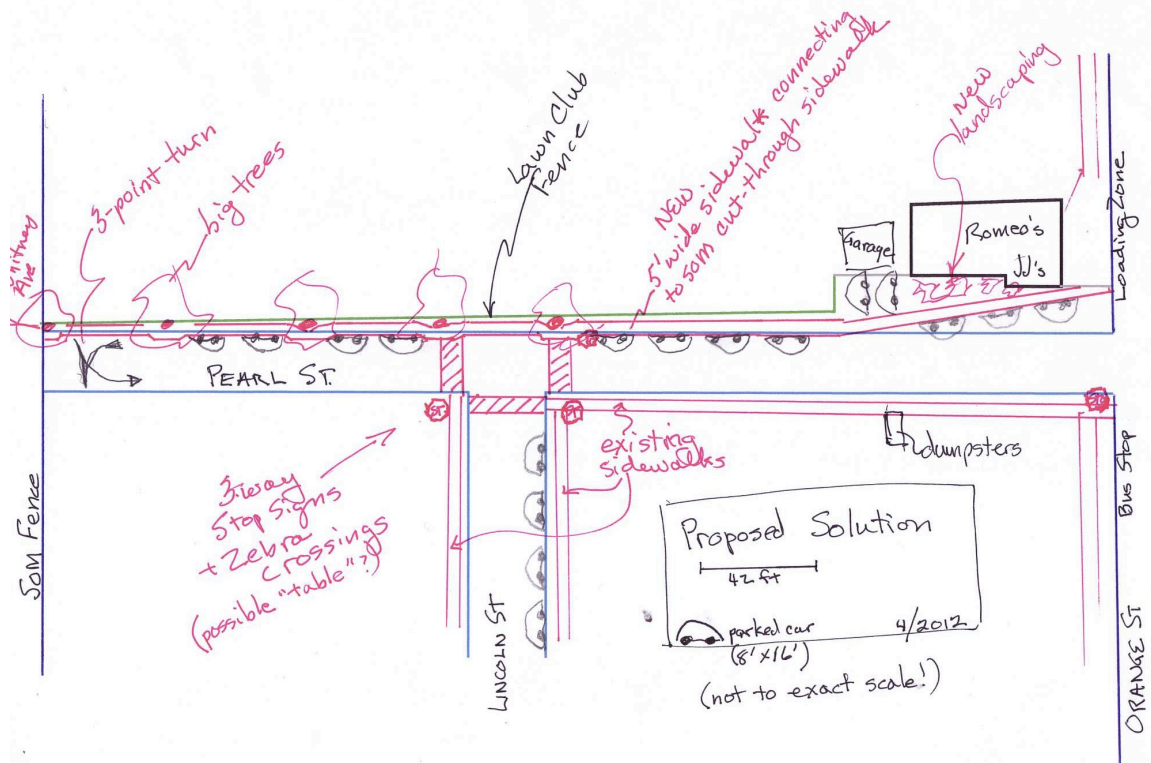
This is an extremely dangerous block—an accident waiting to happen. There are a number of components:

- **Businesses:** Romeo's Café and the JJ Cleaners use head-in parking alongside their building. Parked cars protrude into the traffic lane; cars back out of the parking area directly into traffic turning into Pearl Street. Large delivery trucks illegally use the north side of Pearl as a loading zone, making Pearl a single-lane road with two-way traffic. These trucks then exit the neighborhood down Lincoln Street, frequently at high speed.
- **Pedestrians:** Many pedestrians turn into Pearl Street from Orange, going to Yale via Lincoln and Bradley or to town via Lincoln to Audubon. We welcome pedestrians; they make our neighborhood friendlier and safer. But there is no sidewalk on the north side of Pearl, and the sidewalk on the south side is broken and frequently blocked by the apartment house dumpsters. Therefore they walk in the middle of the street, behind the cars parked and backing out into Pearl Street, and vulnerable to cars turning into Pearl from Orange.
- **On-street parking:** Parking is legal on the south side of Pearl for zone 3 tag holders. The street is too narrow to accommodate two lanes of traffic plus parking (23' wide vs state minimum of 27'). Illegally parked delivery trucks exacerbate the danger by further narrowing the street down to essentially one lane.
- **School buses:** Twice a day school buses enter Lincoln St from Orange via Pearl to discharge and pick up students from the New Haven Academy (formerly St. Mary's). They swing wide around the corners.
- **City and Yale buses:** There is a bus line on Orange that stops at the corner of Pearl. The south-bound bus stop has been moved from north of the intersection to south of the intersection – a great improvement. But at night Yale buses frequently drive through the neighborhood at high speed.
- **City-contracted tow trucks** park illegally on Lincoln waiting for 4:00, then use Lincoln as a staging site for towed cars while they speed to pick up other cars.



One possible solution for Pearl Street

- Ban delivery trucks from Pearl. Create a loading zone on Orange just north of Pearl.
- Install a sidewalk on the north side of Pearl, along the Romeo/JJ building on Pearl, slanting outward at the Romeo driveway/garage, and continuing along the Lawn Club fence to join the pedestrian/bicycle path that will run along the north side of SOM to Whitney.
- Eliminate the head-in parking along the building and put parallel parking along the sidewalk (reducing the number of spaces but widening the street at the corner).
- Extend parallel parking on the north side of Pearl all the way to the SOM gate. This will require a space for a three-point turn at the end of Pearl. It could be zone 3 from Lincoln to the SOM gate, metered or one-hour from Orange to Lincoln.
- Eliminate all parking on the south side of Pearl.
- Repair and widen (if possible) the sidewalk on the south side of Pearl.
- Install 3-way stop signs at the corner of Pearl and Lincoln with zebra-striped pedestrian crossings.
- Bar tow trucks from using Lincoln for storage/staging.
- Subject apartment house dumpsters to rigorous enforcement including fines (they intrude on the sidewalk, are left open, and overflow onto the ground).



Traffic calming for Lincoln and Bradley Streets: About a decade ago Bradley St was made one-way in an attempt to control high-speed traffic cutting through the neighborhood. This has helped, but not enough. Speeding by cars and trucks continues to be a problem particularly in the long two blocks of Lincoln Street and on Bradley between Lincoln and Whitney. Adding to the problem, school buses enter Lincoln Street from Pearl and Trumbull to discharge students at the New Haven Academy. In the afternoon they arrive sometimes more than an hour before the end of school and park on the west side of Lincoln between Pearl and Bradley and on the east side between Bradley and Trumbull (in both cases the "no parking" side), thus narrowing Lincoln Street to essentially one lane for two-way traffic, and causing real hazards to students crossing the street to enter their buses.

Sidewalks:

Substantial sidewalk repairs are needed on the west side of Lincoln south of Trumbull, on the north side of Bradley between Orange and Lincoln, and on the south side of Pearl between Orange and Lincoln. New sidewalks are needed on the north side of Pearl between Orange and Yale's SOM fence (to join with their planned walking/bicycling path from that gate to Whitney) and on the south side of Pearl between Lincoln and the SOM fence.