

Hardwick Planning Commission
Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Task Force
June 9, 2020
Walking Tour
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Jim Lewis; Joyce Mandeville; Ken Davis; Diane Grenkow; and Dave Gross, Chair.
Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA) and Shari Cornish, Select Board Member.

Absent: Elizabeth Dow, Select Board Member and Shaun Fielder, Town Manager

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:33 pm.

The Commission/Task Force reviewed the following suggestions by conducting a walking tour of the downtown Hardwick area:

Possible Short-Term Suggestions:

- **Adjust sight lines near crosswalks (adjust parking spots). (At February Meeting)**
State law states that a 20 feet buffer zone should be on both sides of a crosswalk. Adjusting the parking spaces (installing the buffer zones) would remove roughly 8 spots from the village center parking. This approach would align parking with state law and would theoretically make the crosswalks safer for pedestrians. **Recommend. June 9, 2020 comments: The same parking pattern was installed for the summer months due to the timing of the statewide shut-down. The spots which would be eliminated for the buffer zone/safety issues could become painted “bump-outs” if the words “No Parking” were added to the space with a set of diagonal cross lines.**
- **Remove the handicap parking spot adjacent to the Post Office parking area. (At February Meeting)**
The handicap parking space on Mill Street creates visibility issues for the traffic leaving and entering the post office parking lot. In addition, the space is constrained by an utility pole and lines. The space could be moved to the first spot on that stretch of road (in front of the former Gagnon’s video) and a secondary parking space could be installed. This would remove roughly 1 spot from the village center parking. This approach would theoretically make the handicap parking space more feasible and improve the visibility and safety of traffic at the post office junction. **Recommend.**
- **Repaint the crosswalks in a high visibility color. (At February Meeting)**
Recommend.
- **Install flashing crosswalk signs. (At February Meeting)**
The crosswalk signs have been successfully used in neighboring towns (Montpelier, Morrisville). Two sets would be installed. One would be at the crosswalk connecting the Clip Joint and the Laundry. One would be at either the Co-op/Swinging Bridge location or at the Yummy Wok/Village Diner crosswalk. State law would need to be observed – the Yummy Wok/Village Diner location may be too close to the intersection. **Recommend. June 9, 2020 comments: The crosswalk sign should be posted at the Co-op Swinging Bridge location.**
- **Add stop signs. (At February Meeting)**
The suggestion was reviewed for multiple locations. This may be an approach which is utilized in a longer-term design. **Not Recommended for a Short Term Suggestion.**
- **Install a speed sign before the village (prior to the Glenside intersection). (At February Meeting)**

A flashing speed feedback sign would be useful for vehicles traveling into the village center. This suggestion will probably need state approval prior to implementation. **Recommend.**

- **Install signage to direct cars to alternate parking. (At February Meeting)**

Signs which direct cars to the mural parking area and the Village Diner parking area could be helpful to travelers who are not familiar with Hardwick. **Recommend.**

- **Add a street decal (bicycle symbol) to remind people that bikes can/will be in the road. (At February Meeting)**

The lack of a biking lane or of viable road shoulders through the center of the village result in bike usage on the main road. With upcoming improvements to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, there should be an increase in bicycle usage in the village center. Street decals could be added to road to remind vehicles to share the road. **Recommend.**

- **Educate younger riders about sidewalk and crosswalk safety. (At March Meeting)**
Recommend.

- **Install crosswalks near the Church/North Main Street Intersection and on North Main Street. (At March Meeting)**

The installation of additional crosswalks on North Main Street should improve pedestrian safety. The proposal is to add a crosswalk to the section where the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail will cross, to add a crosswalk to West Church Street (between the parking area of the Hardwick Electric Department and the Jeudevine Library), to move the existing crosswalk from below the former Senior Center to a location between the Jeudevine Library property and the Memorial building (below the Memorial building parking spaces), and to add a crosswalk to North Main Street north of the Lamoille River bridge. See attached satellite image. **Recommend. June 9, 2020 comments: A curb cut would be necessary at the Jeudevine library site and north of the Lamoille River bridge.**

- **Install a fence near the Village Diner to prevent people from traveling over the bank and through the intersection. (At March Meeting)** **Recommend. June 9, 2020 comments: Placing the fence near the parking area instead of on the road section may help with visibility lines. Walking visit demonstrated that the existing trees are already partially blocking drivers from viewing the traffic entering the intersection from Route 15.**

- **Add a crosswalk to the Cherry Street area. (At March Meeting)**

A significant stretch of South Main Street does not have a crosswalk to facilitate pedestrian traffic. Adding a crosswalk to the Cherry Street/South Main Street area should improve pedestrian safety. The closest crosswalk at the Hardwick Elementary school has a nearly 300 feet separation from this area of the road. This suggestion will probably need state approval prior to implementation. **Recommend.**

- **Install bike racks at the Municipal Building, at the town-owned lot adjacent to the Clip-Joint and at the swinging bridge triangular lot. (At March Meeting)**

Several stakeholders mentioned the need for bike racks within the Hardwick Village Center. With upcoming improvements to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, there should be an increase in bicycle usage in the village center. Three locations were initially identified – next to the Memorial Building on the lower level near the parking area; in the municipal lot adjacent to the swinging bridge; and in the municipal lot adjacent to the Clip Joint at the intersection of Mill Street and Perry Lane. **Recommend.**

- **Stop, wait, wave signs. (At March Meeting)**

Adding this written reminder to the sidewalk preceding the crosswalk has been utilized successfully in Littleton, NH. An example is attached. **Recommend.**

- **Alternate materials in the crosswalk sections. (At March Meeting)**

Changing the material beneath the crosswalk section has been utilized in other municipalities. The approach further delineates the presence of a crosswalk. The cost, however, could be prohibitive. ***Recommend for a long-term goal.***

- **Upgrade the town's parking area at the intersection of Mill Street and Perry Lane. (At March Meeting)**

With the recommended removal of parking spaces in the Hardwick Village Center, the addition of improved public parking spaces may be beneficial. The Town owns the parcel adjacent to the Clip Joint, at the intersection of Mill Street and Perry Lane. The parcel could be leveled, spaces could be delineated and a bike rack could be installed. ***Recommend.***

- **Remove parking from the blinking light intersection (Route 14/15 intersection). (At March Meeting)**
The blinking light intersection poses a safety hazard due to the erratic flow of traffic. Drivers unfamiliar with the traffic patterns can become confused and disoriented. The existing STOP signs are not always obeyed. Large trucks must utilize both lanes to navigate the intersection. The inclusion of parking spaces within the intersection may increase the confusion, add an element of distraction to drivers, and impact the turning capacity of the larger truck loads. Removing the four parking spots directly in front of Front Seat Coffee and Positive Pie, would theoretically improve the safety of the intersection. See attached map. ***Recommend. June 9, 2020 comments: The recommendation was shifted after the walking inspection. The first two parking spots in front of Front Street Coffee could remain. The next three spots should be removed to provide adequate turning for trucks and prevent accidents from occurring.***
- **Remove parking from the intersection of North Main Street/Mill Street (in front of the Clip Joint). (At March Meeting)**
The two parking spots in this intersection would already be removed if the crosswalks have a 20 feet buffer. A concrete planter or other impediment is recommended for the space preceding the crosswalk between the Clip Joint and the Laundry. Placement of an impediment may deter vehicles from passing stopped vehicles on the right side. ***Recommend.***
- **Create a designated parking spot for delivery trucks. NOT YET DISCUSSED – July Meeting.**
- **Install a crosswalk between the Hardwick Inn and the Laundry. (At February Meeting)**
More study necessary prior to a decision. (Still in limbo after March Meeting) July Meeting?

The committee/planning commission will forward the recommendations to the Road Foreman and the Police Chief for their input and then the ideas will be sent to the Select Board.

The walking tour concluded at 7:30 pm. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be on July 14, 2020.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA