

**Pedestrian and Vehicular Safety Committee Recommendations
To the Canton Board of Selectmen
November 19, 2008**

As directed by the Board of Selectman the Pedestrian and Vehicular Safety Committee respectfully submits the following list of recommendations and map relative to Route 179 as it enters Collinsville via the bridge over the Farmington River continuing up to and including the intersection of SR 565 (Maple Avenue) and Dyer Avenue, (the target area).

The two most important safety issues for the focus of these recommendations are the **need to slow traffic and reduce traffic flow** along this very congested area used by motorized vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. During peak hours there is heavy vehicle flow and traffic congestion on Route 179 from Bridge St. to the SR 565 intersection. Our recommendations are directed towards making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross this road at established crosswalks and making drivers more aware of pedestrians and cyclists. Encouraging slower speeds on the roads included in this report may result in some of the through traffic finding other routes, potentially decreasing congestion. The Committee limited its recommendations to those sections of the road that require attention in order to provide a safer roadway for all users.

1. Intersection of Route 179 (Bridge Street) and Front Street.

- a. An aesthetically pleasing traffic signal and pedestrian activated crosswalk signal should be installed **now** to allow for safer pedestrian/cyclist movements on the Farmington River Trail and between commercial properties.* In addition to increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road, another intent of the light would be to direct pedestrians to cross in one specified area. A second, less desirable option would be a pedestrian activated flashing warning light.
- b. Traffic calming techniques, such as more clearly marking the travel lanes through the use of alternative pavement material (contrasting material and/or color) as shoulders and medians may help reduce speed.
- c. The lengthy "curb cut" along the north side of Route 179 should be reduced by installing curbing and bump-out extensions at the crosswalk. A paved shoulder would help delineate the sidewalk from the roadway. Narrowing the driveway (on the north/west side of Bridge St.) into the building housing Blumen Laden and adding a low barricade (millstones or aesthetically pleasing bollards) in front of Blumen Laden would make it difficult for automobiles to pass on the right of those stopped at the pedestrian crosswalk. Aligning this driveway with Front Street would help pedestrians and cyclists to "queue up" before entering the crosswalk.
- d. Place electronic speed and pedestrian zone warning signs for traffic approaching the target area from both directions.

* This recommendation is supported by letter to Canton CAO Fetherston from Canton Chief of Police Humphrey dated April, 4 2008.

2. Route 179 (Bridge Street) and North Street.

- a. Extending the curbing on the south side of Route 179 where it passes the Post Office would slow traffic turning off of Route 179 onto North Street.
- b. Adding a sidewalk to the south side of this section of Route 179 would further improve pedestrian safety.

3. **Route 179 (Bridge Street) and River Street.**
 - a. The crosswalk at this intersection is in constant use and may be the second most traveled crosswalk after the trail crossing at Route 179 and Front Street. The sightlines in both directions create a false sense of safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Fast moving cars are not visible to those crossing until they are partway across the road. They are then caught in the middle or forced to run. An island of safety in the middle of Route 179 would provide some protection to those caught in the middle of the road. Pedestrian staging sites on either side of the road would also enhance safety.

4. **Route 179 (Bridge Street) and Center Street.** The design of the intersection must be reviewed. There is significant traffic volume and the space to turn is limited. Possible changes include:
 - a. Improving the pedestrian crossing at this intersection by extending the length of the Center Street sidewalk to reduce its pitch. Also, creating a pedestrian node on the south side of Route 179 would make this crosswalk safer.
 - b. The addition of a turning lane on Route 179 (traveling westward) as it approaches Center Street would help decrease traffic congestion, especially during morning and afternoon rush hours. Changes to the Farmington River Trail would be necessary to accommodate widening the road for the turning lane. One possibility, as depicted on the accompanying map, is a bicycle path overlook on the river side of the path.

5. **Along Route 179 (Bridge Street) where the Farmington River Trail runs along the river.**
 - a. An aesthetically pleasing safety barrier separating the sidewalk from the roadway is needed. Currently the barrier is between the trail and the Farmington River.

6. **Intersection of Route 179 (Bridge Street) and Route 565 (Maple Ave) .**
 - a. This intersection is a major source of concern. The roadway is very straight from Route 179 to Route 565 which **ENCOURAGES INCREASED SPEED** as cars approach the intersection due to the virtually unlimited sight distances.
 - b. A rearrangement of this intersection to make it either a three way stop or a rotary would help to discourage higher speeds through this area. This is especially needed for the safety of residents and visitors. If the intersection stays as it now exists, the current island should be extended to create a pedestrian refuge in the center of the crosswalk.

7. **Intersection of Route 565 (Maple Ave), Dyer Ave and High Street.**
 - a. Consider additional stop signs or a pedestrian activated light at this intersection. Currently, the sight lines for pedestrians crossing Route 565 are very short and inadequate for pedestrian safety.

8. **Recommendation for the general area:**
 - a. Budget annually for purchasing and maintaining an adequate number of State approved pedestrian crosswalk signs.
 - b. Reduce the posted speed from 30 MPH to 25 MPH from the intersection of Bridge Street and Torrington Avenue all the way to Atwater Road. Reduce from 35 MPH to

30 MPH the posted speed from the Atwater Road/Maple Avenue intersection all the way out to Route 44.

- c. Crosswalks in the focus area should be made to stand out more clearly by use of contrasting road material and/or color (possibly brick).
- d. Designated bike lanes would both visually "narrow" the roadway and increase safety for cyclists.
- e. Increased police presence and ticketing of speed violations in the target area should reduce speeding and crosswalk violations. This past budget season the Committee strongly supported the addition to the Canton Police force. The public should be alerted to the increased police presence by way of media coverage/announcements. The Committee applauds the recent purchase of a speed trailer.
- f. The high rate of traffic speed negatively impacts the full enjoyment of Collinsville as an attractive and enjoyable place to live and visit. Traffic calming strategies are designed to give drivers clues that they are traveling through an area used by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. **Creating gateways as described in the 1997 Collinsville Scenic Corridor Management Plan** would alert travelers that they are entering a special place. Defining and visually "narrowing" the travel-way through a change in appearance of the pavement of the entire focus area is recommended. Maintaining a paved shoulder with contrasting paving material or color has the effect of more clearly articulating the travel-way. Planting trees in the yards along Maple Avenue would also have the effect of visually narrowing the roadway.
- g. Both Maple Ave. and Center St. are categorized in the town plan as "Major Collectors" and have excessive auto and **truck** traffic volume and speed through residential areas with inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. After much discussion of options to divert, realign or reduce traffic, the Committee concluded that due to topography, geography and human nature, these moves would simply transfer the problem to other, less adequate streets. However, without the engagement of a professional traffic design engineer, traffic calming, and improved pedestrian infrastructures are seen as the most effective way to improve the safety of all those traveling or living on these streets

The members of the Pedestrian and Vehicular Safety Committee look forward to discussing these recommendations with the Board of Selectman and sincerely hope that most, if not all, are implemented in a timely fashion.

Committee Members

- Larry Minichiello, Chair _____
- Eric Jackson, Vice Chair _____
- Margaret Farrar _____
- Lowell Humphrey _____
- David Sinish _____
- Donald Tarinelli _____
- Rosemary Aldridge _____