

Traffic Calming Demonstration FAQ

Who decided to do this demonstration project?

This is a collaboration between the *Town of Hopkinton*, the *Hopkinton Village Precinct*, the *Central NH Regional Planning Commission*, and the *State of NH Department of Transportation*. From the Town of Hopkinton, assistance was provided in planning and setup by Hopkinton's *Economic Development Committee*, *Police Department*, and *Department of Public Works*.

Why are you trying out a new traffic pattern in this location?

This intersection has been identified as an area of concern by residents for many years in planning documents that have all been approved at Public Hearings. This area has been called out for decades as needing to be redesigned due to driver speeds, excess pavement, and the alignment of the roads coming together. It is highlighted in the Hopkinton Village Precinct Master Plan and Hopkinton's Master Plan (all versions).

In the [Hopkinton Village Precinct Master Plan](#), see the Transportation Inventory (page 12-13) and Goals and objectives, Section III - Transportation (page 28).

In the [Town of Hopkinton Master Plan of 2002/2012](#), see Chapter VI, Transportation (begins on page 111, specifically addresses Hopkinton Village on page 133).

And in the [Town of Hopkinton Master Plan of 2022](#), see Section 4, Transportation (Motor Vehicle Crashes are addressed on page 4.9, Hopkinton Village is specifically addressed on page 4.13, also see Objective 3 on page 4.15)

Is this really a good use of limited Town funds?

Actually, the Town of Hopkinton has spent **\$0** on materials for this project! All the materials you see in the demonstration were donated or borrowed. Most of the labor involved in setting it up and maintaining it was volunteer time. A few Hopkinton staff (four DPW and one EDC) have spent approximately a combined 3-4 hours installing and maintaining the project. But other than that and about \$40 for the Survey Monkey account, there has been no cost to the Town.

But what about the cost if the changes are made permanent?

As far as roadway redesign projects are concerned, this could be a very low cost project. If there is a final design, the expectation is that this realignment can be accomplished at very low cost since there would not be new roadway being constructed. There is also the possibility of the Hopkinton Village Precinct contributing money towards the improvements.

I've never seen or heard of an accident in this location, why does it need to be changed?

Accident data was consulted in planning this project, but simple crash data is just one factor influencing the location and timing of this demonstration project.

It's also important to note that accurate and complete crash data is very hard to come by in any location, particularly this one with the many different routes and streets coming together in Hopkinton Village.

Crash data is tricky because:

1. complete and accurate data relies on complete and accurate reporting, including exact locational data, which is not always the case;

2. the standards for accident reporting change over time, making a comparisons over time difficult;
3. near misses are never captured in the data, meaning crash data alone does not tell the full story of everything that happens in a location; and
4. it is difficult, sometimes impossible to determine the exact location of an accident because street names are reported inconsistently and there are several different street and route names in this location.

Nonetheless, the available data shows that there have been in the range of 26-36 crashes reported at the Hopkinton Village intersection between 2002-2016. Unfortunately, we do not have good locational data after 2017 due to changes in the way crashes are reported to the Department of Public Safety.

There are other intersections in town that are much more problematic, why are you focused on this one?

There's no doubt that many other intersections in town need improvement, even more than this one, and others that have had more accidents. However, it was clear when looking at the big picture that safety at this intersection could be addressed in the simplest, quickest, and cheapest way compared to others. With the contributions and support from the Hopkinton Village Precinct, NHDOT, and Central NH Regional Planning, the only Town contribution has been staff time, which is minimal.

Ok, so what are you doing about those other intersections?

Solutions for other intersections, for example Fountain Square in downtown Contoocook, the Fire Station intersection (Pine/Kearsarge/Park), Clement Hill and Maple St at the dam, and 202/9 and Maple St/Route 127 are much more complicated and costly. The intersection of 202/9 and Maple St (aka the Dunkin' intersection) is in the State's current 10-year Plan and fully funded, so progress is being made to improve it. And the Fountain Square intersection in downtown Tooky will be submitted to the State's 10-year Plan for 2023-32. So those more problematic areas will be addressed by the State of NH over the next several years. (The 10-year Plan is generally for projects over \$1 million, so since it would be a much smaller project, the Hopkinton Village intersection is not a candidate for being funded that way. Since there would not be new roadway being constructed, this project would be significantly cheaper if these changes were adopted permanently.)

Did you consider the fact that large vehicles - Class 8 tractor trailers and other CDL vehicles - have to make this turn?

Yes, we did. And we have received some feedback that during the demonstration, the right turn going from Main St (NH202/US9) onto Hopkinton Road (NH103) was tighter than desired for those largest vehicles. Don't worry! Before any final design is approved (if there is one), formal engineering will ensure the radius of any and all turns can accommodate large vehicles like Class 8 semi trucks.

Don't the voters have to approve this project and any changes to the roads?

Actually, no. Having every road project specifically approved at Town Meeting would be extremely cumbersome. Voters approve an overall budget for roadway maintenance and improvement, and within that, decisions are made to change and fix roadways for numerous reasons, including safety and slowing traffic. For example, changes were made in the last couple years to the intersections of Briar Hill Road and Old Stage Coach Road, and other areas.

What about other measures to slow traffic, like stop signs or speed bumps or humps?

Stop signs can be very effective in slowing traffic, but based on our current understanding*, this location would not be a good candidate for additional stop signs. Stop signs are intended to help drivers and pedestrians determine who has the right-of-way at an intersection. Stop signs are installed where accidents, observation, or other data show that drivers are not observing the right-of-way rule. Speed bumps or humps are also very effective in certain locations for slowing vehicle speeds. Based on our current understanding*, this intersection is not a good candidate for a speed bump or hump, as they are best used on straight stretches of road where there is a lot of pedestrian traffic. Speed bumps and humps also have to be used judiciously in our climate because they can pose a challenge to winter plowing.

**Our current understanding is based on the old traffic pattern. NHDOT could make a different determination based on the results of the feedback and data that comes out of this demonstration.*

If the concern is speeding, why not add more speed limit signs or lower the speed limit?

Speed limit signs alone don't necessarily slow traffic. Lowering the speed limit below typical roadway safety standards is also ineffective as a stand-alone effort at addressing speeding, because most drivers travel at a speed they deem typical for the roadway conditions. Wide streets with multiple lanes, no on-street parking, no street trees, or buildings that are set far away from the street or separated from the street by parking lots create conditions where it feels comfortable for drivers to travel at higher speeds. In Hopkinton, the speed limit on residential streets is 30 mph on all streets within the Town limits unless otherwise posted. Speed limit signs are installed on arterial streets where the speed limit changes, and at periodic intervals along the street. Speed limits on State routes are determined by NHDOT.

How will you know if the “demonstration project” is a success?

The goals of the project were to:

- 1) *slow speeds* of vehicles traveling through the intersection,
- 2) make the area conducive to *more walking and cycling*, in part to encourage increased retail activity around this location,
- 3) make the area *feel safer* for all road users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, et al.), and
- 4) create the potential for an *overall reduction in pavement* in the area.

We will use both subjective and objective information to determine whether the demonstration had any effect on vehicle speeds. We will rely on

- observational *feedback provided* in the Hopkinton Village Traffic Calming Demonstration Survey and
- *radar speed data* (courtesy of Central NH Regional Planning) gathered before and during the demonstration to determine whether vehicles were traveling at reduced speeds during the demonstration.

To determine whether the area was more conducive to walking or biking and felt safer for all road users, we will rely on the *feedback provided* in the Hopkinton Village Traffic Calming Demonstration Survey.

The survey results will be publicly available in the coming days.

What are possible next steps?

Once the survey closes and the feedback and data are analyzed and consolidated, the Town will begin conversations with NHDOT to determine the best course of action in this location. The total cost of engineering and construction of any permanent improvements, minus any contributions from funding sources outside the Town of Hopkinton's budget, will determine whether additional funds will be needed to be raised and appropriated by the Town of Hopkinton.

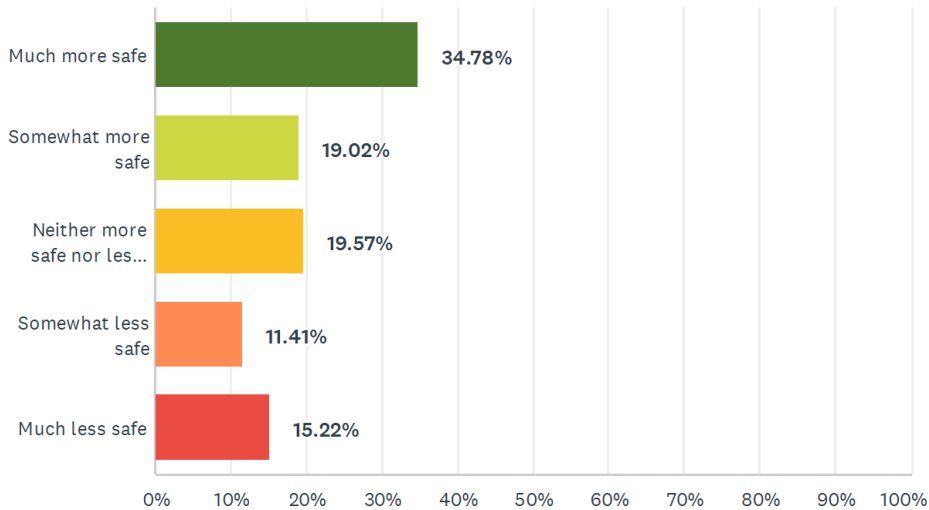
What has the survey shown so far?

As of 1:30pm on Wednesday, October 26, 193 people have responded to the survey. The responses run the gamut, with the majority of people feeling much or somewhat more safe in the intersection and the majority of people having an overall favorable view of the changes.

Here's a snapshot of the results for the two questions that ask peoples' opinions of the project:

Q6 In general, how did the changes in the traffic pattern make you feel while traveling through this intersection?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 9



Q7 What is your overall opinion of the Traffic Calming measures implemented during the demonstration?

Answered: 189 Skipped: 4

