



City of Beacon

Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

Minutes

May 26, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon, NY 12508
Lower Level Classroom

➤ Old Business

1. Unsafe Pedestrian Signage - Phillips and Wolcott Ave. & Hillside Dr. and Wolcott Ave.
2. Pedestrian Safety crossing at East Main/Spring/ Washington (including a new follow-up message)
3. Traffic Safety on Verplank Ave. & Dutchess Terrace
4. Signage at Washington Ave. and Helen Ct. (including a new follow-up message)
5. Concern about Emergency Vehicles and parking at the intersection of W. Church Street and Cross Street.
6. East Main Street parking congestion

➤ New Business

1. Wolcott Ave. Speed Concerns

1. Unsafe Pedestrian Signage - Phillips and Wolcott Ave. & Hillside Dr. and Wolcott Ave.

Message from a resident:



I am writing to you concerning the low visibility pedestrian crosswalk signs at the intersection of Phillips St. and Wolcott Ave. (Please see attached photo).

Over the last several months I have noticed that Beacon has placed highly visible pedestrian signs near the new housing on Wolcott Ave. and Memorial Park. The new signage is excellent and it strikes me that this type of signage should be used throughout the City, especially in places where pedestrians are crossing heavily traveled roads like Wolcott Ave. Based on the recent Highland Current article,

The Slowdown Everyone Wants, it seems I am not the only one who is concerned about the safety of our crosswalks.

One of the reasons that my husband and I chose to live in the City of Beacon is because it is in many respects a walkable city. We have noted during milder weather that our neighbors also enjoy walking their dogs or toddlers in strollers. One street that we need to cross in order to reach Main Street is Wolcott Ave at Phillips St. While there are some slow traffic times, we have often experienced the following in attempting to safely cross the street:

- Many drivers seem unfamiliar with the concept that pedestrians have the right of way at crosswalks
- Many drivers exceed the 30 mph speed limit so we don't risk stepping into the crosswalk assuming that they are going to fast to stop in time even if they see us
- And, there are some good citizens who actually stop to let pedestrians cross the street -- we

consider that a win because once one driver stops, drivers from the other direction usually stop as well

Our assumption is that some drivers may be aware that pedestrians could be using the crosswalk at Wolcott and Phillips, but are not clear exactly where the crosswalk is located because it is not strongly marked as indicated in the attached photo. Nor is there any signage to inform drivers to slow down in case people are crossing the street.

As I am sure that the City does not want to see any more traffic fatalities, I request that a serious audit of pedestrian crosswalks that have not been upgraded with more visible signage be conducted not only in my neighborhood, but in other areas as well to ensure that drivers are alerted to the possibility that people may be crossing busy streets.

Solutions could be as simple as adding arrows to clearly point out the crosswalk, paint the sign poles a bright neon yellow to draw attention to the crosswalks, or refresh the crosswalk street markings. Of course, traffic lights would be great and also a way to slow traffic but better signage would be a welcome first step.

I would greatly appreciate a reply advising me of plans that the City has to improve pedestrian safety in Beacon as well as improving the signage at Phillips Street and Wolcott Ave. in the near future.

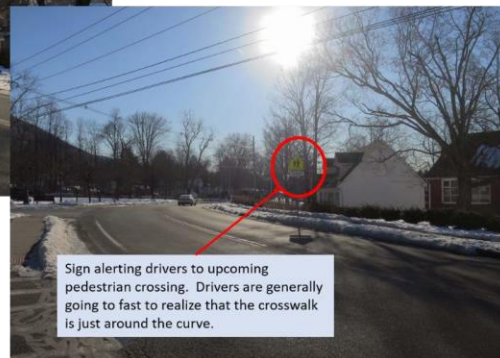
A second message from the same resident:

I took some additional photos of the crosswalk signage at Hillside Dr. and Wolcott which is also in my neighborhood. As I assume you are aware, this is a fairly busy area in warmer weather because of the entrance to the Mt. Beacon parking lot and the presence of many hikers.

Image A - the corner of Hillside Dr. and Wolcott is a school bus stop where students wait for the bus. Their wait also coincides with some early morning rush hour traffic which is often above the speed limit. It would seem that enhancing the visibility of the crosswalk sign would make sense not only for those crossing the street but also to help slow traffic for students congregated on the corner.

Image B - On the opposite side of Wolcott. The concern here is that the oncoming cars are often speeding up the hill. While there is a sign indicating a pedestrian crossing ahead before reaching the top of the hill, the drivers really can't anticipate how close the crosswalk is because of the curve.

Again as I suggested in my first email, it would be good to look at all the crosswalk signage on Wolcott as well as other busy streets that have not been upgraded. Solutions could be as simple as adding arrows to the signs that are located at the crosswalk.



February 3: Michael Manzi will look into installing crosswalk signs that are brighter and to adding reflecting material to the sign-posts. Further, Michael Manzi will continue looking into upgrading crosswalk signs.

February 24: The Highway Department determined that the signs of concern belong to New York State, but did add reflective tape to the posts for such. The item is continued to next meeting to discuss possible contact with DOT or the County for next steps.

March 24: The Highway Superintendent will ask NYS DOT to change signs to be brighter.

April 28: The City is awaiting response from NYS DOT.

May 26: The matter is continued for next meeting, still pending response from NYS DOT.

2. Pedestrian Safety crossing at East Main/Spring/ Washington

Message from Councilmember Aymar-Blair, on behalf of a Ward Four Resident:

I'd like to submit to the traffic safety committee a review of pedestrian safety crossing at East Main/Spring/Washington, notably for the droves of children on their way to and from Forrestal school in the mornings and afternoons. I'm happy about the one-way street on Spring but it did not address the concerns that are raised to me so often. We have to do something about this intersection; I believe stop signs and painted crosswalks are a necessity here.

Let me know if you have any questions. I've heard more complaints about this intersection than any other in Ward 4, and I want to stress how unsafe it is for pedestrians.

Have a good weekend!

All the best,
Dan

A Follow up message on the same matter: (received 5/6/22)

Can you please forward the following to the Traffic Safety committee. My first query is something they can probably easily answer without a meeting:

1. Thank you for the new striping at East Main and Washington. The minutes of the April 28th meeting don't mention any other measures to be taken at this intersection. I'm curious if there was any discussion about stop signs or anything else that can be done at this intersection. Is the idea that we'll see how the newly painted crosswalks and then to come back to this? Reminder this is a major corridor for JV Forrestal students and their families.

2. I would like to suggest painting parking places on both sides of Howland between Wolcott and Kingdom Hall. Overflow mountain traffic continues to be a problem, blocking intersections as well as the outlet from Exeter Circle. With properly striped parking spots, it will be clear where to park and also enforceable. The added bonus is that this striping could be a badly needed traffic calming measure on Howland.

3. Lastly, I'd like to raise the need for a stop sign on Crescent where it meets Rende. Drivers come up Crescent and speed through that left hand turn to get to Phillips and Wolcott. Local residents have been complaining about this corner for some time. I raised this same issue two years ago but believe it's important to revisit. There is a stop sign at the other end of Crescent (at Phillips) with the same amount of traffic speeds and volumes we see at Crescent/Rende - information I didn't share last time. We need a hard stop here as there are children living and playing on Rende on both sides of this corner.

April 28: Department of Public Works will look into new cross walks as repainting Main Street and will update striping for pedestrian crosswalks at this location, if possible, on three of the four sides.

May 26: Regarding item number 1: there will be a new cross-walk painted at this location in the near future and the Committee recommended revisiting afterwards to see how that has helped with the above concerns. Further, the Committee has recommended permanent 'cross-walk ahead' sign to be installed along East Main Street past Russel.

Regarding item number 2: The Committee noted that the above-noted vehicle would be parked illegally if blocking the intersection. Further the Committee did not find it necessary to line the spots at this time given that the concerns noted primarily apply on weekends only.

Regarding item number 3: The Committee noted that at T-intersections traffic would be required to stop as-is under the law. The Police Department will look into the accident history of the intersection at issue and will follow up to find out the volume of complaints received about such.

3. Traffic Safety on Verplank Ave. & Dutchess Terrace

Message from Councilmember Rhodes, on behalf of a Ward One Resident:

Here's the email from the Ward One resident (and maybe soon to be Tree Committee Member!) about the intersection of Dutchess Terrace and Verplanck. It's interesting to have this come so shortly after the N. Walnut and Verplanck conversation, and to see the committee's discussion from March around making pedestrians at N. Walnut more visible. (Dutchess Terrace is also shortly after the crest of hill at Cross Street, to its east, so you have the some similar sight line issues.)

Cheers,
Molly

Message from the resident:

I am writing because I am concerned about the safety of the intersection of Verplank Avenue and Dutchess Terrace. This intersection is frequently used by pedestrians crossing from the neighborhood north of Verplank Avenue to access the Main Street area, as well as in the other direction. My daughter and several of my neighbor's children take piano classes out of a private home on Dutchess Terrace north of Verplank Avenue. These children are put at risk every time they walk to their music class.

The reason this intersection is especially dangerous is because it is on a hill and so it is difficult to see traffic coming from the eastern direction on Verplank Avenue. Traffic speeds up because of the hill and this intersection is not visible until a car is dangerously close. I have personally witnessed two car accidents at this location. In both cases I reported the accident so there may be some record of this.

I would like to request a traffic study at this intersection. If the study does not show a need for traffic calming measures, I would suggest we look at accident reports at this intersection.

The traffic calming measures I would suggest include:

- touch activated flashing light for pedestrians to cross
- brightly painted crosswalk
- pedestrian crossing sign with text on the NYS pedestrian right of way law and fines/penalty for violation
- a speed bump uphill of the intersection (east of Dutchess Terrace on Verplank Avenue)

April 28: the Department of Public Works will revisit conducting a possible Traffic Study which would include Verplank Avenue.

May 26: The Committee recommended to the City Administrator to work with Dutchess County to conduct a traffic safety study along Verplank with specific attention to pedestrian safety and sidewalks included.

4. Signage at Washington Ave. & Helen Ct.

Nice speaking with you today. Below is a history of our hope to get a sign installed near the hazardous intersection at Washington Ave & Helen Ct.

I look forward to your response. Thank you

Attendees: Committee Chair Matthew Dubetsky, Fire Chief Gary VanVoorhis, Police Lieutenant Jason Walden, Planning Board Representative Jill Reynolds, Carolyn Glauda, Carl Rubing, Secretary Collin Milone

Old Business 1. Washington Avenue &

Helen Ct. See the original message from a

resident below:

The situation at Washington Ave & Helen Ct which is the entrance/exit for Glendale Estates. It is a hazardous blind spot as drivers coming east on Washington Ave round a bend in the road approaching Helen Ct. where residents exit Glendale Estates onto Washington Ave. There have been several close calls recently and I am hoping to avoid accidents/ injuries. including school busses picking up students! Is it possible to have a sign/flashing light (see picture below) installed to warn drivers of the blind exit round the bend? I look forward to hearing from you on this important matter. Thank you.

September: The Committee recommended installing a Hidden Road sign (MUTCD W2-2R) on the southwest side of Washington Ave. approaching Helen Ct. The Committee also recommended cutting back the brush on Washington Ave. approaching Helen Ct. Collin sent this brush recommendation to the Building and Highway Departments.

August: The Committee discussed sign options and will review this request again at their next meeting

June: Mickey Manzi was not able to attend this meeting. ***He will update the Committee on the cost and feasibility of a flashing sign during the July meeting. He will also work with Matt Dubetsky to determine who owns the bushes near the cemetery.***

May: The Committee did not have time to discuss this. It will appear on the June 24th agenda.

February: Collin will write the recommendation for a flashing sign on Washington Ave in front of 470 approaching the intersection with Helen Ct. Matt Dubetsky will provide the location and sign language. Council will take this up March 29th

January: The Committee recommended installing a sign warning motorist of the upcoming turn and blind spot. Matt will propose which sign is appropriate at the February meeting.

a new message on the same matter:

Thank you for re-addressing our concerns about the dangerous intersection at **Washington Ave. and Helen Ct.** I realize that things take time, but we brought this to the attention of the city nearly two years ago and nothing has been done other than talking and more meetings! Can you clarify the two actions discussed below? Last September they discussed a sign was to be installed and brush cleared and in the recent meeting last week a flashing sign and brush being cleared (again) was discussed. ***As I brought up two years ago, school buses drop off children of our community at that intersection and residents leaving or entering Helen Ct take their life in their hands.***

Traffic Safety Meeting September 28, 2021

The Committee recommended installing a Hidden Road sign (MUTCD W2-2R) on the southwest side of Washington Ave. approaching Helen Ct. The Committee also recommended cutting back the brush on Washington Ave. approaching Helen Ct. Collin sent this brush recommendation to the Building and Highway Departments.

Traffic Safety Meeting April 28, 2022

The Superintendent of Streets researched the cost of a flashing light sign and was informed that such would cost approximately \$14,000. The Department of Public Works will check the foliage alongside the roadway at the above location to make sure properly cleared.

April 28: The Superintendent of Streets researched the cost of a flashing light sign and was informed that such would cost approximately \$14,000. The Department of Public Works will check the foliage alongside the roadway at the above location to make sure properly cleared. The Police Department will increase patrol detail at such location.

May 26: The Committee recommended that the Highway Department should add a 'Hidden Drive' sign approaching said intersection.

5. Concern about Emergency Vehicles and parking at the intersection of W. Church Street and Cross Street.

This concern was raised by a Committee Member during the April 28th meeting. Specifically, the concern is whether or not there was sufficient "no parking" signage to allow for safe firetruck access.

April 28: The Committee recommended measuring at the above location to ensure that there is sufficient room for firetruck and emergency vehicle use and access and to check the code for compliance.

Ma 26: The Committee recommended to City Council that code be amended to extend the existing no parking zone at this intersection be extended from 30 to 50 feet on both sides of West Church Street along Cross Street to accommodate emergency vehicle access. Further, once codified, the Highway Department will move the 'no parking from here to curb' signs at such back to 50 feet from the curb.

6. East Main Street parking congestion

This concern was raised by a community member in attendance at the April 28th meeting. Specifically, the resident was concerned with parking from hikers which has led to congestion along narrow residential streets in the area.

April 28: The Committee recommended adding a temporary "No Outlet" sign at East Main Street and Laurel Street. The community member will report back in one or two months to determine if such has led to measurable improvement.

May 26: The committee recommended codifying a no parking zone along East Main Street from Pocket Road to William Street along the south side of East Main Street. Once codified, the Highway Department will add 'no parking' signs along the same stretch and will add a 'no parking from here to corner' sign approaching William Street.

New Business

1. Wolcott Ave. Speed Concerns

Thanks for discussing the traffic speed issue on Wolcott. Cars regularly do 40-45 in this residential zone every day, right by a school and just before/after the school zone. I think that stop signs at the Phillips intersection would be the best, most effective solution. Also extending the school zone to Philips since there is another school there at the church. Add in some police presence like Cold Spring and the traffic will calm down.

Here's the link to a facebook post:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/79901704313/permalink/10160304527359314/>

It looks like there were 170 comments or so.

May 26: The police Department will increase monitoring and radaring of the area of concern.