

The Hayden Rowe/Main Street Intersection

From Norman Khumalo, Hopkinton Town Manager

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In May 2010, Town Meeting authorized \$400,000 for engineering to develop a plan to improve streetscape and infrastructure in our downtown. The Town additionally established the Downtown Initiative Steering Committee (DISC) to advise the Town Manager and provide public input to the BETA Group (the engineers hired to develop the plan) and to assist in facilitating public participation.

The intersection of Hayden Rowe Street and Main Street is a key intersection in this stretch.

Currently, traffic movements near the Common involve a wide main road (Hayden Rowe Street) and a narrower road (Ash Street) both of which terminate at Main Street. A third street (Marathon Way) runs from Ash Street to Main Street on a diagonal. Main Street is very wide at Hayden Rowe Street (approximately 80 feet wide), narrowing substantially at Ash Street (approximately 37 feet wide). The area is located at the top of a hill, making visibility from the east difficult, particularly during times of the year when road glare is prevalent in the evening. The width of Main Street in front of the Common encourages higher speeds and there are numerous traffic flow and public safety issues that need to be addressed due to prevailing conditions.

Issues at the Intersection

As a first step in improving the intersection, DISC, the BETA Group, and town staff made several key factual determinations, including:

- The crosswalk at Hayden Rowe Street and Main Street is very long at a point with limited visibility and where vehicles tend to accelerate endangering pedestrians,
- The width of Main Street and the lack of lane markings makes turns from Hayden Rowe Street to Main Street difficult,
- The width of Main Street near the Common encourages increased traffic speeds,
- The diagonal traffic flow on Marathon Way is unconventional and unsafe,
- The intersection at Ash Street and Main Street is difficult for truck traffic,
- It is the starting point of the Boston Marathon,
- Any changes must accommodate the needs of school buses for Center School

The Problem Evaluation Process

The BETA Group prepared concepts to address these identified issues that were then presented to DISC and the Town Engineer for review in work sessions. All work sessions were posted and open to the public. Numerous options were considered, including:

- Adding a traffic signal at the Hayden Rowe St/Main St intersection
- Reducing the width of Main Street
- Adding visual cues to encourage lower speeds
- Adding a traffic refuge island on Main Street for additional pedestrian crossing safety
- Modifying the use of Marathon Way , including closure, one-way flow, and diagonal parking

Moving to a Solution

The width of Main Street poses a risk to pedestrian safety and encourages increased speeds. However, marathon logistics and traffic flow considerations also need to be considered in any proposed changes. After evaluating options, the possibility of a traffic light at the Hayden Rowe Street and Main Street intersection was discounted because BETA determined that a traffic light would adversely impede traffic flow. However, a flashing beacon is being considered as a visual cue to traffic, in conjunction with road markings. An island on Main Street is also proposed to serve as a visual cue that the roadway is narrowing and to serve as a landing area (safe zone) for pedestrians. However, DISC acknowledges that the design of any island will need to be carefully done to ensure that it works for the marathon and the Town.

DISC now is in the process of developing its recommendations with regard to the Hayden Rowe intersection, downtown streetscape and infrastructure and continues to seek public input. Comments can be provided to the Town Engineer, who is also available to provide time for residents to review the plans. More information is available on the DISC space on the Town of Hopkinton's website or by contacting the Town Engineer.