



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BIKE WALK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

*Online & 2 Lincoln St
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, September 11th
2025, 7:00 PM*

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1. CALL TO ORDER

[7:00 PM]

- a. John O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
- b. Members Present:
 - John O'Brien (chair), Lauren Philbrook, David Achee, Daniel Liguori, Russ Miller-Johnson (attended remotely)
- c. Public Present
 - Chris Yuen (Community Development Director), Jack Evans (Local Motion), Andrew Boutin (Member of the Public), Elena (Member of the Public, attended remotely)

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

- a. Chris Yuen added the following items:
 - Business Items: A discussion on the committee's desired future projects for the current funding cycle and a review of bike parking progress.
 - Staff Updates: An update on the Pearl Street pedestrian crossing scoping study and the Regional Safety Action Plan.
- b. John O'Brien added the following item:
 - Business Items: A discussion on possible public outdoor bathroom facilities.

3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

- a. August 14th, 2025
 - A motion was made by David Achee to approve the minutes from August 14th, 2025, seconded by Daniel Liguori. The vote was unanimous (5-0) in favor.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

- a. Andrew Boutin: A resident of Cascade Street, Mr. Boutin raised the need for more public restrooms in the city. He suggested locations near Cascade Park and along Dunbar Drive. He proposed that the city could partner with local businesses to offer facilities and that all publicly available restrooms should be added to the official city bike map.
- b. Jack Evans: Mr. Evans announced a public open house for the Town of Essex's Keystone Trail and Method Transportation Plan projects. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, September 30th, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM at the middle school. He encouraged committee members to attend to discuss regional connectivity and collaboration.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Public Restroom Facilities

- The committee discussed the public comment regarding restrooms. There was consensus that adding locations of existing public and business-provided restrooms to the bike map would be a valuable and achievable first step. Members identified a need for facilities in the northern part of the city, near the Tree Farm soccer complex, and at a future revamped Stevens Park. The primary challenges discussed were the operational costs and maintenance liabilities associated with public facilities. The committee decided to prioritize mapping existing locations and revisit the possibility of recommending new seasonal facilities in the spring.

b. Bike Parking

- The committee reviewed the current state of bike parking. Members noted that recently installed racks are seeing high usage. Chris Yuen reported that Public Works has an inventory of older bike racks that can be installed. The committee identified several gaps in the network, including the Tree Farm, the commercial plaza on Pearl Street containing a Subway, and near the Lincoln Inn. The racks at the library were noted as being non-permanent, which has both benefits (movability for winter) and drawbacks (less secure). Lauren Philbrook volunteered to audit the Tree Farm area for potential installation locations.

c. Future Projects & Funding

- The committee brainstormed projects for its annual \$10,000 budget. Key ideas included:
 - **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)**
 - Continuing the annual tradition of installing one RRFB, with the crossing at Central Street and Lincoln Street being a strong candidate based on a prior rubric score.
 - **Community Bike Ride**
 - Organizing an educational and community-building bike ride in May to align with National Bike Month. The event would aim to raise awareness, gather public feedback, and could include food and promotional materials to increase participation.
 - **Safe Routes to School**
 - Exploring a "bike bus" or structured walking program for Hiawatha Elementary. The committee acknowledged that such a program requires a dedicated parent champion but agreed to begin gauging interest with the PTO and other parent groups for a potential rollout next year.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES

a. Annual Summary for City Council

- John O'Brien reported on his recent presentation to the City Council. He shared the committee's accomplishments from the past year and advocated for an increased role in the city's traffic calming policy, including a potential budget increase for pilot projects. He noted that the Council was receptive to the ideas presented.

7. STAFF UPDATES

a. Pearl Street Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study

- The project is currently with the consultants following recent public engagement events. Feedback from residents in apartment buildings along Pearl Street indicated that a slight majority were either fine with or preferred keeping the central median for safety reasons. The final report is expected by the end of the year.

b. Pearl Street Pedestrian Crossing Study

- A new scoping project will assess the feasibility of adding a pedestrian crossing on Pearl Street between West Street Extension and the CVE. The primary goal is to improve safety and accessibility for transit riders who need to cross the street to catch the bus.

c. Traffic Calming Policy Update

- The City Council has reviewed the latest draft and supports moving it forward. Final details are being worked out to address technical concerns from the police department and city engineer and to determine the appropriate level of neighborhood buy-in required for projects.

d. Amtrak Station Updates

- A \$3.75 million federal grant will fund renovations to the station. The current design focuses on exterior improvements, including a new canopy and a reconfiguration of Railroad Avenue to improve pedestrian safety. The project does not currently address the undersized interior waiting room, but staff is now exploring a potential future phase to expand it into an adjacent vacant space.

e. Regional Safety Action Plan

- The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has completed a regional study to identify a High Injury Network, which allows member municipalities to apply for federal "Safe Streets for All" funding. The results showed that Essex Junction has very few road segments that qualify, meaning the city will likely be unable to access this specific funding source. However, the plan's general recommendations can still inform local safety efforts.

8. READING FILE

9. ADJOURN

- a. Lauren Philbrook made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM, seconded by David Achee. The vote passed unanimously (5-0).