

**ACTR Relocation Working Group- meeting summary**  
**Middlebury Municipal Office Building**  
**Rotary Small Meeting Room**  
**July 10, 2017**

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**Present:** Jim Moulton, Bill Cunningham, Tom Hanley, Dan Werner, Bill Kernan, Jennifer Murray, Dave Donahue, Matt Curran, Gary Baker, Victor Nuovo

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Jennifer summarized the process so far, for the benefit of new attendees.

The working group took a closer look at three alternatives developed by ACTR since the last meeting, submitted last Thursday 7/6. Dan Werner and Bill Kernan submitted written comments 7/10 to the alternatives as presented, which were provided to attendees.

**Option A: Academy Street**

Jim Moulton spoke about the history that led to the development of this option, and talked through the design- explaining the details and answering questions. The existing curb line has been moved back to create more room for the buses and to keep them from blocking the travel lane. Flashing beacons have been added to enhance pedestrian safety, and they are proposing the use of traffic interrupters to keep traffic flowing smoothly. Reducing delays associated with getting down Academy and turning onto Main Street will address anticipated operational impacts, although it will not completely solve them. Jim acknowledged that no solution is perfect, and ACTR will need the Town to continue to work with them throughout the design and permitting process.

Attendees shared the following comments:

(Bill Kernan):

- The design and safety could be enhanced with creative pavement markings instead of flashing beacons.
- Let's use the engineer during design phase, to figure out if interrupters are the best way to control traffic. Giving drivers stop light interrupters could back up southbound traffic on Route 30 into and beyond the traffic circle. Signal timing adjustments should work.
- The design asks for 2 spaces to create a bus stop on Rte 30 near South Street. There is currently a bus stop on Route 30 near South Street, and observes the 2 spaces they are proposing to take are very frequently used.
- The design asks for 2 spaces on Main Street near the Community House to create a bus stop. Observes these are prime, high-demand spaces and the road there is sloping. Open to talking more about this, and working with ACTR.

(Dan Werner):

- Comments about extending the sidewalk to the curb line; acknowledges that this is an ADA question.
- Frog Hollow Parking Lot lighting is on the list of requests related to the design. He is managing a Park & Ride Grant for that lot. The work includes more lighting, tree and scrub brush cutting, new landscaping, and striping. Signage is already complete. "Bus Hub" signage could be added.
- Thinks the bus stop location as shown is a good location.
- The signal timing and/or addition of some other warning system for buses pulling out, can offer a variety of solutions. An engineer can perform a traffic analysis during the design of this alternative, and determine the best solution
- The location of Academy Street near two other parking lots allows for long-term daily parking. These lots can also make a great location for shuttle parking to Middlebury College events.
- I understand the need for a bus stop in/near the Post Office/ Bank part of downtown. Bill makes a good point....try to find a flatter spot. We should brainstorm about this. Open to working on solutions for downtown stops.

(Victor Nuovo):

Likes the idea of location the ACTR Transit Hub on Academy Street, but wonders about the option of using the municipal parking lot as part of the design. It seems like a good option to him, since it gets the bus traffic completely off the street. Asks the group if the idea of using the parking lot is completely out.

(Dave Donahue):

From the college's perspective, these parking spaces (parking lot) were highly regarded during the design process for the park. Jim Moulton also asked him about the use of that lot for the ACTR Transit Hub. If there was a strong consensus within the Town about using the lot for the bus station, he would take that back to the college for consideration. So it is not a closed conversation. However, David did let the group know that the lot has been used for events this summer, such as the movie and concert series organized by Better Middlebury Partnership. They hope to continue to operate as a community park and do more events like this in the future. Notes that the railroad project gives us an opportunity to think long-term and shift our thinking about parking. Dave would like to see the bus shelter shifted further toward the lawn area to allow pedestrians to pass the shelter more easily, noting that people wait for the bus outside the shelter as well as within the shelter, taking up a portion of the sidewalk.

(Dan Werner):

Notes there are future events that will be happening in the park that we haven't even thought about yet.

(Tom Hanley):

There is a built-in pedestrian conflict with using the parking lot for buses; it is not a good situation for safety. We looked at it, but it fell off the table as a viable option. Academy Street is not critical for emergency services. South Pleasant Street, though, is critical for emergency services. Also, thinks the flashing beacon lights should be re-located to a crosswalk location.

(Jim Moulton):

From ACTR's perspective, the parking lot would be safer as a dedicated lot for use by buses, not as a shared parking lot.

### **Option B: North end of South Pleasant Street**

Jim Moulton spoke about the history that led to the development of this option, and talked through the design- explaining the details and answering questions. The concrete barrier divider has been removed and both lanes remain open for 2-way traffic. This option would require excavation of the bank and creation of a wider pad for pedestrians to offload on the east side of South Pleasant Street.

(Bill Kernan):

- Appreciates that this design addresses many of the concerns they have been discussing at previous meetings, but does have a few negative comments based on the criteria the group has established for evaluating sites
- The design still results in the loss of several prime-high demand parking spaces in downtown.
- Creates pedestrian safety issues in crosswalk directly in front of the bus queuing line- they are queued-up right at the crosswalk now, which was a safety concern on previous designs.
- Does not alleviate the concerns of the Inn on the Green owners.
- Still located within the historical district and impacts and is intrusive.
- Does not alleviate ACTR's safety concerns with buses pulling out into traffic lane as stated at other proposed locations.
- Still has impacts on a residential neighborhood.
- The cutout for the passenger access way and bus shelter would be 20' and would nearly reach the existing sidewalk and require a substantial retaining wall.
- He visited the site and it would probably be a 60ft tall retaining wall, with removal of a maple tree.
- In this design, you could have cars pulling up right beside buses- not sure how you would give buses the right of way.

(Dan Werner)

- Agrees with Bill's comments, additionally-
- The design does not allow all buses access to an off-loading site. An existing power pole restricts that.
- The grades along Court Square sidewalk and Pleasant Street sidewalk make this a very difficult site to comply with ADA. It would likely require a complicated approach to meeting ADA design requirements.
- Retaining wall would definitely be required
- Tree removal would most likely be required
- Even after creation of the retaining wall, the sidewalk does not extend along all buses for offloading passengers.
- Limited or non-existent long-term daily parking for bus system users.

(Tom Hanley)

- Wants to thank ACTR for working on their concerns regarding circulation
- Noted that this option involves 2 compelled stops, and one potential compelled stop (Merchant's Row); Academy St. has one. Not sure how this benefits them with operational concerns.
- Concerned about delays at the stop sign during peak operational hours
- Echoes Bill's concerns about removal of a large chunk of prime parking

(Victor Nuovo)

- This proposal would have a very serious effect on this neighborhood. It is predominantly residential, and a transit hub in this location would have a negative impact on the people who live there. He feels this use- the noise, the fumes, the buses lined-up is not appropriate in this location.

(Jennifer Murray)

- Agrees with Victor, and feels that compared to the other criteria, neighborhood character and public input should be weighted heavily when evaluating this option
- Opposed to the aesthetic impacts of a large retaining wall in this area

(Jim Moulton)

- Thinks there is a community perception issue about bus transit, and cited South Village as an example of a residential neighborhood where impacts from ACTR were not as great as the neighborhood anticipated. He thinks it would not be as much of an impact as many of the participants at the public meeting might think.

(Dave Donahue)

- Not much to comment on with this one; they have +/- 30 staff members at Painter House, but it doesn't appear this would affect them much.

ACTR had included an Option C in their packet of re-designed options, which was the current interim location at the south end of South Pleasant Street. The group agreed not to pursue an analysis of this location for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it is undersized for ACTR's needs, and the input received from property owners in that vicinity. John Ilick was very clear that he did want the transit hub to be located there for the long-term, when permission for the interim location was granted.

Jennifer asked the group to discuss what to include in a presentation to the infrastructure committee. Jim Moulton asked for clarification from last meeting- what would the infrastructure committee's role be in this process. Jennifer said she had been mistaken in the last meeting, and that upon further review of Selectboard minutes the infrastructure committee was given the charge of making a recommendation to the Selectboard. Gary Baker agreed that the infrastructure committee is supposed to review the plans and make a recommendation to the Selectboard.

Jim Moulton suggested that given the results of this meeting and previous input, it appears that the Academy Street option would most likely be the option selected. In light of this fact, he explained that the vehicular users of parking spaces in downtown should not take precedent over bus-users of parking spaces in downtown. As such, if ACTR needs to create a bus stop or two in downtown in the future to ameliorate the operational impacts of relocating to Academy Street, he doesn't want "prime" downtown parking spots to be taken out of consideration for use in making bus stops within the downtown area for the use of ACTR buses and riders. He reminded those present about the importance of ACTR's services for our community.

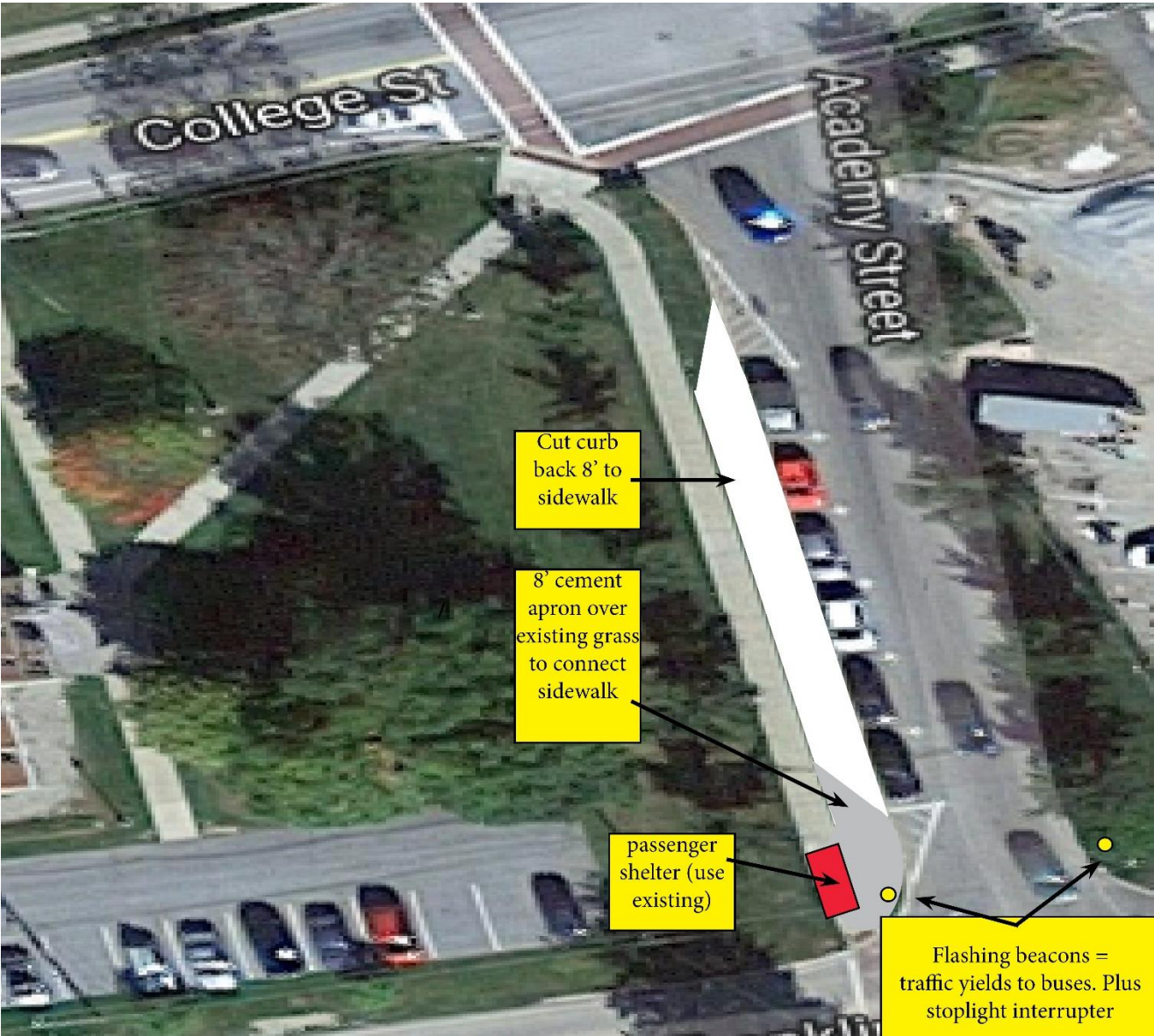
If the Town is willing to continue to work with ACTR on the design of this option, specifically- in terms of creating downtown bus stops, and showing an openness to finding solutions for some of the operational impacts of the Academy Street location (e.g. traffic flow improvements), then ACTR would be willing to bring forth a single option to the infrastructure committee on Thursday, showing that we have consensus on the Academy Street location.

Next steps:

- Jim Moulton will be out of town, but plans to call-in to the Thursday infrastructure committee meeting. Bill Cunningham plans to attend.
- Bill will put ACTR's designer Mary in touch with Jennifer to touch-up the conceptual/sketch drawing of Academy Street for presentation to the Infrastructure committee
- Jim and Bill C. are going to let Dan and Bill K. know what times of day they anticipate experiencing the most congestion on Academy Street (morning, noon, evening) so they can begin to work on traffic flow solutions.

Option A

Academy Street



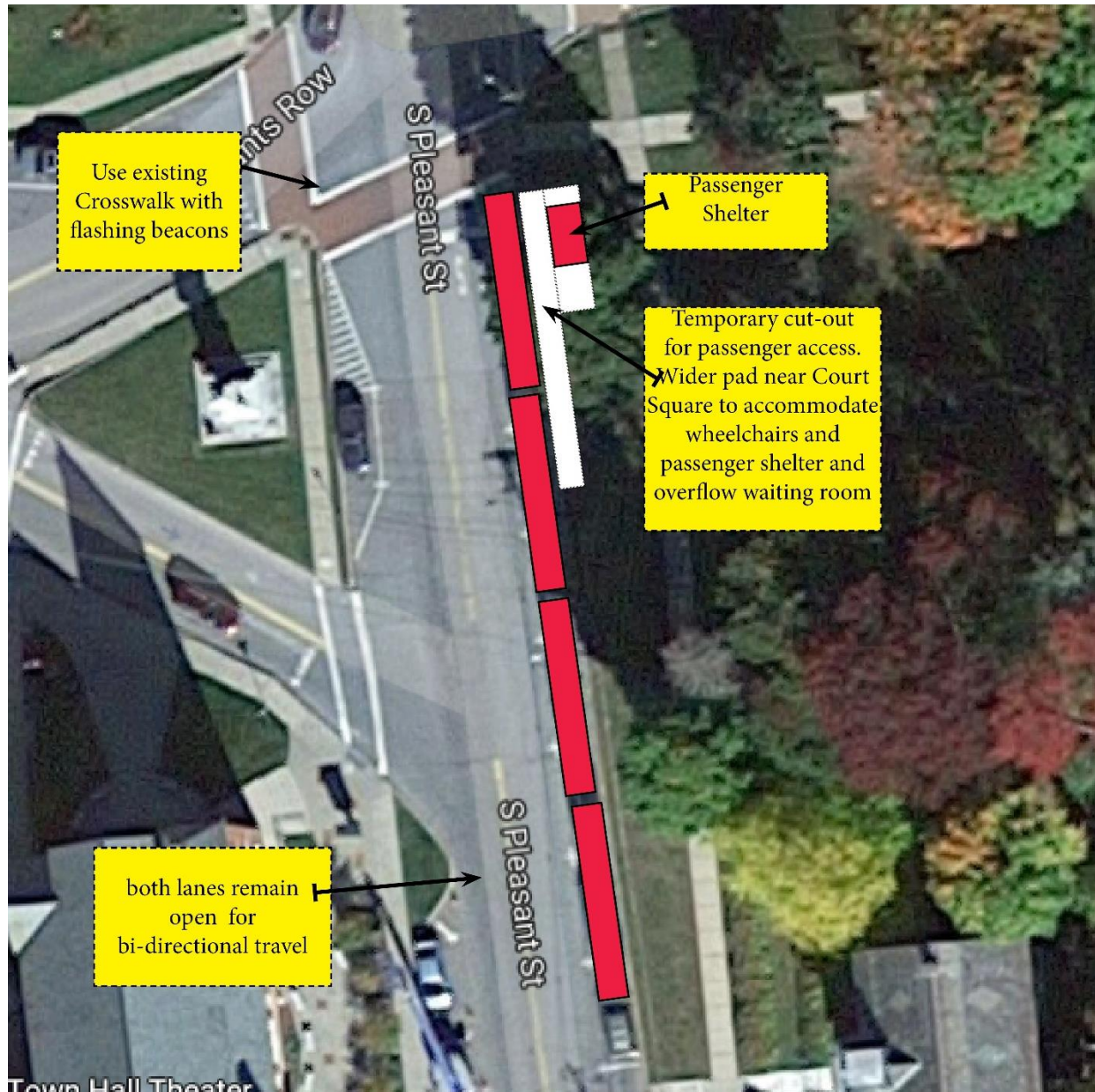
**Description:** All street parking becomes dedicated bus zone. Create a cutout back to the sidewalk to get buses further out of the traffic flow. Add a concrete apron in front of shelter for pedestrian flow. Flashing beacons and stoplight interrupter to prioritize bus exit.

Need	Want
All street parking dedicated to buses	Cut curbing back to sidewalk
Stoplight interrupter	Better signage and lighting to Frog Hollow lot
Flashing yield beacons before Franklin Street	Public toilets
Apron in front of passenger shelter	
Barriers if engineers identify a safety need	
2 parking spaces on Rte 30 near South St stop	
2 parking spaces on Main near Community House	
Reconfigure Systemwide schedule	



## Option B

### North end of South Pleasant St.



**Description:** Both lanes remain open for bi-directional traffic. Existing street parking dedicated to buses during service hours – open to public use at other times. Pedestrians access via existing crosswalks and sidewalks. Cut hill back 32 inches to railroad ties for pedestrians. Cut deeper passenger waiting area at corner to accommodate passenger shelter and wheelchair loading area.

Need	Want
All street parking from corner to edge of Inn property dedicated to buses during service hours	
Cut back curb to retaining wall for pedestrians	
Create 15' deep pad for shelter, overflow waiting and wheelchair loading. Connects to existing Court Square sidewalk	
Planter on passenger side if engineer identifies safety need	