

From: David Rath <DavidRath@kohnrathlaw.com>
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 3:15 PM
To: Planning <planning@willistonvt.org>
Subject: RE: My Taft Corners: Hearing highlights and Pt. 2 on Feb 15

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Good afternoon,

I should have submitted comments previously, and apologize. I live on Whitewater Circle in Williston; as a local resident, I have concerns about pedestrian bike access and accommodations throughout Williston. I do not see any comments about bike/ped access and protecting vulnerable users in the hearing highlights for Taft Corners. Convenient, safe access for non motorized travelers should be a primary objective for Taft Corners and for Williston. The reality is crossing Route 2 or Route 2A in Taft corners is a challenging and scary process for bikers and pedestrians, even at the crossings with protected cross walks. Any update of the Taft Corners master plan should prioritize getting the non motorized population to and from the Taft Corners businesses, conveniently and safely.

The bike/ped issues at Taft Corners are a small part of the challenges non motorized travelers face in Williston, and I urge Williston Planning and Zoning to put together the same type of public hearing process for Willistonians to address those challenges (e.g., no shoulders or drop shoulders on Williston roads like Mountain View & North Williston Road, unplowed sidewalks and bike/ped paths, or worse, plowed sidewalks or bike/ped paths refilled with snow and ice from the road plows, sidewalks and bike/ped paths that dead-end, forcing vulnerable users on to inadequate or non-existent road shoulders). Ironically, the Williston bike/ped path system is a wonderful asset where it exists and the Town should be proud of the system. But Williston Planning and Zoning should understand the existing system is inadequate; the perspective from outside your office is that focus on improvement and extension of the existing system is underwhelming.

I do not want to simply complain – the existing bike/ped path system is nice for people who can get there; and I am happy to pitch in and help looking at what needs to be done and how to do it.

Thanks for your time and work.

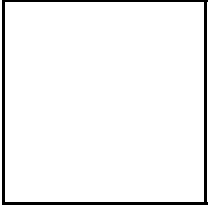
David

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From: Williston Planning & Zoning [<mailto:planning@willistonvt.org>]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 10:03 AM
To: davidrath@kohnrath.com
Subject: My Taft Corners: Hearing highlights and Pt. 2 on Feb 15





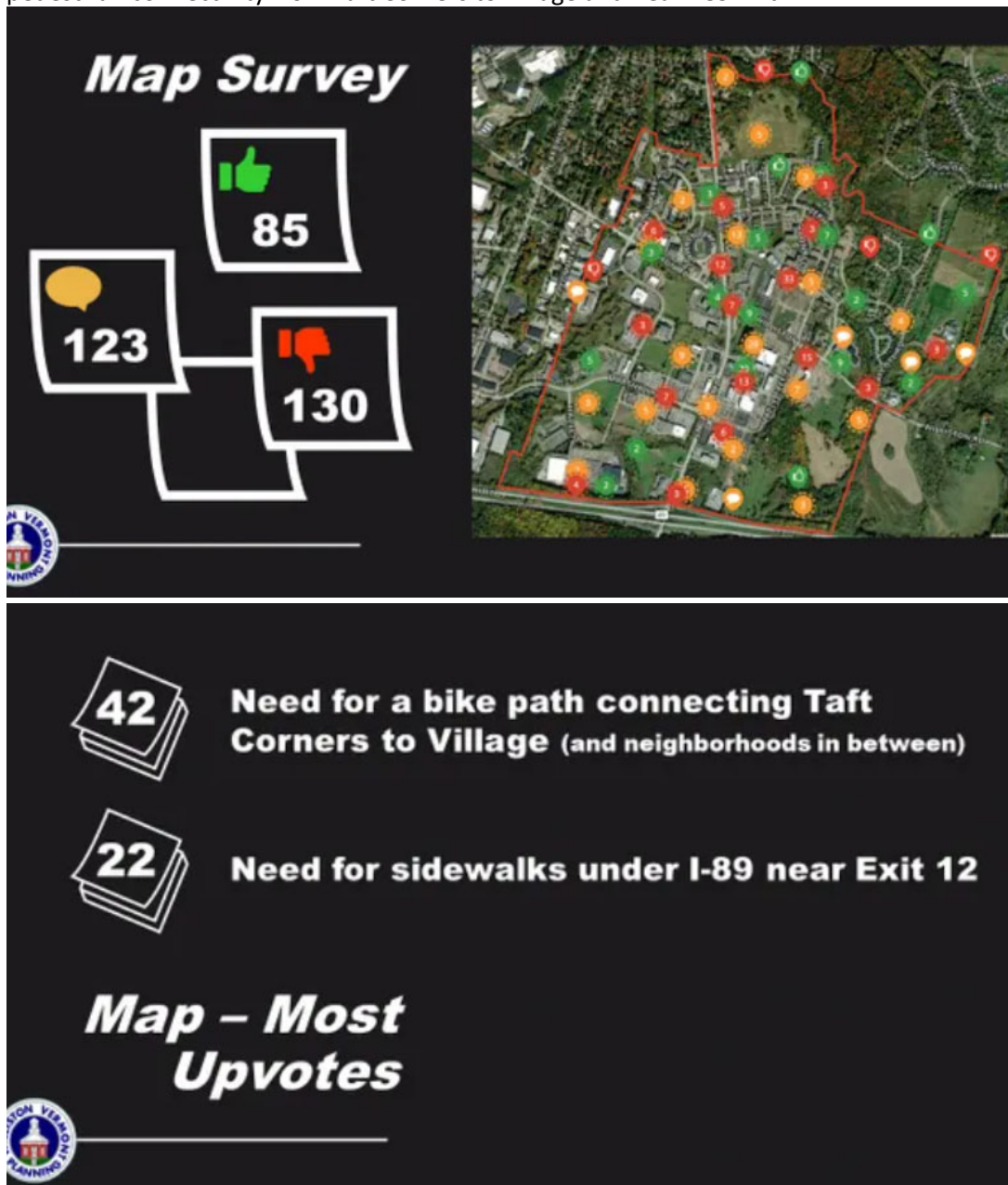
Emily Heymann

From: Emily Heymann
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 2:23 PM
To: David Rath
Cc: Matthew Boulanger
Subject: RE: My Taft Corners: Hearing highlights and Pt. 2 on Feb 15

Hi David,

Thanks for reaching out. We will include your comments in the packets to Planning Commission.

In March to May 2021 the Planning Commission took on the [public outreach and input](#) component of the Form-Based Code. These comments informed the Vision Plan. In this mapping exercise, the most liked comments were about pedestrian connectivity from Taft Corners to Village and near I-89 Exit 12:



I encourage you to skim through the [Vision Plan](#), pages 36-42 focus on “Street Spaces, Green Streets for People.” Scroll down to Pages 56-76 of the Vision to read direct comments from citizens, lots of input about pedestrian/cyclist connectivity and safety. The Form-Based Code and new [Public Realm Street Specifications](#) set the standard for buildings and new streets that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles. Ultimately, Form-Based code is a regulatory tool that sets the standards for designing and building new buildings and streets. Decisions about filling in the gaps in existing town systems, or operational changes to maintain those facilities, is ultimately a policy and budgetary decision of the Selectboard that mostly impacts the Dept of Public Works.

Route 2 and 2A: these are state highways, not town highways. This means that modifications to state ROW or intersections with state roads must conform to Vermont AOT specifications, which tends to prioritize vehicles and large AOT highway plows. It also means the state AOT, not town, is responsible for plowing those roads and repainting the crosswalks and stripes. The Vision Plan does mention that if the town were to take over a portion of Route 2 or 2A it would have much more flexibility to rebuild the ROW to prioritize people and pedestrians. For example, Main Street in Waterbury has street parking and crosswalk bulb outs because that portion of road is owned & maintained by the Town, not the state. Similarly in Barre and Stowe.

Existing streets and gaps in pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure: gaps in the existing system are managed by the Department of Public Works. They leverage the Town’s path bond dollars for grants and other funding to complete gaps in the Town’s system. Questions about the projects list, including north Williston Road & Mtn View Road, should be directed to Bruce Hoar, DPW Director or Lisa Schaeffler, Assistant Director. Contact info [here](#).

The Selectboard has a policy for traffic calming on existing town streets which outlines action steps and response levels: [Traffic Calming Policy](#).

Your sentiments about plowing are shared by the Planning Commission. Sidewalk plowing of public paths and sidewalks is done by the Department of Public Works with funding for equipment and staff approved by the Selectboard. Annually, the Planning Commission provides comment to the Selectboard on operating and capital budget expenses. In both [FY2022 memo](#) and [FY2023 memo](#), the Planning Commission expressed dismay that a second sidewalk plow is not prioritized. On Jan 4, 2022 the Planning Commission said, “Sidewalk Plow: Continuing our recommendation from December 2020, sidewalk plowing is a priority for town residents, is part the town plan’s goal of making Williston pedestrian-friendly and reduces the need for vehicle use. This is especially important during the pandemic. To ensure all sidewalks are plowed in a timely manner, a second sidewalk plow should be purchased THIS year.”

This message (now expired) was posted on Town website Feb 7th following the storm: *“Last Friday’s winter storm brought over 20 inches of snow to Williston, a significant snowfall event. Our Highway Department worked a long day Friday to keep up with the snowfall, and the clean up work continues this week. The Town’s sidewalk snowplow has encountered some set-backs in its operations since Friday. The volume of snow has required the blower attachment on the plow to be used, and this is a slow moving task to get to the 15.5 miles of sidewalks and paths that are maintained. The Town’s multi-use paths that are usually plowed with a pick-up truck are in need of a first pass with the blower on the sidewalk plow to cut down on the snow volume. The sidewalk plow has encountered multiple mechanical breakdowns since Friday. Public Works staff is working to clear the sidewalks and paths this week, but it will be slow work that will take multiple days to complete. Thank you for your patience as this work takes place.”*

Phew, I threw out a lot of info! Happy to answer follow up questions.

Best,
Emily Heymann, AICP

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