

MEMO

West Pawlet Village Center Master Plan

Public Meeting Notes **DRAFT**
Pot Luck Dinner Meeting 1 - Streetscape
January 12, 2023 6:00pm - 9:00pm WPV Firehouse



Introduction:

At the beginning of the Pot Luck Dinner, a short presentation was given to outline the background of the Village Master Plan project, goals and schedule. The presentation then reviewed some of the initial input collected from the Community Survey and Rail Trail User Survey. The conversation then focused on discussion of the intersection in West Pawlet, the issues it presents and potential design improvements. This meeting as attended by approximately 15 people. A copy of the presentation was uploaded to the project webpage.

Issues Identified:

A series of photographs were presented showing the main West Pawlet intersection (Route 153 / Egg Street / Railroad Ave) as viewed when approaching from multiple directions.

- When approaching from north (Route 153) no indication which way road is going to turn, or that an intersection is ahead. Only sign is indicating Rail Trail parking ahead, with an arrow to the right.
- As you approach intersection closer, it appears as an even split left-right to either side of monument, no obvious indication which way road goes. Difficult to see yellow line striping in winter.
- Speed limit along this route is 30 mph, but many people don't abide by it.
- Cars approaching this intersection often don't know which way around monument they should be going.
- When approaching from west (Railroad Ave) there is no Stop sign or Yield sign to warn motorists that vehicles traveling from other directions may think they have right-of-way. Right of way rules here are unclear, especially to people not familiar with the intersection.
- When approaching from south (Egg Street) visibility is limited because intersection is at crest of the hill. Cant see cars coming from other directions, or crossing Rail Trail bicyclists/pedestrians, until you are almost into the intersection.
- Pedestrians crossing the road at the Rail Trail likewise do not have good line of sight to see vehicles approaching from the south on Egg Street due to hill.
- There used to be a Stop sign at the top of the hill on Egg Street, however this was later removed because large trucks stopping on this hill would lose momentum and not be able to start up again when road conditions were slippery.
- There is a Trail Crossing sign at the top of the hill just before the Rail Trail, but easy to miss.
- Vehicles approaching from the south reach the top of the hill and are suddenly presented with an awkward intersection.
- Vehicles approaching from south heading north to Route 153 don't know which way around monument to go - do they go the long way around monument as if it was a traffic circle?
- Route marker signs are very old and weathered - cannot read anymore.
- When approaching from the east (Route 153) road appears to split left and right, but paved intersection is very wide and it is not always clear which way they should be going.
- Yield sign across the street from Post Office ("YIELD LEFT to oncoming traffic") is confusing - what does that mean?

- Concern among residents that too many signs may become distracting, cluttered or confusing.
- Large pothole on right (north-east of monument) has been an issue.
- People recall at least two known incidents of people hitting monument in their vehicles, one time continuing on to crash into building across street.
- Slowing vehicles down through this intersection would be a good thing.
- Monument is currently sitting in an 8 foot wide patch of grass in middle of road, could be celebrated more or made more welcoming.
- The monument itself isn't a hazard, but it is an important part of town history.
- People come to look at the monument, but have to stand in road. As younger students, we used to walk down the road from the school to go and visit it, learn about history.
- Volunteer would be happy to maintain landscaping around it.
- Keith (Mason?) - problem to maintain intersection.

Attendees were then presented a series of potential design concepts to comment on.

Design Concept A:

- This concept solves two problems at once.
- Monument is showcased better. Would be good to have local tradespeople/artisans involved in the design for their craft.
- This design concept could be improved by moving Rail Trail crossing even further east to intersection at stop bar. Would improve crossing safety as well as bring people more into village.
- It is helpful to paint/repaint lines in road, makes it clearer.
- Everyone in attendance liked this solution.

Design Concept B:

- Generally considered not as good as concept A.
- Tractor trailers couldn't navigate circle. Would need mountable curbs like in Manchester, not as much greenspace/landscaping.
- Still can't walk up to monument.

Design Concept C:

- Nice setting honoring monument, can access it.
- Larger trucks turning here would have issues, would need to increase turning radii.
- Not as good as concept A.

Design Concept Summary

- Everyone in agreement concept A is the best.
- Could modify concept A a little - move monument a little further down and stop traffic a little earlier. Improve Rail Trail crossing.
- Local artisans and tradespeople should contribute to design.
- Sidewalks need to be lowered.
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Source of Local truck Traffic:

- What is bringing large truck traffic through WP?
- Some of it is local/regional dairy trucks, but have been seeing corporate trucks like Walmart and Amazon.
- New Amazon distribution center coming in Granville, at the former Manchester Wood facility.
- There is a new store in Rupert also, delivery routes.
- GPS is directing trucks along shortcut routes through the area.
- Large trucks aren't supposed to be coming through here. What can we do to stop them?

Old Railroad Freight Building:

- Also need to resolve condition of old railroad right building. Box trucks used to hit the roof overhang until they cut it back, but still sticks out into road.
- How can we repurpose this building?
- Railroad freight building ownership is in legal dispute. State of Vermont wants it moved. Legal issues need to be resolved first.
- Barn restoration groups can strip and sell parts, or it can be moved.
- They moved brick railroad station up in new Haven, they can move this.

Speed limit:

- Not everyone obeys speed limit.
- Town has put three speed radar signs up around town, changing locations.
- These have been very effective, helpful.
- Need more of these in West Pawlet.
- Speed limit drops down to 30 mph a ways outside of the village, may be helpful to have a second sign (reminder) closer to town.

Other Observations / Comments:

- During hurricane Irene, WP village was surrounded by floodwaters. Only way in/out was using rail trail path over to Granville.

At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were reminded that there is an online comment form available for them to add additional comments on these subjects, or for people who missed the presentation. This can be found at the bottom of the project webpage at: www.regrowthplanning/pawlet.

[** END MEETING **]

Written comments collected via the online comment form to date copied below:

- "I am concerned that none of the proposed intersection plans addresses the issue of a badly needed crosswalk in front of the post office" [submitted January 16]