



City of Beacon Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

Minutes

November 16, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon, NY 12508
Lower-Level Classroom

➤ **Old Business**

1. Intersections of Verplanck Ave. and Matteawan Rd & Main St and Route 52
2. Wolcott School Zone
3. Dutchess County Traffic Count Data

➤ **New Business**

1. Traffic Lights at Matteawan/Verplanck & Fishkill/Verplanck
2. Intersection of Matteawan and Verplanck
3. Light at 9D and Main St.
4. Henry St. Double Yellow Lines
5. South Elm Parking

Old Business

1. Intersections of Verplanck Ave. and Mattewan Rd & Main St. and Route 52

To the City Council: My wife and I frequently take walks throughout Beacon, often pushing a stroller. We've noticed several dangerous intersections, particularly Verplanck Ave and Mattewan Rd, Main St and Route 52, and the crossing on Route 52 between Ron's Ice Cream and Memorial Park. I strongly urge the Traffic Safety Committee to assess or reassess these intersections, especially with Beacon's population boom the last few years.

However, of all these intersections, I believe 9D and Route 52 (also known as Wolcott and Teller which is on the border of Wards 2 and 4) pose the greatest risk! The presence of a crosswalk here is astonishing given the evident danger. The owners of the brick house on the corner of Teller have informed me that their property was damaged on two occasions

due to cars speeding around the corner. This emphasizes the potential harm to pedestrians. Furthermore, the eastbound traffic on 9D, obscured by a bend and slope, is a serious concern. While the plans to take the bend away and replace it with a T turn is a good idea, I believe developing a sidewalk in front of 925 Wolcott Ave to move the crossing over to provide greater visibility and time for both drivers and pedestrians.



I initiated a petition the other day addressing this public safety issue and later discovered plans to overhaul Route 52

and this intersection. Even if the bid for the entire project is high, I strongly recommend proceeding with the construction, prioritizing 9D and Route 52. Alternatively, consider making it a standalone project to expedite its completion. People's safety should not be compromised because of the larger project's complexities. While a traffic light might be the ideal solution for safety, even an amber flashing light and a reflective pedestrian sign would significantly enhance caution for speeding vehicles.

To the Traffic Safety Committee (forwarding the above): I wanted to share with you the email I sent to the City Council several weeks ago to make sure you see it and that it gets put onto the public record and perhaps discussed in the upcoming meeting which I will try to attend! The bottom line is the intersection of route 52 and 9D needs an amber flashing light ideally with an electronic radar mph display as well.

September 28, 2023: The Committee discussed that the City is awaiting traffic study data for Verplanck Ave. and expecting to receive such in the near future. The Committee also discussed that the City is awaiting a re-scoped Fishkill/Teller Avenues rehabilitation project design in the coming weeks and expects to put said project out to bid in early 2024. Said project is expected to involve the intersection of 9D and Teller, as well as sidewalks along portions of the stretch of Fishkill/Teller Avenues.

At the next Committee meeting, members will discuss whether the traffic light at the intersection of Main St. and Teller Ave. can be reprogrammed to include lead-pedestrian intervals, or not.

October 26, 2023: The Committee noted that there seems to be a box at the stoplight in question, which may indicate that the light is programmable. The Committee will continue discussion on the topic at the next meeting with the Highway Superintendent present to verify if such is the case, and whether or not it could be used for Lead-Pedestrian Interval timing.

November 16, 2023: The Highway Department Superintendent will speak with the City's engineering vendor to see if any measures can be taken in the meantime (including pricing of a new computer board), but noted that new traffic lights will be installed as part of the upcoming Fishkill/Teller Rehabilitation Project. The Committee suggested noticing updates for this and other projects on the City website.

2. Wolcott School Zone (Added by resident attending)

A resident attended the September 28, 2023 meeting to report positive impacts on speed concerns from Police enforcement and speed signs located along Wolcott Ave. as drivers enter the City from the South. The resident inquired into the feasibility of increasing school zones in the area. The resident also noted concerns with bright street lighting in the same area and the spillover light from such into surrounding homes.

September 28, 2023: The Committee noted that the Police Dept. will continue presence in the area and that previous discussions had explored expanding school zones in the area in question. The concern with doing so is confusing drivers with where the zone(s) begin and end.

The Committee requested email follow-up to the administration regarding street light concerns.

October 26, 2023: The Committee discussed whether anything could be done while leaving the City. For next meeting, research will be done wither regards to the boundaries of the existing school zones along the relevant stretch. The Committee noted concerns with a long confusing contiguous school zone, as well as with having two 15 mph school zones with a brief 30 mph area in between.

November 16, 2023: The Committee noted that the bulk of concerns in the area have been from traffic coming into the City, rather than leaving, and declined to recommend adding further school zones in the area at this time. The Police Department will continue to monitor speeding in the area.

3. Dutchess County Traffic Count Data

October 26, 2023: This item was reserved for future discussion.

November 16, 2023: **See appendix**

November 16, 2023: The Committee asked if Dutchess County is open to a more holistic review of Verplanck Avenue.

New Business

1. Traffic Lights at Matteawan/Verplanck & Fishkill/Verplanck

The following email was received:

I've only attended one traffic committee meeting (back in Feb!), but I brought up something during that meeting that I'd love for the traffic committee to revisit: programming some of traffic light settings so that when the crosswalk light is on, car traffic has a red light.

While I think this should be a standard throughout town (I think it'd actually help a lot with driver frustration on Main St!), it seems most pressing around the schools, in particular:

- Matteawan + Verplank
- Fishkill Ave + Verplank
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Matteawan + Verplank:

Currently, the cross lights signal "walk" across Verplank (and towards the middle school) while drivers on Matteawan turning onto Verplank have the green. While of course pedestrians always have the right-of-way, giving drivers the green is encouraging them to drive and turn. I'm frequently in the driver position around this time trying to get to the train station, so I get it - that light feels really short and the traffic is bad. I really think that it'd improve safety and ease frustration all around if there was more of a regimented and unambiguous signaling system for pedestrians and drivers (Verplank green, Mattewan green, all streets red and all crosswalks green).

Fishkill Ave + Verplank:

Very similar situation as Mattewan + Verplank, except the problem is less around school hours and it's more of an all-the- time issue. This cross is really scary because there are more lanes (up to 3 in each direction!), right turn on red allowed on Fishkill, and lots of left turning onto Verplank and Fishkill. Even when I have the cross light, I feel like I'm playing frogger and hoping the drivers don't mow me down. As a pedestrian, I'd be more than happy to wait for a cross light if it meant I could safely cross.

I don't know if these cross signals + red traffic lights should be automatically turned on at certain times or only triggered when a pedestrian pushes the cross button (the latter seems fine!), but I imagine you all have opinions on the best method!

November 16, 2023: the Committee noted that the same answer as 'Old Business No. 1' applies to this issue, as well. The Committee further noted that the Matteawan Rd light has been fixed and that the Police Department had posted officers in the meantime while repairs were being made.

2. Intersection of Verplanck and Matteawan

The City received an email from the School District requesting review of the intersection of Verplanck and Matteawan, with specific attention to safe student crossing. The School District did acknowledge that there is a light at such, but wondered if any further measures were needed.

Please note that the placement of a crossing guard at this intersection would require reallocation of one from another location, unless the District contributes towards the costs of hiring additional help.

November 16, 2023: The Police Department noted that the City doesn't generally post crossing guards at lights and that most crossing guards are posted where younger children cross. At the intersection in question, there is a light present and the children crossing are older. The Committee would not recommend moving any of the other eight crossing guards to the location in question, which are largely at elementary schools or at crossings without lights.

3. Light at 9D and Main Street (added at meeting)

During the meeting, a concern was raised that the light at 9D and Main Street is signaling right turns while also showing a crossing signal simultaneously.

November 16, 2023: The Committee noted that this is a NYS DOT light, but the Highway Superintendent agreed to reach out with the concern.

4. Henry Street Double Yellow Lines (added at meeting)

During the meeting, a concern was raised regarding whether or not the double-yellow lines on Henry St. could be shifted to better balance lane widths?

November 16, 2023: The Highway Department will look into the issue further for the next meeting and measure how much space there is for the driving lane on the side with diagonal parking.

5. South Elm Parking

During the meeting, a question was raised as to whether new parking sill be added on the opposite side, as well?

November 16, 2023: The Committee noted that these marked spots are not designed to discourage parking on the opposite side, but rather that the marked spots are part of a broader effort to gradually mark out more structured parking throughout the City, which will allow more efficient parking.

Next meeting: The Committee agreed to adjourn until January 25, 2024.