



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

*Online & 2 Lincoln St
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Monday, April 13th 2026
7:00 PM*

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MEMBERS PRESENT: John O'Brien, Chair; Russ Miller-Johnson, Vice-Chair; David Achee; Daniel Liguori; Lauren Philbrook

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Giguere, City Planner; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Kevin Batson, Diane Clemens, Ben Cooley, Bryan Davis, Jack Evans, Joe Finch, Marcie Gallagher, Finn Hamilton, Yunier Martinez, Ernie Reuter, Mark Robbins, Mike Smith, Mike Sullivan, Alison Wermer, Terri Zittritsch, Alex, Charlene Michelle, Nate, Thomas

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. He noted that the BWAC is a volunteer advisory committee who provides input to the City Council.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

3. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

a. **March 12th, 2026**

DANIEL LIGUORI made a motion, seconded by RUSS MILLER-JOHNSON, to approve the minutes of March 12, 2026, as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

Mr. Cooley said that he is a cyclist and expressed his support for Alternative 1 on Park Street, due to the buffered bike lanes. Mr. Reuter commended the installation of pedestrian infrastructure on Route 15. He encouraged the BWAC to consider repaving the bike path connecting Essex and Essex Junction near Countryside Drive. He said the Park Street Complete Streets project will help connect cyclists in Williston and Essex Junction and spoke in favor of Alternative #1. He encouraged easily to maintain projects and additional speed enforcement. Mr. Smith expressed support for Alternative #1. He said this would help to make the area safer for non-drivers.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. **Traffic Calming Policy Scoring Update**

Mr. Giguere said that a traffic calming policy was adopted by the City Council last December. This allows residents to directly request traffic calming in specific areas. Staff puts all requests through a rubric to allow the City to focus their efforts on where there is the most need. Seven streets have been identified as high priority area. He noted that two of the identified streets are within the Park Street Complete Streets project area. Traffic volume, crash data, land use data and speed are all considered when determining priority areas. Pedestrian volume is currently not considered due to the lack of data.

Mr. Liguori asked how some of the streets marked as currently ineligible for traffic calming were excluded by the rubric. Mr. Giguere explained that analysis occurs with three major hurdles to overcome. The first is a threshold for traffic volume and vehicle crashes, which often excludes residential streets with low traffic volumes. The second hurdle includes land use characteristics, prioritizing locations within close proximity to affordable housing, schools, or other facilities with vulnerable populations. The third hurdle to overcome is traffic speed. Mr. Yuen clarified that traffic volume thresholds are different depending on the type of street being analyzed to account for expected volumes, with arterial roads having higher initial thresholds.

Mr. Liguori asked why each street received multiple scoring locations. Mr. Giguere explained that this was an

attempt to use the rubric to identify which location on an identified street would benefit the most from traffic calming implementation, rather than arbitrarily choosing a measurement location in order to focus on the highest impact areas.

b. Park Street Complete Streets Improvements-Alternatives Presentation

Mr. Giguere said the Park Street Complete Streets Improvements are a series of proposed road striping changes between Railroad Street (Crescent Connector) and River Street. He provided an overview of the regional and local significance of Park Street for all types of transit. Desired improvements to Park Street are cited in several local plans. Safety issues, such as speeding, drivers crossing the centerline to pass bicyclists and parked cars were discussed. The three alternatives include: Alternative 0 (maintain existing conditions), Alternative 1 (removing all on-street parking and adding wide bike lanes with 4-foot buffers) and Alternative 2 (retaining parking on one side with 2-foot buffers). The newly constructed parking from the Crescent Connector will be unchanged with any of the alternatives. He discussed the benefits and tradeoffs between all alternatives. Mr. Giguere discussed public engagement, especially noting business owner outreach in the Park Street area. 149 responses were received to the public survey, 75% of whom traveled in the area regularly. 20% of respondents said that reduced parking would make them less likely to visit the area. 46% of respondents selected Alternative 1 as their preferred alternative, and 73% chose either Alternative 1 or 2. In the open-ended questions, concerns were raised regarding the use of bike lanes, accessibility concerns for those who cannot bike, that narrowing lanes will make traffic worse and that removing parking will harm businesses and customers.

In the northernmost section of Park Street, parking spaces were reduced due to the completion of the Crescent connector project. City staff presented findings from multiple data sources, including Google Street View, a 2019 Stantec study, and recent in-person counts, showing that parking utilization decreases further away from Five Corners. The data revealed that while on-street parking spaces are generally available, businesses like Park Place Tavern and Green Mountain Clippers experience high demand that sometimes exceeds available off-street parking spaces during peak hours

Mr. O'Brien requested public input. Ms. Wermer asked about allowable public use of a variety of nearby parking lots. Mr. Reuter expressed support for Alternative 1 to minimize pedestrian crossings of the roadway. Mr. Hamilton expressed support for Alternative 1 due to biking accessibility and additional economic development opportunities. Answering a question from a Mr. Batson, Mr. Yuen said that Park Street is a Class 1 state road. This means that the City has design control and receives funds from the state for paving. Mr. Reuter said it is unsafe to cross Park Street while biking, and that he sometimes needs to travel on the sidewalk. Mr. Batson would like to extend the project to Cascade Street and past the bridge. Ms. Gallagher asked if a shared-use path was ever considered. Mr. Giguere said that this is hoped to be developed in the future when funding is available. Ms. Gallagher also spoke of the need to bring this project to Williston for regional connectivity. Answering a question from Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Yuen said the project will hopefully occur as a part of the annual restriping program. It could occur as early as this summer. The proposed buffer is paint striping to keep costs at a minimum and because this project will be serving as a pilot project. Mr. Yuen said that plastic delineators were proposed early in the project however this would present an issue for snow removal.

Mr. Robbins said that he strongly supports Alternative 1, however he would also support Alternative 2 if a compromise is necessary. Ms. Wermer requested that bicycle amenities be clear from vegetation near the concrete retaining wall by the bridge. Mr. Finch countered the common complaints about the project and said that he has biked in -11 weather. He believes that cyclists will use the infrastructure as long as it is maintained. Users of motorized wheelchairs can also benefit from biking infrastructure. This project will not make traffic worse as lanes will not be removed. Additional foot traffic will help businesses. Alternative #1 provides additional space to protect cyclists. The intersection of Park Street and South Street is unsafe and a buffer zone or sight lines could help with this. He encouraged the City to purchase a plow for protected bike lanes.

Michelle expressed support for Alternative #1. She suggested increasing the use of green paint outside of the intersections. Mr. O'Brien said he supports this but that the City Council has cited this as being cost prohibitive in the past. Michelle suggested that the work trucks outside of Cocoplum be parked in the parking lot as opposed to on the street. Mr. Yuen said that it may be possible to designate some of the spaces as one hour only, however he often does not see these spaces fully utilized. Michelle said she is a frequent cyclist and notices a lot of debris in the roadway. Ms. Clemens suggested more aggressive street sweeping on Park Street. She asked if the impact of this project on local students was considered. She encouraged complete streets principles so that all users can feel comfortable. She expressed concern about tuning traffic at the intersection at Iroquois Ave. and Park St. Mr. Yuen said that there is not sufficient space to have both a bike and turn lane in this area, however it could be a future capital project. Shorter signal cycles can also be utilized to prevent with backups in this area. Mr. Robbins discussed "the Dutch reach" project which encouraged drivers to reach with their right hand to open the door to keep cyclists safe.

In committee discussion, Mr. O'Brien said that public comments have shown that improvements are necessary in this area. Mr. Miller-Johnson said that bike and pedestrian infrastructure makes the community more affordable due to reducing driving. Discussion overwhelmingly supported Alternative 1, which includes bike lanes with 4-foot buffers on both sides of the street. Key concerns about Alternative 2 included safety issues with cars crossing the double yellow line and potential conflicts with business parking needs. The BWAC also discussed traffic safety improvements, including better enforcement of the 25 mph speed limit and potential operational changes to traffic signals. The four-foot buffer will also assist with preventing drivers from crossing the center lines.

LAUREN PHILBROOK made a motion, seconded by DAVID LIGUORI, that the Bike Walk Advisory Committee recommend Alternative 1 for the Park Street Complete Street Improvements project to the City Council. Motion passed 5-0.

6. **MEMBERS UPDATES**

Mr. Miller-Johnson encouraged all members to view "The New Right of Way" documentary on YouTube. This features Essex Junction intersections and businesses.

7. **STAFF UPDATES**

Mr. Giguere provided an update on the "We Are Essex Junction" public mural project at the fire station. On May 7th, Mr. Giguere will be at the pavilion outside of Brownell Library to help residents envision the design. Materials will also be available on the City website. Mr. Yuen discussed updates to the Comprehensive Plan and public engagement available for such. The Park Street project will be presented to the City Council on April 29, 2026. A member of the BWAC will be in attendance. Mr. Giguere will begin his paternity leave shortly, and Mr. Yuen will be staffing BWAC meetings for the next few months.

8. **ADJOURN**

DAVID ACHEE made a motion, seconded by RUSS MILLER-JOHNSON, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.