



Why Is Highgate Focusing on Walking and Biking?

Highgate has been attempting to do something to improve pedestrian safety since a fatality in the 1980's. Route 78 is wider now that it was in the 60's, the speed of vehicles on Route 78 is faster and the traffic is greater. The type of vehicles are also different now – they are larger and wider. Highgate is fortunate to

have a population with many families and many family-centered destinations right in the Village. We have a school that is centrally located, a beloved library, a recreation facility, merchants and parks that host popular events, such as concerts and celebrations. All of these facilities are located within walking distance of each other.

The school, families, and residents have all been telling us they want more, and safer, opportunities to travel within Highgate Center.

A photo from a 1910 Town Report shows an image of our Main St., formerly Franklin St., now known as Route 78, and there is clearly a better pedestrian facility than we can provide to



Franklin Street (VT RT 78) Ferland/Tremblay Store
Steinhour Livery Feed & Stables

residents and visitors now.

So, we've begun looking around at our community to try to find ways to improve walkability, bikeability and safety for all who live, work, and travel within Highgate Center.

Sidewalks: Can we afford them?

Yes, sidewalk projects are expensive. But they also bring value to a Town well beyond the investment. The State estimates for every dollar spent the Town reaps \$2.87 in return (http://www.highgatevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B27DD8364-9602-460E-9A11-4C6436D74153%7D/uploads/QUICK_FACTS.pdf). Property values at sale result from the elevated desirability of property located in a walkable ar-

ea even though the Town Property appraisal does not consider sidewalks as a taxable improvement. Equally important is the increase in bike/pedestrian businesses that are supported by the improvements. State reports state that \$56 million in revenue and 1000 jobs were generated by bike and pedestrian relat-

ed businesses in 2009.

Additionally, it is important to remember the potential savings for residents if they are able to spend less in gas and car associated expenses if they are able to walk, bike or take the bus.



Community members take part in Highgate Center Walkability Assessment on October 15, 2016

Sidewalks: Why now?

An essential, long-term change a community can make to improve the health of its residents is to improve walkability/ bikeability.

We are seeing more people walking as the Village is being developed. Walkers coming from the park and ride or Joey’s Junction navigate Rte. 78 daily, however, it is dangerous.

With strong participation at the Highgate Public Library and a growing number of activities held within

our parks and at school, there are more opportunities for families with young children to come into the Village and take advantage of a variety of resources, all within walking distance of each other.

Additionally, the school has worked hard to create a *Safe Routes to School Travel Plan* to find ways to support more kids walking, improve their health and improve learning. Sidewalks are certainly a response to these needs, as



Highgate Elementary School’s Walk to School Day

are crosswalks.

Moreover, the Town has been denied the creation of crosswalks without a safe destination on both sides of the street. Without sidewalks there are no crosswalks.

Over the past few years, the State has made improv-

ing bike and pedestrian facilities a priority, resulting in a variety of grants available to Towns. These grants support scoping, planning and some implementation of sidewalk improvements with typically only a 10% financial match.

And lastly, a safe and walkable community serves our residents who choose to walk to their destinations, but also those who may have limited access to transportation, such as elderly who no longer drive and those residents too young to drive to their destination.

Why Lamkin Street?

In short, it will provide more residents with the safe infrastructure necessary to allow them safe access to the community’s Village resources from their homes.



Highgate Public Library: A popular destination for the whole community.

In 2007, NRPC provided the town with funding and support to study an area of the town to provide pedestrian improvements. They focused on the Lamkin St. area because it is a high density area and high growth area. The region contains large tracts of land that can be developed into housing.

Lamkin St. *has* developed since that time and is transitioning into dense residential development. Because it comes up to Route 78 near Flat Iron Park, it will give us the site for our first crosswalk on Route 78.

(details available for: Lamkin Street Corridor Study 2007 performed by RSG, Inc. www.highgatevt.org/index.asp?SEC=4509D9F0-4E16-4778-8C98-0DEA20FB47FF&DE=DBDC32C7-1AC1-47B2-856E-2A8A7853E793&Type=B_PR

This study was used to apply for a 2013 grant for \$250,000 to install the first segment of the sidewalk. The project is currently under review at AOT and is scheduled to be installed in the spring of 2017.

A second grant paid for the 2015 Route 78 study which proposed several options to make travel safer in the

Village corridor for pedestrians, bikes and vehicles.

The committee is excited to look into crosswalks at both ends of the Village using pedestrian islands *in the future* as funding opportunities become available. This change would make a safe place for pedestrians when crossing a busy highway.

These islands also serve as a cue to drivers that they are entering a village, should slow down, and be alert for pedestrians. We will apply for funding for these projects when the opportunity presents itself.