

Memorandum

Date: October 14, 2016
To: Michael Zehner, Planning Director, Town of Wellesley
From: Alison Felix and Cynthia Wall, MAPC
Re: Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan – Recommendations Report

Jointly developed by MAPC, MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC), and the Town of Wellesley, the Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan is a year-long community-driven study for the Route 9 Corridor in Wellesley. The plan provides tailored strategies for addressing the functionality and form of the roadway and corridor.

The Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan comprises two phases. Phase 1, accepted by the Wellesley Planning Board on March 14, 2016, consisted of an inventory and assessment of existing conditions and the identification of issues and opportunities. Issues and opportunities were compiled from a wide range of sources that included recently completed studies prepared for the Town, fieldwork, feedback from the 25-member Stakeholder group, a Public Forum held in November 2015, and an on-line survey with almost 200 responses.

Phase 2 is the Recommendations report with 52 recommendations organized by the ten key topic areas identified in the Issues and Opportunities Report. It is important to note that the recommendations are not presented in any order of priority.

The Recommendations report is intended to serve as a blueprint to make Route 9:

- A greater asset to the community – functionally and aesthetically.
- An improved roadway that better serves all users – drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The report can assist the Town in working with MassDOT and legislators to improve the Route 9 corridor. Since so much research was involved, these recommendations also serve as a toolkit. For instance, if the Town wanted to install a different type of guardrail, it has information about the choices.

On September 27, 2016, a final Public Forum was held to review and obtain feedback on the Recommendations report. With about 30 attendees, there was meaningful dialogue and overall support for the 52 recommendations. For the Public Forum, MAPC sorted the 52 recommendations into four types of steps needed in order to make the recommendations happen – action, advocacy, policy, and investment.

The following is a summary of verbal and written feedback received from the Public Forum and comments received since the last Stakeholder Group meeting held on August 23, 2016:

Audible Crossing Signals for Pedestrians

- Pedestrian signals and the path of travel should be audible.

Bicycles and Sidewalks

- One attendee proposed making the eastbound sidewalk “100 percent end to end” for pedestrians while the westbound side should have a “dedicated bicycle path 100 percent end to end with bicycle signals.” With such a system in place, pedestrian/bicycle accidents would be prevented. The attendee also wrote that “One full length sidewalk on a single side of the street is adequate.”
- Would like to see Route 9 become more bike friendly.

Bus Stops

- Increase the frequency of bus service and number of bus stops. Specifically, bus stops should be added at the future sports facility, Route 16, Kingsbury Street, MassBay Community College, and the Cedar Street ramp.
- Transfers between bus routes should be facilitated.
- The frequency of bus Route 8 should be increased.
- Bus stops should have shelters and be accessible.

Complete Streets Initiative

- Overall support for a Complete Streets initiative.

Coordination with MassDOT

- The Town needs to be informed if MassDOT removes trees (e.g., clear cutting or mulching) or makes changes to infrastructure (e.g., stone walls).

Gas Leaks, Noise, and Vehicle Speeds

- General concern was expressed about gas leaks, noise, and vehicle speeds along the Route 9 corridor.

Guardrails

- Recommendations 2.B. - *Adjust Guardrail Placement where Feasible and Warranted* and 2.C. - *Improve Guardrail Aesthetics by Working with MassDOT to Develop a Consistent Specification for the Route 9 Corridor* were viewed favorably.

Historic Features

- Recommendation 9.F. - *Identify Historically Significant Features*

One attendee noted that the current statement did not reflect the discussion at the last Stakeholder Meeting, to preserve structures and sites that are of historical significance. There should be three aspects to this: 1) identify such structures and sites; 2) preserve them; 3) recognize them. The current statement addresses only the 'recognition.' Also, the current statement does not mention historical 'structures.' Another attendee emphasized the need for repair and maintenance but expressed uncertainty about plaque recognition.

(Note: There is a Recommendation 8.E., *Establish a Restoration and Preservation Plan for Historic Features.*)

Maintenance

- Recommendation 8.G. – *Implement Adopt-A-Highway Programs*

Interest was expressed to learn more about this program. One attendee indicated a preference for no signage and suggested to explore whether volunteer recognition could be given in ways other than installing additional signs.

- Recommendation 8.I. – *Utilize Inmate Work Programs*

This recommendation was not well-received. However, a recommendation to consider a community service clean-up program that brings together high school students and seniors was proposed. A recommendation to work with the Boy Scouts as part of a clean-up program was also proposed.

- The Town and MassDOT need to develop a joint maintenance plan to address matters that range from historic stone walls to existing and missing fencing. The plan needs to identify responsible parties (e.g., Who paves the Route 16 ramps?, Who is responsible for clearing weeds along Route 9 and weeds that cover sidewalks?).
- Clean up along the Route 9 corridor should be required.
- Work with Mark Nikolewski, a resident interested in organizing a "Friends of Route 9" committee. Once formed, this committee can advocate for clean-up.
- Maintenance is critical, especially if gateways are established.
- Concern about dilapidated fences along the corridor was expressed. Developing guidelines (e.g., suggested styles) for private property that backs to Route 9 was proposed. Incentivizing preferred styles of fences or planting trees (e.g., arborvitae) in lieu of fences was also suggested.

Pedestrian Bridge

- There were comments both in favor and against the concept of installing a pedestrian bridge over Route 9.

Safe Routes to School

- While this recommendation was viewed favorably, there was some confusion regarding what benefits this program can offer (e.g., construction projects) and the extent to which it already exists within the Town's public school system.

Signals

- Pedestrian signals and the path of travel should be audible.
- Signals should better manage traffic.

Specific Recommendations

- Recommendations 3.D. - *Expand Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programs* and 9.D. - *Ensure Prevention of Double Poles* should be minimized.
- Recommendation 6.C. - *Advance the Boulder Brook Culvert Project* should take place prior to the development of 900 Worcester Street and the repaving of the roadway.
- Recommendations 7.B. - *Ensure all Gas Leaks along Route 9 are Fixed Prior to Paving*; 8.B. - *Annually Prioritize a Top List of Specific Maintenance Issues and Convey to MassDOT*; 8.D. - *Require Landscaping Operations and Maintenance Plans for Large Commercial Developments*; and 9.A. - *Develop a Tree Protection Plan for the Route 9 Corridor*; should all be prioritized.
- The practicality of recommendation 8.H. - *Organize Community-Run Cleanup Events and Programs* was questioned.

Trees

- Need to plant additional trees along the Route 9 corridor, especially around Oak Street.
- Different species of trees should be planted along the Route 9 corridor.

For reference, both the handout and presentation from the public form are included as attachments. The three reports: *Recommendations, Issues and Opportunities*, and *Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions* are available on the Town's website at: http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Planning/projects/Route9Study&Plan

**Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan
Public Forum**

**September 27, 2016
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Wellesley Town Hall, Great Hall
525 Washington Street, Wellesley, MA**

AGENDA

- 6:30pm** **Welcome & Introductions**
Michael Zehner, Planning Director
- 6:40pm** **Route 9 Study and Recommendations**
Alison Felix – MAPC
Cynthia Wall – MAPC
- 7:00pm** **Open House**
Emily Torres-Cullinane - MAPC
- 8:30pm** **Adjourn**



ROUTE 9 ENHANCEMENT STUDY AND PLAN – PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Please visit each station to learn more and ask questions about the proposed Recommendations!

The recommendations are not listed in any order of priority.

Recommendations Report		Station - ACT
Number	Topic Area	
1.D.	TRAFFIC	Develop Ongoing Data Collection and Monitoring Programs
8.G.	MAINTENANCE	Implement Adopt-A-Highway Programs
8.H.	MAINTENANCE	Organize Community-Run Cleanup Events and Programs
8.I.	MAINTENANCE	Utilize Inmate Work Programs
9.F.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Identify Historically Significant Features
10.A.	GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION	Develop a Working Strategy among Wellesley's Residents, Business Community, Town Government, and the State
10.B.	GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION	Undertake a Comprehensive Public Outreach Campaign

Recommendations Report		Station - ADVOCATE
Number	Topic Area	
2.C.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Improve Guardrail Aesthetics by Working with MassDOT to Develop a Consistent Specification for the Route 9 Corridor
2.G.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Add Medians at Intersections with Crosswalks
2.I.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Apply for Green Community Designation to be Eligible for Green Community Grant Funds to Install LED Lights
3.A.	PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS	Work with MassDOT to Explore Opportunities for Dedicated and Separate Bicycle and/or Multi-Modal Paths
4.B.	SPECIFIC SITES	Route 9 Reconstruction Project
4.C.	SPECIFIC SITES	Prioritize Intersections and Sites for Improvements
5.A.	PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	To Encourage the use of Public Transportation, Explore Designating Bus Stops along Route 9 to Serve the MWRTA's Bus Route 1
6.A.	WATER MANAGEMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES	Advocate that MassDOT be Required to Adhere to the Same Standards of Stormwater Management as the Town
6.B.	WATER MANAGEMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES	Work with MassDOT and Developers to Institute Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques along Route 9 to Improve Stormwater Management
6.C.	WATER MANAGEMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES	Advance the Boulder Brook Culvert Project
7.A.	NATURAL GAS LEAKS	Review and Advocate for Adopted and Pending Legislation
7.B.	NATURAL GAS LEAKS	Ensure all Gas Leaks along Route 9 are Fixed Prior to Paving
8.B.	MAINTENANCE	Annually Prioritize a Top List of Specific Maintenance Issues and Convey to MassDOT
8.D.	MAINTENANCE	Require Landscaping Operations and Maintenance Plans for Large Commercial Developments
9.A.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Develop a Tree Protection Plan for the Route 9 Corridor
9.H.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Support and Encourage Use of New Roadway Technologies

ROUTE 9 ENHANCEMENT STUDY AND PLAN – PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Report		Station - POLICY
Number	Topic Area	
	ROADWAY DESIGN	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy
2.E.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Ensure ADA Compliance - Work with MassDOT to Develop a Transition Plan and Utilize MassDOT's Curb Ramp Assessment Tool
2.H.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Create an Access Management Plan to Enable Safe Access for Pedestrians and Bicyclists
2.K.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Explore the Installation of Pedestrian Scale Lighting
3.C.	PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS	Implement a Vision Zero Program
3.D.	PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS	Expand Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programs
7.C.	NATURAL GAS LEAKS	Lead Coordination of Roadway Work
7.D.	NATURAL GAS LEAKS	Review MAPC's Study of Natural Gas Leaks
8.A.	MAINTENANCE	Develop a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for the Route 9 Corridor
8.C.	MAINTENANCE	Develop a Sidewalk Maintenance Plan
8.E.	MAINTENANCE	Establish a Restoration and Preservation Plan for Historic Features
8.F.	MAINTENANCE	Adhere to Effective Coordination and Timing of Projects
9.B.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Install LED Street Lights with Attention to Aesthetics
9.C.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Explore Placement of Overhead Wires Underground
9.D.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Ensure Prevention of Double Poles
9.G.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Establish Gateways at the East and West Entrances of Route 9

Recommendations Report		Station - INVEST
Number	Topic Area	
1.A.	TRAFFIC	Implement Traffic Signal Enhancements that Benefit Pedestrians and Bicyclists
1.B.	TRAFFIC	Install Dilemma-Zone Detection Systems at Signalized Intersections
1.C.	TRAFFIC	Utilize Speed Monitoring Trailers or Signs to Inform Drivers of their Speeds
2.A.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Install and Reconstruct Sidewalks along the Entire Length of Route 9 to the Extent Feasible
2.B.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Adjust Guardrail Placement where Feasible and Warranted
2.D.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Install Pedestrian Crossing Signs at Crosswalks
2.F.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Clearly Mark Crosswalks at Signalized Intersections
2.J.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Install LED Streetlights for Route 9 as Part of a Town-Wide LED Streetlight Retrofit
2.L.	ROADWAY DESIGN	Consider Realigning the Placement of Light Poles in the Event of Relocation
3.B.	PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS	Expand and Connect the Wellesley Trails Network in the Vicinity of Route 9
4.A.	SPECIFIC SITES	Route 9/Kingsbury Street Intersection Reconfiguration
6.D.	WATER MANAGEMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES	Make Improvements to Identified Locations with Drainage Issues
9.E.	CORRIDOR AESTHETICS AND IDENTITY	Pursue the Installation of Multimodal Wayfinding Signs

Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan

Public Forum



September 27, 2016

Wellesley Town Hall, Great Hall





What is the purpose of the Route 9 Study?

Develop a Plan based on an inventory and assessment that identifies the Town's goals and recommendations for the roadway, addresses issues, and capitalizes on opportunities.

Process

August
2015



Public Forum &
Survey
November 2015



Existing Conditions
Report
December 2015



Issues and
Opportunities
Report
March 2016

Public Forum
September 2016

We Are Here

Stakeholder
Meeting
August 2015

Stakeholder
Meeting
October 2015

Stakeholder
Meeting
November 2015

Stakeholder
Meeting
March 2016

Stakeholder
Meeting
August 2016

Phase 1
***Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions
and
Identification of Issues and Opportunities***

Phase 2
Recommendations



What we heard...

- **70% of survey respondents use Route 9 every day.**
- **Traffic volumes, sidewalks, and pavement conditions are the most common concerns.**
- **Pedestrian safety – including safety for school children – is important.**
- **Safety and overall aesthetics matter to the community.**
- **Route 9 is viewed as unsafe, divides the community, and is visually unappealing.**

The Recommendations are a blueprint to make Route 9:

- **A greater asset to the community – functionally and aesthetically.**
- **An improved roadway that better serves all users – drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.**



Topics that Rose to the Top!

52 Recommendations

Traffic

**Pedestrians and
Bicyclists**

**Public
Transportation**

**Natural Gas
Leaks**

**Corridor
Aesthetics &
Identity**

Roadway Design

Specific Sites

**Water Management
& Natural
Resources**

Maintenance

**Governmental
Collaboration**



52 Recommendations

ACT

Activities residents and businesses can participate in to achieve changes along Route 9.

ADVOCATE

The Town should collaborate with others for these recommendations.

POLICY

Recommendations that would be carried out after Town consensus to do so. Consensus would be reached by discussions with residents, town boards/commissions and staff.

INVEST

The Town would appropriate funding to help accomplish these recommendations.



52 Recommendations - Examples

ACT

- **Implement Adopt-A-Highway Programs.**
- **Develop a working strategy among Wellesley's residents, business community, Town government, and the State.**

ADVOCATE

- **Prioritize intersections and sites for improvements.**
- **Advance the Boulder Brook Culvert project.**

POLICY

- **Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan for the Route 9 corridor.**
- **Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.**

INVEST

- **Implement traffic signal enhancements that benefit pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- **Install and reconstruct sidewalks along the entire length of Route 9 to the extent feasible.**

Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan



Route 9 Enhancement Study and Plan





NEXT STEPS

- **Provide your feedback on the Route 9 recommendations.**
- **MAPC will present the Recommendations report and the feedback from this Public Forum at the Planning Board meeting on October 17, 2016.**
- **Recommendations report will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for their review and adoption.**