

Walk-Bike Council of Addison County
walkbikeaddison.org



October 12, 2022

Dear Town of Middlebury Infrastructure Committee,

The **Walk-Bike Council of Addison County** is a citizen-led advisory group with an ear to the ground on walking and bicycling issues and opportunities for all abilities. The Council operates from the premise that bicycling and walking are essential modes of transit and recreation, and that increasing opportunities and awareness for safe walking and bicycling are good for Addison County as a whole.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed change to the **Court St/Charles Ave/Monroe St intersection**. Safe walking and biking through the school zone along Court Street is a **top priority**. Parents and child care providers report that crossing busy Route 7 is the main obstacle to allowing children to walk and bike to school and recreation centers independently. In addition, mobility restricted individuals, including elders, seek adequate time to navigate intersections.

We support the aligned four way signaled traffic stop as **highly favorable for pedestrians**. It features ample sidewalks to encourage the safe crossing of busy Route 7 in the middle of the school zone. We recommend that **the timing of the signaled light create a safe box where motor traffic halts in all directions** while pedestrians cross allowing them the efficiency of diagonal paths. This intersection is used by students of all ages - elementary students headed to the town recreation center, middle schoolers headed to the Teen Center, and high school students walking from the Buttolph neighborhood to school. Their trips on foot or by bike are no less important than those riding or driving in vehicles. We want to ensure that vehicle trips through town are not prioritized above trips by other means around town. Our students, and other residents, on foot or other means, are equally deserving of a safe and efficient means of crossing Court St. Our Court St/Cross St intersection comes close to this, but could be improved with the addition of a crossing on the south corner. School hours of 7:30 am to 4 pm weekdays would be most critical.

We feel the design is **less favorable for cyclists** since it doesn't direct them where to go. The **addition of a painted bike box*** would improve this significantly. Navigating Court St in the school zone has been improved by wider shoulders in some sections, including this one which could accommodate a box. **Wide well-maintained shoulders and flush storm water grates** make a significant difference in navigating Route 7 comfortably by bike. While sidewalks may be used as an alternative by cyclists at times (especially by

the youngest children), it is actually safer for most people on bicycles to use roads and road shoulders, especially when crossing the many busy commercial driveways in this zone where exiting motorists are less likely to see cyclists approaching. Additionally, when sidewalks are crowded with pedestrians (such as at school start and end times) it is more appropriate for people on bicycles to use the roadway to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.

Walk-Bike Council of Addison County appreciates your in efforts to improve Route 7 in the school zone for pedestrians and cyclists and hopes you'll consider a **speed feedback sign** in this zone somewhere between Mary Hogan School and the high school to guide traffic. We look forward to your refinements.

Best regards,

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***Bike Box Reference:** <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/intersection-treatments/bike-boxes/>