



City of Beacon

Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

Minutes

June 23, 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. Wolcott Ave. Speed Concerns

➤ New Business

1. Alice St. and Prospect St. Concerns
2. Mountain Lane Parking Blind Spot
3. Maple Street between Fishkill Ave. and Cannon St.
4. Route 9D Approaching Sargent Elementary School
5. Washington Avenue Traffic Safety Concerns
6. Verplanck Avenue Traffic Safety 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.

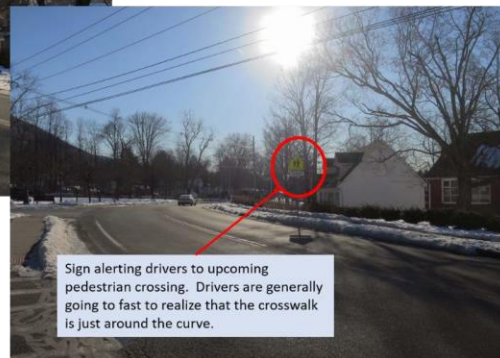
A second message from the same resident:

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.

June 23: The matter is continued for next meeting, 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.

June 23: The matter is continued for next meeting, pending Police update regarding accident history.

3. Traffic Safety on Verplanck 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 Verplanck Avenue)

UPDATE (June, 2022): The Office of the City Administrator will send an official request once in receipt of emails from Chief VanVoorhis, Lt. Walden, Highway Superintendent Michael Manzi, and Committee Chair Matthew Dubetsky detailing why Verplanck specifically. These will be used in an official letterhead request to be sent to the County (email requesting such sent 6/7/22).

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

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

June 23: Committee members will provide written email justification for a Dutchess County Study and the City Administration will prepare a letterhead request for such.

4. 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.

June 23: The Police Department has had traffic details at the area of concern. While patrols cannot be posted at Wolcott all day, radar speed indicator will be put back out soon after repairs. Police will contact St. Luke's to see if a radar speed indicator can be placed on the grass area in front of the building, otherwise, will use the smaller one once repaired. The Committee will also research how far a school zone can extend and if/how such can be changed on a state road.

New Business

1. Alice St. and Prospect St. Concerns

A resident called and reported that they have observed drivers failing to stop at the intersection of Alice Street and Prospect Street, and that they saw that some kids almost got hit the other day.

They requested safety improvements at the existing stop sign going towards East Main: specifically, a white line with the word 'Stop' painted.

June 23: The area has been repainted during city-wide restriping and has therefore been addressed. This item will be removed from the agenda going forward.

2. Mountain Lane Parking Blind Spot

A resident called and reported that the north side curve of Mountain Lane has a blind spot issue, specifically that when the UPS or other deliveries drive through, people have nearly been hit on multiple occasions.

June 23: The Committee agrees that the area is a narrow road and requires safe driving, but is not clear on any action which the committee could take to remedy at this point.

3. Maple Street between Fishkill Ave. and Cannon St.

The following email was received from a resident:

Following up on this conversation from last year. Many other residents have commented on this issue. I am not sure when next meeting is but see below.

In regards to Maple St between Fishkill Ave and Cannon St. There has been an increase of

traffic and speeding. Over the years, more families with young kids are playing on the street and this has become dangerous. It has been evident throughout the day but mornings have been increasingly problematic with speeding. Many residents/families of Maple St have brought up concerns. It seems people use Maple st as a cut through as well possible traffic caused by commercial space. It is a particular problem, when a car comes from Fishkill ave towards Cannon on Maple. There is a slope in the road which causes a blindspot and fear a kid will be playing down the slope and not be seen. We are hoping a speed hump may be placed or some other method to deter speeding and cut throughs. Thank you so much

June 23: The Police Department will increase monitoring of the area and the Committee will reevaluate to see if that helps to calm concerns now that school has adjourned for the summer.

4. Route 9D Approaching Sargent Elementary School

The following message was received from a resident:

Good Morning! I'd like to find out if it would be possible to add 2 flashing crosswalk signs and new paint to the crosswalk at the intersection of Route 9D and the Sargent Elementary School Road. My family has had numerous close calls with cars that refuse to stop at the crosswalk. I'd like to think that if the crosswalk were more visible then perhaps motorists would obey this New York State law. I am not the only person affected by this; many other residents have also experienced this problem. If you need assistance with the work I'd be willing to help. Thanks for your consideration of a clearly needed infrastructure improvement to our community.

June 23: The Committee will discuss the possibility of flashing signs or yellow pedestrian crossing signage on either side of 9D with the Department of Public Works.

5. Washington Avenue Traffic Safety Concerns

The following email as received from a resident:

Hello there,

I live at 332 Washington Ave in Beacon with my husband and 7 year old daughter. We love our community and our home, but we are concerned about the safety of Washington Ave.

We and our neighbors all agree that the traffic on Washington Ave is dangerous, particularly in front of our homes in between Liberty St and the Depuster split.

The speed limit is 30, yet the cars regularly fly by at 45 mph or higher. My family, along with others who have children on this stretch, park off the street, literally just a few feet from traffic as it whizzes past. We have had several near misses but count our blessings that we have not been hurt.

However, that hasn't been the case for others, as there have been a number of car accidents on this stretch between Liberty and Depuyster, most recently a car flipped and landed on the St Joachim cemetery fence.

Luckily no one was hurt, but surely that luck will run out, especially as Beacon's population grows and traffic

increases.

There are a number of children, including my own, that live here; they walk and ride bikes on this stretch of road and their lives are very much in danger of the highway speeds these cars drive. Since Washington Ave has no shoulder, all it would take is a foot or two of displacement for a car to inadvertently kill someone.

We, the neighbors on Washington Ave who live between Depuyster and Liberty, feel strongly that putting in STOP signs on Washington Ave at Liberty st, where there is a blind hill, and also at Depuyster, where there is a confusing fork in the road and a dangerous bend people regularly walk along, would slow traffic down and make it safer for everyone.

All of the neighbors are in agreement that Washington Ave traffic has been a big cause for anxiety and stress, as it is a serious risk to the people living on it. We believe these two STOP sign areas, at Liberty and Depuyster, would immensely help make this road safer for everyone.

Please let me know the next steps necessary to help make this wonderful town more of a safe place for all of us, but especially the children. I am happy to collect whatever information needed to move forward.

Thanks so much.

June 23: Committee members will visit the area of concern to determine the possibility of stop signs on Depuyster and Washington, with stop ahead signs on Washington approaching a potential 3-way stop and/or flashing stop ahead sign.

The Committee also recommends a traffic study of Hellen Court all the way to Depuyster and Washington, with specific attention to the above intersection of concern.

6. Verplanck Avenue Traffic Safety Concerns:

The Following email was received from a resident:

It has been a couple of months since a car jumped the curb on Verplanck Ave. and stopped on the lawn of 97 Verplanck Ave. and I have been meaning to write to you ever since.

I live at 31 North Walnut Street. My wife love to walk the neighborhood and enjoy our sweet little town. Traffic has become more and more of an issue and with these difficult times

it seems more people want to go much faster than the 25 MPH speed posted on Verplanck Ave. One effective and needed way to slow down the traffic would be to place a 4 way stop sign at Verplanck Ave and North Walnut Street.

It is really needed for several reasons: Firstly, at that intersection North Walnut does not proceed in a straight fashion. Next, when proceeding towards Memorial Park on Verplanck Ave. there is a fairly quick descent that impairs the line of sight for both vehicles and pedestrians. Lastly, again when proceeding towards Memorial Park on Verplanck Ave., the turn onto North Walnut Street is very sharp. As a result of these 3 factors Verplanck is a difficult street to cross at that point and it is difficult to slow down and make a right turn to head south on

North Walnut. It is also very difficult when on North Walnut to make a left when heading south or a left when heading north.

Before making a decision about this issue I encourage you to both walk the area and to drive around Verplanck and Walnut to truly understand why it is so necessary to have a 4 way stop sign there. Thank you for serving on the Town Council and for all that you do for Beacon.

June 23: The Committee determined that such should be lumped into the requested traffic study along Verplanck. The Committee has previously discussed adding crosswalks at North Walnut and Verplanck