

Westford Town Center Study
Pedestrian Safety Committee Review & Comments (3)

We would like to thank NMCOCG for their efforts to evaluate means to improve pedestrian safety and circulation as part of the Town Center Study. The Pedestrian Safety Committee reviewed the analysis of Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities. Following are the summary of its comments.

Section III – C. Pedestrian Recommendations p. 51-54

1. Address ADA Compliance Issues – The Pedestrian Safety Committee is strongly in favor of using ADA standards in sidewalk and bicycle lane design and construction. NMCOCG’s extensive research provides for safety and accessibility for all potential users of pedestrian access facilities. There were questions about a walkway to the bandstand, and the width of the sidewalk in front of the Roudenbush, which is very narrow.
2. Install Pedestrian-scale Ornamental Lighting – this was given low priority, given the added cost. There were concerns for light pollution into neighboring residential streets.
3. Construct a Curb Extension on Lincoln Street at the Intersection of Boston Road – this was given high priority. Recommend a planter or something similar to enhance visibility of the curb extension.
4. Realign the Crosswalk on Depot Street at the Abbot School – this was given a high priority, and it can be done at a low cost. The existing sidewalk ends in the school driveway putting students/pedestrians in the path of buses and cars dropping off. A connection to school entrance is needed. The position of the crosswalk is aligned to the side of the school driveway. However, curbing and painting could help to delineate crosswalk and sidewalk from road.
5. Expand the Sidewalk Network on Depot Street – from Beaver Dam Drive to 18 Depot Street. There were questions about how the decorative pillars came into the right-of-way, and when they were put in.
6. Implement the Recommendations Outlined in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan – this is being done. The Pedestrian Safety Committee was formed as part of implementing the pedestrian access and safety objectives of the Comprehensive plan. The prioritization of sidewalk construction is shown on the Westford Pedestrian Safety Committee Working Map with broad input from the Selectman and Planning Board. Several Westford schools have joined Mass Safe Routes to Schools.

7. Promote the Thomas Paul Trail for Pedestrian Access to the Town Center from the Neighborhoods to the North and West – the committee supports promoting the Tom Paul Trail as well as other town trails.
8. Adopt a Town Regulation that Requires the Removal of Snow from Sidewalks – The committee does not support this recommendation. We feel it is neither enforceable nor practical except around schools using school equipment. Snowplows deposit heavy snow and ice onto sidewalks, making it almost impossible for homeowners to remove. Towns that clear sidewalks use heavier machinery, like a Bobcat with snow removal equipment.
9. While not included in the Town Center Study, a resident suggested installing a crosswalk from the adjacent sidewalk on the common to the triangle monument at the entrance of Hildreth Street. Another crosswalk could also connect to the town park across Boston Road. It was felt this could provide safe access to pedestrians crossing Boston Road to/from Hildreth Street if there are suitable locations for crosswalks. It was noted that a sidewalk going down Main Street ends at Northern Bank & Trust without a connection to the town common.

Section III – D. Bicycle Recommendations p. 54

1. Install Bicycle Racks within the Town Center – Additional data will be needed to determine where they would be most needed. There is a bicycle rack behind the Library and a small one behind Roudenbush building.
2. Establish a Complete Streets Policy to Provide Accommodations for all Roadway Users on Future Roadway Construction and Reconstruction Projects – this is applicable town wide. There was a discussion of adopting a policy to provide an 18 inch pedestrian/bicycle buffer at the edge of roads delineated by a painted white line to be installed during road repaving and reconstruction. Main Street may be scheduled for reconstruction in 2014. An existing example is Rte 225 in Bedford. A question was raised about road widths and whether or not they could support a wide curb, denoted by the edge paint. Pg 26 of the town's subdivision rules and regulations summarizes required road widths. Major streets: 40 ft. Secondary Residential: 27 ft. Secondary nonresidential: 30 ft. Minor streets would be too narrow (22 ft) but major and non-residential secondary streets should be able to support 1.5 ft “bike lanes”. Secondary residential roads could support it, if vehicle lanes were 11 ft.
3. Install Bicycle Accommodations on Study Area Roadways – The committee is not in favor of a bicycle lane on Lincoln Street due to cars parking on both sides of the street. It is felt it would be too dangerous. Also, a bike lane on Lincoln Street would not connect to any other bike lanes.