

2019 JUL 29 PM 3: 25



Transportation Advisory Committee

May 2, 2019

Minutes

Committee Members Present: Dana Miller (Chair), Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Annis Sengupta (Clerk), Jessica Bennett, David Coleman, Clifford Gaysunas, Charles Hamad, Jeremy Romanul, Jeffrey Roth

Ex Officio Committee Members Present: Glenn Clancy (Belmont Director of Community Development and Town Engineer); Sergeant Ben Mailhot (Belmont Police representative to the Committee); Jay Marcotte (Director, Department of Public Works); Patrice Garvin (Town Administrator)

7:00 **Meeting called to order.**

Committee Chair provided a welcome to the public attending the meeting and introduced the Committee members.

7:05 **Park Avenue Public Meeting opened.**

The public meeting on the proposed intersection improvements for the area around the existing rotary at Marsh Street and Park Avenue opened with a presentation by Jeffrey S. Dirk Vanasse and Associates on behalf of the Belmont Hill School. The Belmont Hill School is funding the design phase of this project and is requesting that the Town of Belmont submit the project for a MassWorks grant to fund construction. The public meeting was the first full project presentation to the Transportation Advisory Committee and provided an opportunity for public comment.

Project Background

The presentation opened an explanation of the project's origins. The firm was originally asked to look just at the rotary at Park Avenue to see what changes could be made to improve the safety of pedestrians in the area, specifically students and employees of the school and whether it would possible to modify the intersection and replace the rotary with a traffic signal.

Existing Conditions Analysis

The analysis of existing conditions determined the following:

- The geometry of the intersection suggested it may not be a good location for a traffic signal.
- The intersection is designed to convey traffic at high speeds when traffic volumes are low.
 - The sweeping angles along the rotary promote a slingshot effect and encourage high travel speeds.
 - This type of design is not appropriate for an intersection next to a school or connecting residential neighborhoods.
- At the intersection of Hinckley Way and Park Ave, there is a bus stop and commercial activity.
 - The lack of pedestrian connectivity from Hinckley Way to the rotary raises safety concerns not only for the Belmont Hill School campus but also for residential areas on either side of Park Ave.
 - There are no sidewalks.
 - There are no ADA compliant access points.
 - There are no accommodations for bicycles travel.

Design Approach

The firm approached the design by looking for a better way to provide for mobility that balances the needs of bicycles, pedestrians, motor vehicles and transit riders. Considering the following:

- How do you link the last portion of the trip from the bus stop to the Belmont Hill School?
- How do you get to the neighborhoods along Park Ave?
- How do residents of the neighborhoods move back and forth?
- How do you improve those modes of transportation?

Conceptual Plan

The plan that was submitted to the Board of Selectmen and the TAC goes beyond the traffic circle and addresses connectivity more broadly.

- All proposed improvements can be implemented within the existing Town-owned Right-of-Way.
- Introduces ADA Compliant sidewalk from the bus stop at Hinckley Way to Prospect Street via a sidewalk system along the south side of Park Ave.
 - On the north side, the right-of-way is constrained beyond Village Hill Road, but there is an opportunity for a sidewalk on the north side of Park Avenue up to Village Hill Road from Hinckley Way.
 - Proposal introduces new pedestrian crossings from the neighborhood along Park Avenue and at the roundabout.
 - Proposal changes intersection geometries to creates 90 degree turns. These modifications reduce crossing distances while accommodating emergency vehicles coming around the corners.

- If there is a desire to provide a crosswalk going across Park Ave between the roundabout and Hinckley Way, it would be proposed at an intersection, where it would be expected by motorists.
- Introduces bicycle lanes on both sides of Park Ave.
 - These bicycle lanes transition to an on-road facility along Prospect Street.
 - At the Prospect Street connection, bicyclists would transition into a shared roadway with signs for motorists to alert them to merging cyclists.
- Introduces roundabout to replace existing rotary
 - Designed so bicyclists can travel with motor vehicles through the circle.
 - Introduces extra-wide ADA-compliant ramps to create opportunities for bicycles to ride up off the road onto the sidewalk to avoid riding with traffic in the circle.
 - Can modify shoulders in the traffic circle to better accommodate bicyclists - but don't want to create a roadway so wide that it encourages faster speeds.
 - The plan proposes to narrow the roadway through the roundabout to reduce travel speed and create a safer pedestrian environment.
 - Introduces a path deflection going through the roundabout to reduce slingshot effect and control travel speed.
 - The objective is to reach 30 mph speeds through the intersection.
 - 40 mph is the speed at which a collision with a pedestrian is more likely to be fatal.
 - 30 mph allows quicker reaction and higher likelihood of survival.
- Introduces pedestrian signalization at the roundabout.
 - Rectangular rapid flashing beacons are proposed for Park Ave and Marsh Street crossings at the roundabout. These allow pedestrians to push a button for a strobe light to indicate pedestrians are crossing.
- Introduces a HAWK beacon at the primary crossing for children at the Belmont Hill School.
 - A HAWK beacon is a positive traffic control. It stays dark until a pedestrian pushes a button, then it transitions from flashing red to solid red during crossing and back to flashing red before turning dark after crossing is completed.
 - It is at a location with more major pedestrian activity.

Board of Selectmen Presentation

The Belmont Hill School has proposed to pay for the preparation of all design plans and preparation of the MassWorks Grant, which would then be submitted by the BOS requesting that the state fund these improvements. The MassWorks

grant program funds shovel-ready projects. The design plans will be submitted to the BOS. Belmont Hill School will pay for all of the construction drawings, which go beyond the concept stage and get the project to a shovel-ready stage. The Town and residents will have an opportunity to review these plans and provide comments. The design firm will revise the plans as necessary before it is submitted as part of the MassWorks grant application.

Approximate Costs:

- Design/survey: \$230,000
- Construction: \$1,510,000
- Total Cost: \$1,740,000 with 25% contingency.

Next Steps

- Prepare MassWorks application
- Develop Preliminary Improvement Plan and Cost Estimates
- Request TAC endorsement of plans
- Present completed MassWorks Grant Application to BOS for Town endorsement
- Submit to EOHED.

8:00

Questions and Comments

The TAC opened the floor for comments from TAC members before taking questions and feedback from the audience.

TAC Comments and Questions

Overall, the TAC found that the ideas in the plan are consistent with the philosophy of Complete Streets and support the Town's goals of ensuring that pedestrians and bicyclists have safe pathways through town. Coming out of the traffic study, the TAC will be making recommendations for how to ensure that commuter routes are safe for all users of the roadway. TAC members raised questions about the specific dimensional changes to the roadways, the number of pedestrians and bus riders accessing the intersection, and whether any maintenance costs will be incurred. Key takeaways and recommendations included:

- A proposed bump out near Hinckley Way will need to be adjusted to accommodate a driveway.
- A Rutledge Road label on the map should be changed to Knox Road.
- The Marsh Street crosswalk needs to be pulled closer to the intersection so pedestrians benefit from the islands introduced in the plan and bicyclists have a reasonable route through the circle.
- TAC has a strong preference for more protected bicycle facilities and would like to see whether elevated cycle tracks would be an option.
 - The designers will explore whether elevated cycle tracks are feasible to give cyclists a safer path through the intersection.
- TAC members are concerned that reducing the width of travel lanes in the circle will make cycling more stressful and would like to see bicycle

facilities through the circle or a feathered edge on the islands so cyclists can quickly leave the travel lane if they need to.

- TAC and the public are concerned about overflow parking for school events. Weekly sporting events generate parking all over the sides of the streets around the intersection from 2:30 pm to 5 or 6 pm. TAC would like Belmont Hill School to come back with a formal traffic and parking management plan to address these concerns.
- TAC would like to see a crosswalk introduced at Village Hill Road to connect the residential neighborhoods across Park Ave in service of creating pedestrian connections from neighborhoods to Belmont Center and other amenities.
- TAC would also like to see whether a chicane or other measure could be added on Park Ave to reduce traffic speeds coming out of the rotary.
- Is it possible to get land on the north side of Park Avenue for the sidewalk extension?
- If Belmont Hill School has land on the south side of the road, is there an option to use the land on the south side that they own for the south-side sidewalk so there can be room for a sidewalk on the north side within the ROW?

Public Questions and Comments

Residents echoed the sentiment that sidewalks along Park Avenue are badly needed. Crosswalks at Village Hill Road are a priority. Pedestrian connections to Prospect Street provide residents access to Belmont Center and connections to the Belmont Hill School campus provide access to Habitat, Belmont's Mass Audubon conservation area. Residents echoed TAC's concern about overflow parking for school events and highlighted the particular challenges facing Rutledge Road, Clifton Street, and Knox Street as a result of current traffic patterns.

Resident Concerns: Current Challenges

- **Sightlines:** The issue of sightlines around the curve of Prospect Street toward Park Avenue was raised.
 - Traffic lights will hang over the road so they are visible to motorists.
- **Back-ups:** During the evening rush hour, traffic to Route 2 backs up all the way down Prospect Street to Clifton Street.
- **Cut-through Traffic:** Rutledge Road was used as a detour during utility work and continues to be used as a cut-through. Residents are concerned that construction on Park Avenue for this project will create additional back-ups and cut-through traffic.
- **Access:** Turning left into Knox Street from Park Avenue is very difficult and dangerous. It would be helpful to have someone look into whether

anything can be added to allow safer vehicular access to Knox Street, particularly during rush hour.

- **Volume:** The traffic volumes cause challenges for the commercial property.

Resident Questions:

- **Land Use and Development Plans:** Residents are concerned that the interest in pedestrian connections across Prospect Street signals Belmont Hill School's intention to develop the land that it owns between Prospect Street and Rutledge Road. Residents would like to know what these plans are.
- **Sidewalk Maintenance and Snow Clearing:** The Town of Belmont bylaws require property owners to clear sidewalks of snow. A few of the property owners along Park Avenue's proposed sidewalks would have a difficult time clearing snow from that length of walkway. If the sidewalks are not cleared of snow and useable, pedestrians will be forced into the street. Residents would like to know whether Belmont Hill School might agree to use their Bobcats to clear the sidewalk along Park Ave to the corner and to use salt to avoid icing over.
- **Lighting:** Could the street lighting at night be improved where you put the sidewalks along Park Avenue? People may be reluctant to talk along the sidewalks - backyards sloping down abutting the sidewalk make it very dark.
- **Landscaping:** The delta at the corner of Rutledge Road and Park Avenue is a neighborhood amenity with beautiful landscaping by the Belmont Garden. Can that be preserved?
- **Parking:** What can the school do to reduce or eliminate overflow parking?

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. Jeffrey S. Dirk Vanasse and Associates will integrate feedback and return to TAC with a parking management plan and another opportunity for public comment in four weeks. Residents will be notified on the website, mailbox, listservs for town, can receive agendas in email. The company's representative will also provide answers to the TAC's questions, including the question about the number of current school students and the number of current school employees to get to school by the MBTA bus that stops at Park Avenue
2. TAC will follow up with the Belmont Hill School and the Planning Board about parking issues at the school.
3. TAC will explore options to reduce cut-through traffic and provide traffic calming on Rutledge Road. Rutledge Road neighborhood has been complaining about cut through traffic for a long time; once you identify what are acceptable commuter routes, you are identifying roads that are not on commuter routes and should be protected - it is an opportunity to

look at Rutledge Road. This is an obvious opportunity to address it. The residents are particularly interested in exploring the possibility of raised elements that calm traffic.

8:35 Break

8:48 Discussion of Proposed Common Street Traffic Calming Improvements

TAC reviewed slides to be presented at a public meeting to discuss removing parking along Common Street from Orchard Street to Payson Road and installing bicycle lanes with the upcoming repaving project. After vigorous debate over appropriate options to present at the public meeting, the TAC recommends striping of bicycle lanes with seasonal protection added via stanchions. A previously-discussed option of a two-way cycle track on one side of the road was determined to be overly challenging in terms of managing the transition of bicycles into and out of the cycle track at Orchard Street, Payson Road and the Washington Street pinch point. The Belmont Police Department prefers to have bicycle lanes at the shoulders because it is easier to demarcate the transition with dotted lines to sharrows.

A public meeting on this topic has been scheduled for May 23rd.

9:51 pm Park Avenue Public Meeting

TAC set a preliminary date for a second public meeting on the proposed Park Avenue improvements for June 6, 2019.

9:52 Traffic Calming Policy—Review revised draft document

Item tabled until next meeting.

9:53 Old Business

None

9:54 New Business

None

9:55 Meeting Adjourned



Transportation Advisory Committee

TOWN OF BELMONT

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Dana Miller - Chair
Laurence MacDonald - Vice Chair
Annis Sengupta - Clerk

Jessica Bennet
David Coleman
Clifford Gaysunas
Charles Hamad
Jeremy Romanul
Jeffrey Roth

Date: April 26, 2019

To: Members – Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Glenn R. Clancy, Committee Liaison

Subject: Agenda for Meeting on May 2, 2019 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room 2. If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact me via e-mail.

7:00 – 7:05 Approval of Minutes (April 25, 2019)

7:05 – 8:00 Park Avenue Public Meeting

- Discussion of Proposed Traffic Calming Improvements

8:00 – 8:30 Common Street Bike Lanes

- Bike Lane Striping Options
- Discussion on Public Hearing Presentation

8:30 – 8:50 Traffic Calming Policy—Review revised draft document

8:50 – 8:55 Old Business

- No Known Items

8:55 – 9:00 New Business

- No Known Items

9:00 Adjourn

Note: Times are tentative depending on the flow of the meeting, the time of any particular item may deviate ten to fifteen minutes from the schedule.

Cc: Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator
Sgt Ben Mailhot, Belmont Police Department
Jay Marcotte, Director, Department of Public Works
Richard McLaughlin, Belmont Police Chief

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Present

MAY 2, 2019 Transportation Advisory Committee

Name

Address

SUMNER BROWN

35 ROSS

+ Judy McSwain "

Betsy Cabot

130 Marsh St

Amy Grossman

249 Rutledge Rd

Mark Grossman

249 Rutledge Rd

Jean Harrington

20 Knox Street

DON HAFNER

232 RUTLEDGE RD

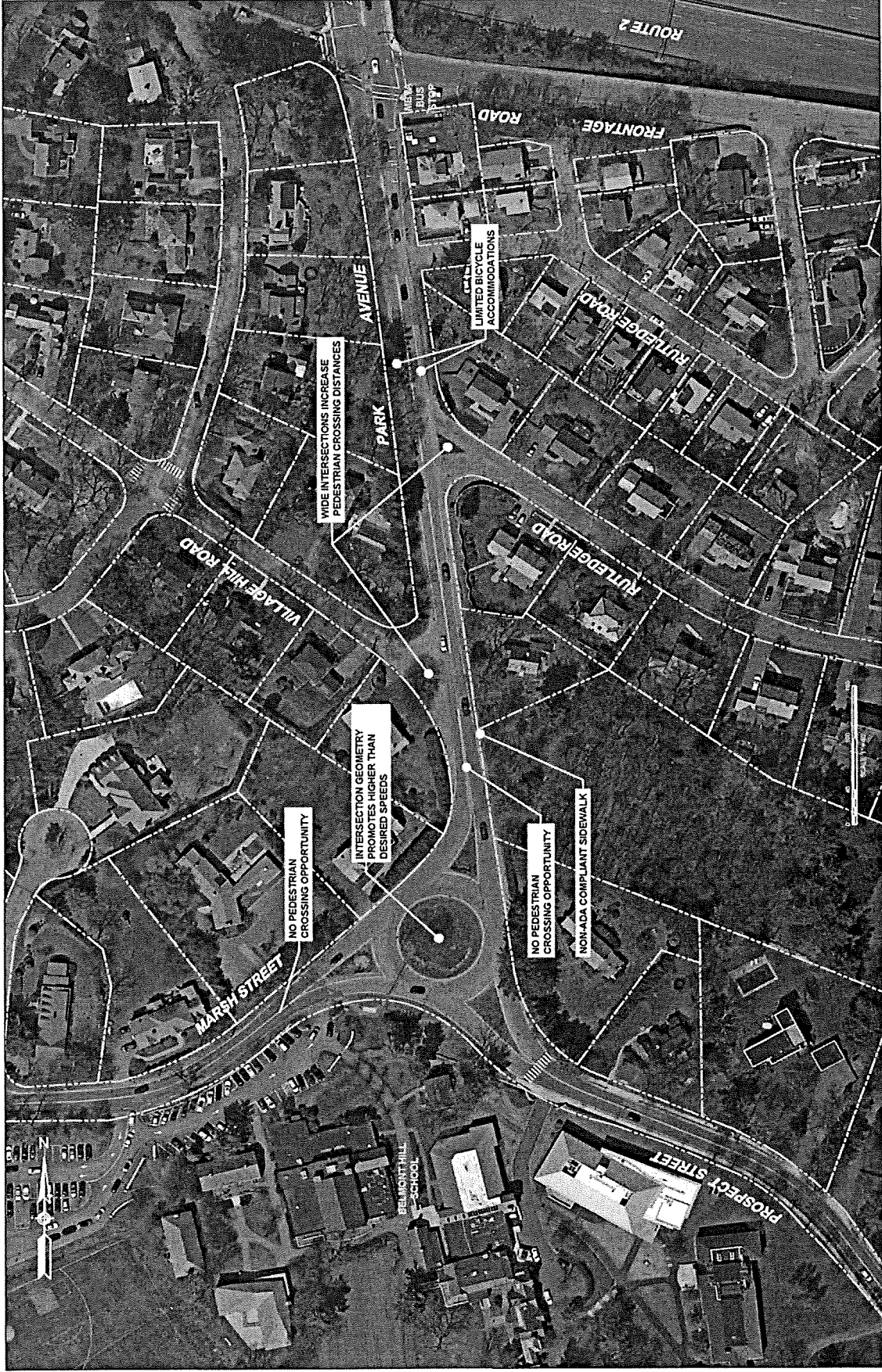
Marcia Sugrue

15 Village Hill Rd.

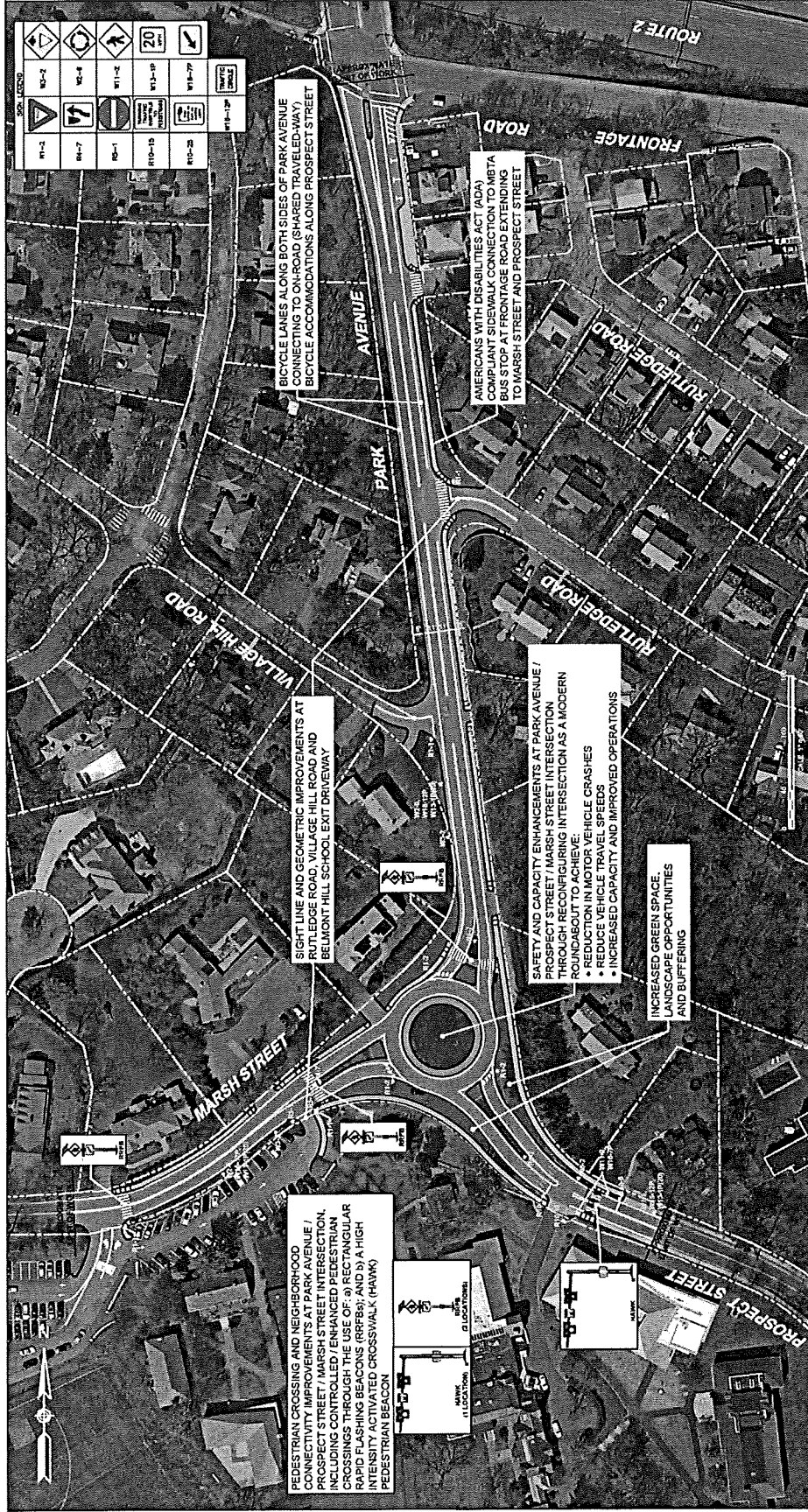
TED PORTER

151 RUTLEDGE RD

Existing Conditions Context



Conceptual Improvement Plan



SUMMARY OF ROUNDABOUTS BENEFITS VS. TRAFFIC SIGNAL CONTROL

Lives saved

- Up to a 90% reduction in fatalities
- 76% reduction in injury crashes
- 30-40% reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 75% fewer conflict points than a four way intersection

Slower vehicle speeds (under 30 mph)

- Drivers have more time to judge and react to other cars and pedestrians
- Advantageous to older and novice drivers
- Reduces the severity of crashes
- Keeps pedestrians safer

Efficient traffic flow

- 30-50% increase in traffic capacity

Reduction in pollution and fuel use

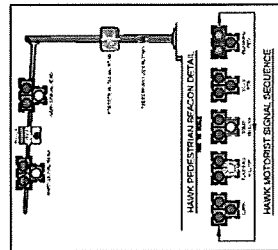
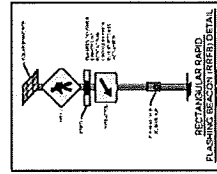
- Improved traffic flow for intersections that handle a high number of left turns
- Reduced need for storage lanes

Increased service life

- Service life of a roundabout is 25 years (vs. the 10-year service life of signal equipment)

Community benefits

- Traffic calming
- Aesthetic landscaping



Preliminary Cost and Next Steps

➤ Preliminary Cost Estimate:

- Design and Survey: \$230,000
- Construction: \$1,510,000*
- **Total: \$1,740,000**

* includes a 25% contingency

➤ Next Steps:

- Present Plan to the Transportation Advisory Committee
- Prepare MassWorks Grant Application
- Develop Preliminary Improvement Plan and Cost Estimate
- Present Completed MassWorks Grant Application to the Board of Selectmen for Endorsement
- Submit MassWorks Grant Application to EHOED

