

## **REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE JUNE 10, 2017 WALKABILITY WORKSHOP**

On June 10, 2017, the Sleepy Hollow Environmental Advisory Committee sponsored a Walkability Workshop to obtain input from Village residents about how to make our downtown streets safer and more attractive for pedestrians. The workshop, led by SHEAC members Claire Davis and Daniel Convissor, began at Village Hall with a brief introduction by Dan and distribution of diagrams of the intersections to be covered by the walking tour that followed.

Seventeen people signed in at the orientation, and there were 16 participants in the walking tour including three village trustees and a regional representative from the NYS DOT. The group walked west along Beekman Avenue from Village Hall, then followed a loop down Washington Street to Valley, along Valley to College, up College to Cortlandt, up Cortlandt to Beekman, and then back to Village Hall along Beekman with a final stop at Lawrence Street (see attached map). Stops were made at all key intersections along the route so that participants could discuss what they observed and make notations on the diagrams.

Feedback representing the observations of 13 of the 16 participants (81%) was submitted in the form of annotated diagrams and/or email comments. Dan and Claire reviewed the feedback extensively over the summer and what follows is a report of their findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **1. Washington & Valley**

Most consistent comments– Turning radius onto Valley Street is too wide, and both the lane width and the wide angle of the turn onto Washington Street encourage cars to speed around the curve past the car wash; vehicles park on sidewalk between car wash driveways forcing pedestrians into the street. (Rec: Add a curb extension in front of laundromat at 225 No. Washington St. to create a near 90° right turn from Washington into Valley Street, thereby narrowing the travel lane, reducing speed and shortening the pedestrian crossing route; create barrier along property line between car wash driveways to prevent sidewalk blockage)

Other observations – There are no street trees, making it very hot to walk in summer; driveways to car wash and laundry are excessively wide; drive aisle for recessed, head-in parking spaces adjacent to laundry conflicts with metered street parking space and pedestrian flow; and residue at the car wash exit makes the sidewalk slippery for people walking. (Rec: Plant shade trees where feasible; examine on and off street parking conflicts at 225 No. Washington for possible improvement; require car wash owners to regularly clean the sidewalk of slippery residue.)

#### **2. Chestnut & Valley**

Most consistent comments – Crosswalk across Chestnut on west side of Valley is excessively long.

Drivers speed around curve by the car wash (see comment above) and then west onto Chestnut without stopping. (Rec: Look into making Chestnut one-way East here; add a curb extension to N/W corner to reduce pedestrian crossing distance.)

Other observations - There is no E/W crosswalk for people who need to cross Valley Street from the south side of Chestnut; the crosswalk between the island and the east side of Valley is too long.

(Rec: Add E/W crosswalk between Valley and Chestnut; add curb extensions to reduce length of existing and new pedestrian crossings.)

### **3. Valley & Depeyster**

Most consistent comments – NW corner lacks accessible ramp onto Valley Street and has a catch basin in the crosswalk there; intersection crossings are too long. (Rec: Install missing crosswalk elements; move catch basin; and create curb extensions to reduce crosswalk lengths.)

Other observations – Stop signs are poorly placed for visibility by drivers; S/E corner HC ramp appears to be non-compliant (no tactile strip and angled incorrectly); one street name sign appears to be missing (should be two). (Rec: Repair non-compliant and/or missing ramp and sign elements; relocate stop signs to curb extensions for greater visibility.)

### **4. Valley & College**

Most consistent comments – Intersection crossings are too wide; accessible ramps are missing or ADA-non-compliant. (Rec: Create curb extensions to reduce crosswalk length; install/repair missing and/or non-compliant crosswalk elements.)

Other observations - “All-Way” panels missing from stop signs (as per DOT rep); lack of street trees along Valley; sidewalk by bus stop is too narrow; there are insufficient street name signs (only 1 for 4 corners); crosswalks not visible enough. (Rec: Install missing sign elements; plant additional street trees on Valley; and create curb extension by bus stop; raise crosswalks for greater visibility.)

### **5. Cortlandt & College (Firehouse intersection)**

Most consistent comments – There are no E/W crosswalks; N/S crosswalk (crossing College on east side of Cortlandt) is too long. (Rec: Install two E/W crosswalks - from north side of College and from south side of Cedar; add curb extension at SE corner to reduce length of N/S crosswalk.)

Other observations - There is no street name sign at Cedar and Cortlandt; existing ramps are in poor or ADA-non-compliant condition; there are obstacles to visibility of stop signs on both sides of Cortlandt. (Rec: Repair HC ramps and correct for compliance; create curb extensions on both sides of Cortlandt

south of college and move stop signs closer to travel lanes for greater visibility.)

## **6. Cortlandt & Depeyster**

Most consistent comments – There are no E/W crosswalks; N/S crosswalk on west side of Cortlandt is too long; existing HC ramps are in poor condition and ADA-non-compliant. (Rec: Install curb extensions to reduce crossing distance and to allow installation of new E/W crosswalks with ADA compliant ramps; consider raised crosswalks for greater visibility; and repair existing curbcuts and/or reconstruct to make ADA-compliant)

Other observations - “ALL-WAY” panels are missing from stop signs (as per DOT rep); one-way signage for Cortlandt should be more visible for drivers entering from the west on Depeyster.

(Rec: Install “all-way” panels to stop signs; install additional one-way sign on Cortlandt at SW corner visible from stop bar on Depeyster Street; relocate street and directional signs to curb extension to improve visibility of signage.)

## **7. Cortlandt & Beekman**

Most consistent comment – Accessible ramps are missing for the painted N/S crosswalk that runs from the west side Cortlandt Street to the the NE corner of Teresa Street; drivers turning right/east from Cortlandt onto Beekman have limited visibility from the west due to the odd angle of intersection. (Rec: Install ADA compliant ramp at both ends of the subject crosswalk; incorporate island into expanded plaza on east side of Cortlandt to create a right angle intersection with Beekman and improve angle of sight.)

Other observations – Parking space markings on north side of Beekman alongside Van Tassel Apartments (95 Beekman) are too close to the mid-block crosswalk running from 95 Beekman to the southeast corner of Cortlandt and Beekman, encouraging encroachment into the crosswalk; parked vehicles at this location also block visibility for drivers and crosswalk users; there is no stop sign facing the westbound lane at Teresa Street; and street name signs are insufficient and only partially visible due to blockage by sign clutter at intersection. (Rec: Adjust parking space markings in front of VanTassel Apartments to eliminate crosswalk encroachment and create better visibility for drivers and pedestrians; install a stop sign facing the westbound travel lane at the corner of Teresa Street; and remove and/or reposition intersection signage, to the extent feasible, to improve visibility of street name signs.)

## **8. Beekman & Pocantico**

Most consistent comment – Crosswalk and stop sign visibility for drivers in both directions on Beekman are dangerously impacted by parked vehicles. (Rec: Adjust vehicle parking space placement on south

side of Beekman to eliminate conflicts with crosswalk and stop sign visibility; install a linear curb extension connecting the two crosswalks and ramps along the south side of Beekman; and relocate signage to curb extension and construct raised crosswalks for improved visibility.)

Other observations- There is only one street name sign, on the NW corner, that is completely blocked from view in both directions when seasonal planters are hung from the same pole; “All-Way” panel is missing from stop sign (as per DOT rep); and tactile strips are missing from all 4 crosswalk ramps;

(Rec: Reposition street name sign for year-round visibility; install missing stop sign element; and install tactile strips at each of the ramps.)

## **9. Beekman & Washington**

Observations: The N/S crosswalk on the west side of Washington is too long; visibility from the curb at both N/S crosswalks is limited by cars and delivery trucks/vans parked almost up to the intersection both at the northeast corner (by the bank) and east and west along the south side; this is a relatively high volume intersection, and drivers cut across into on-coming lanes when turning; an accessible ramp for the N/S crosswalk is missing from the SE corner; and tactile strips are missing from the ramps at the other 3 corners. (Rec: Create curb extensions with new ADA-compliant ramps at all four corners to reduce N/S crosswalk lengths and increase visibility for both pedestrians and vehicle drivers; install raised lane separators along the center line of the roadway to at least 25 feet back from each crosswalk on both streets.)

## **10. Lawrence & Beekman**

Most consistent comments – Westbound drivers on Beekman approaching Lawrence have severely limited visibility of pedestrians and drivers entering from Lawrence due to the angle of intersection; visibility for drivers turning from Lawrence onto Beekman, or traveling westbound on Beekman and turning onto Lawrence, is often blocked by vehicles parked on Beekman by the NE corner.

(Rec: Install a curb extension at the NE corner to reduce speed of motorists turning into Lawrence as well as enhance visibility for drivers and pedestrians.)

Other observations – Painted crosswalks and accessible ramps are missing for people crossing Beekman; safety of pedestrians crossing at this intersection is severely impaired by parked cars and slope of street. (Rec: Install missing crosswalk elements; install one or more curb extensions to enhance visibility.)

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The workshop took place while a project was underway involving street excavation work by the gas utility company resulting in disrepair of the roadway and damage to certain existing crosswalks, curbs,

and ramps. It is understood that the utility company is being held accountable for repairing damage resulting from that project, and recommendations in this report to create new crosswalks and/or curb cuts and ADA-compliant ramps are separate from, and in addition to, a general need to repair existing, damaged conditions.

In reviewing the comments and observations from all 10 of the intersections covered by the workshop, certain key issues seem to stand out: the vast majority of crosswalks have faded and/or partially eroded paint; crosswalks at many intersections are excessively long and/or have poor visibility due to the odd angles at which streets intersect; certain excessively wide angles of intersection encourage drivers to speed around curves endangering pedestrians; parking spaces are often located too close to, thus impeding visibility of, crosswalks, stop signs, and stop lines; and insufficient tree canopy on Valley Street and on College Street between Valley and Cortlandt makes for a less attractive and comfortable pedestrian experience.

Judiciously placed curb extensions would address a multitude of safety issues by creating shorter crossing widths and improving visibility of people, vehicles and signs. Installation of missing crosswalk and sign elements, along with a regular maintenance program, will enhance pedestrian safety and mobility.

#### **PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**

1. Repaint all crosswalks and stop bars in the downtown area with durable material (such as thermoplastic).
2. Install raised lane separators on Beekman to the east and west of North Washington and on North Washington to the south of Beekman.
3. Reconfigure placement of vehicular parking space markings along both sides of Beekman Avenue from Theresa Street to Pocantico to address conflicts with crosswalks.
4. Undertake pilot curb extension projects in Spring 2018 at the following (relatively high crash incident) intersections using temporary, removable materials such as traffic cones and water soluble paint:
  - (a) Beekman and Lawrence
  - (b) Beekman and Pocantico
  - (c) Cortlandt and Depeyster

Planning for these pilot projects should be subject to coordination by the Village Board and the EAC in consultation with the Police and Fire Departments.

5. Appoint a coordinating committee consisting of at least one Village Trustee, at least one SHEAC representative, the Superintendent of Public Works or his designee, and the Chief of Police or his

designee to evaluate the pilot projects and to plan for further implementation of report recommendations. Use of inexpensive “quick build” materials such as flexible posts, paint and movable planters should be considered where feasible. Possible grant funding to cover more costly and/or longer-term improvements should be considered as well.

6. The village should conduct a separate street tree inventory solely within the business district to determine where additional street trees can be planted. Great consideration should be given to planting shade trees that will enhance the pedestrian experience.