

Fairlee Village Plan

May 2001

*A BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND TRAFFIC
CALMING PLAN FOR FAIRLEE, VERMONT*

FINAL REPORT

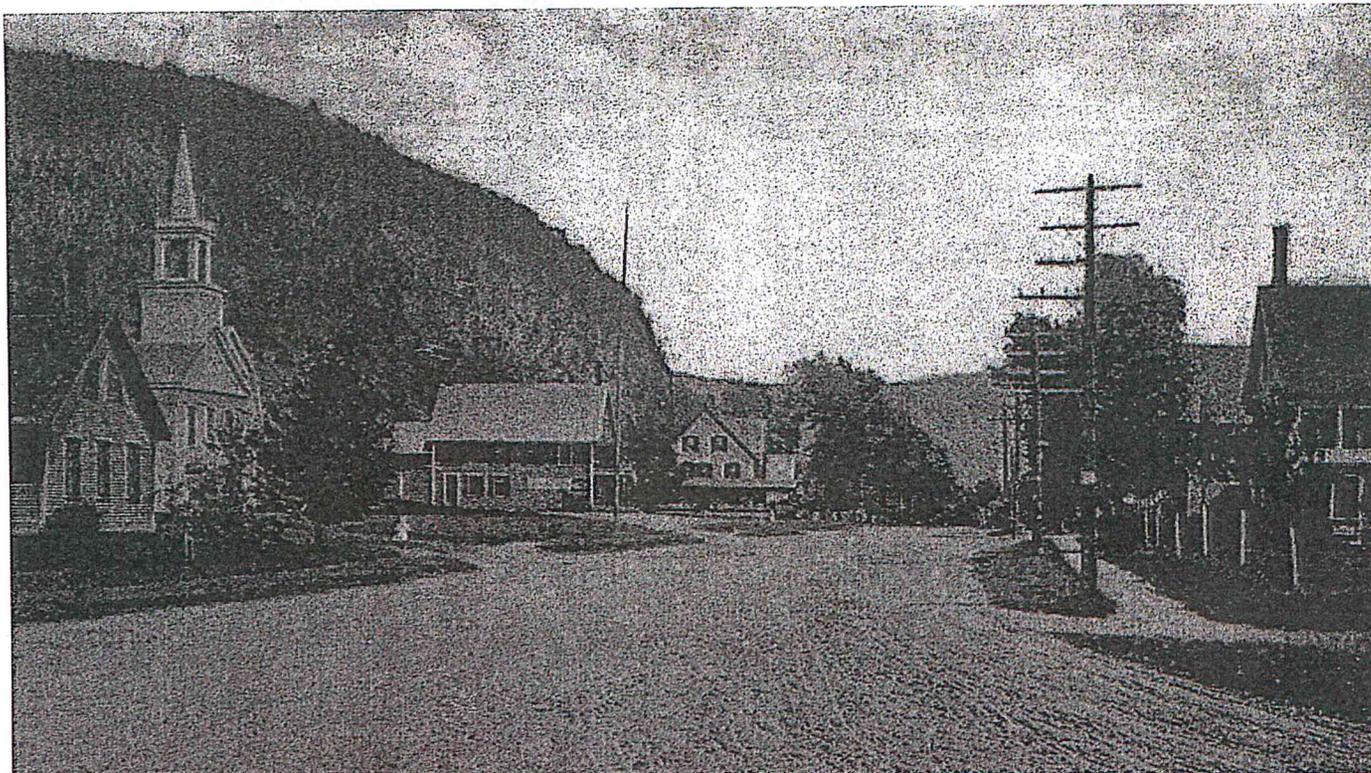
Prepared for.....The Town of Fairlee, Vermont

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Project Administration by.....Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission

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An historic photo of Main Street, looking north from the Depot. Chapman's was once the livery building, and the church on the left burned and has since been rebuilt. The trees along the sidewalk on the right were newly planted and the utility poles may be newcomers as well.

Acknowledgements

The Office of Robert A. White would like to thank the many people who contributed to this report. Although we are sure to miss someone, we appreciated everyone's contributions. Dick Hodge assisted in town master planning, zoning and mapping issues; Lucy Gibson, staff transportation planner for the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, assisted in the overall plan as well as the town bicycle report; Georgette Wolf-Ludwig provided answers and access to historic photos; and the Fairlee Selectboard assisted with review of the planning concepts and draft report, and provided an important local reality check. Almost every business along Main Street provided input and ideas for the design alternatives. In addition, the Rivendell Interstate School District, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance and other regional interests provided insights into particular issues.

A. Introduction

The Vermont Department Housing and Community Affairs provided funds to complete the following study of the Village of Fairlee, Vermont, for the purpose of developing recommendations for improvements for pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and enhancements to the village environs. The project has been administered by the Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). The report has been prepared by the town's consultant team, The Office of Robert A. White, ASLA, Landscape Architects and Planners from Norwich, VT, with the assistance of Lucy Gibson, TRORC, Dick Hodge, Chair of the Fairlee Planning Commission, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), and over 40 local residents.

Key points include:

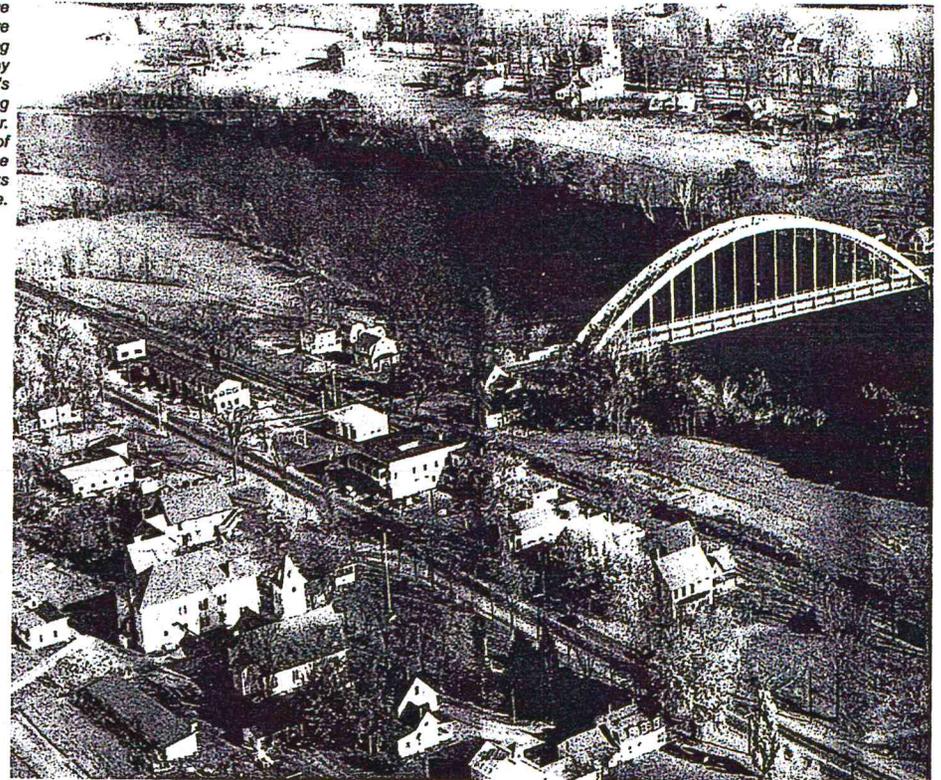
- A series of possible enhancements to the Route 5 corridor are presented with an eye to creating flexible options for the town to implement over time. Many of these are small easy-to-do projects, while others are larger, more costly, and involve more complex funding and implementation.
- Village improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and to achieve traffic calming are defined.
- Planning tools for future commercial development in the village center that are compatible with the historic setting of the community and contribute to enhanced commercial and residential property values.
- The feasibility of recreational trail corridors, especially along the Connecticut River departing from the Fairlee Railroad Station property, is explored.

The Village of Fairlee has maintained its historical downtown, despite some evidence of sprawl towards the Route 5/I-91 interchange and some commercial/industrial development north of the village. The Land Uses and Connections Maps in this report highlight the existing land uses and areas of concern for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. They also demonstrate the interrelationships between transportation, geography, land uses and future economic development. For example, Fairlee's seasonal tourism market began with the creation of the railroad, and business growth has spread on Main Street with the interstate and physical constraints of the river and cliffs behind the village.

Route 5 through Fairlee is a regional collector road. The existing width is 40-45' with travel lanes up to 12' wide and shoulders between 10-12'. This is a far wider road than would be built under current VTrans roadway standards today. There is every reason to attribute the town concerns about speeding and safety in the Village to the characteristics of this roadway.

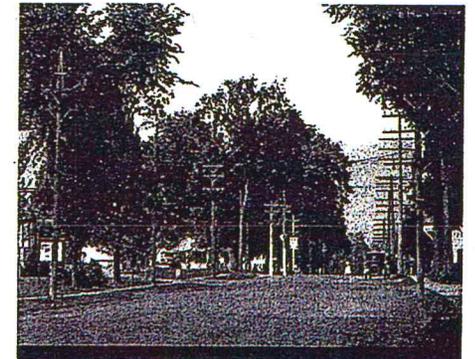
Alternatively, if Route 5 were to be built today, there would be narrower travel lanes of 11' wide, shoulders for bikes of 4' wide, and if desired by the community, space for on-street parking. Route 5 can be changed and still comply with VTrans design standards and be more conducive to a historic village center.

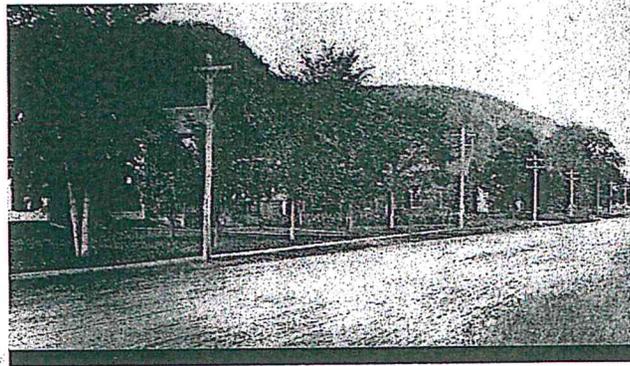
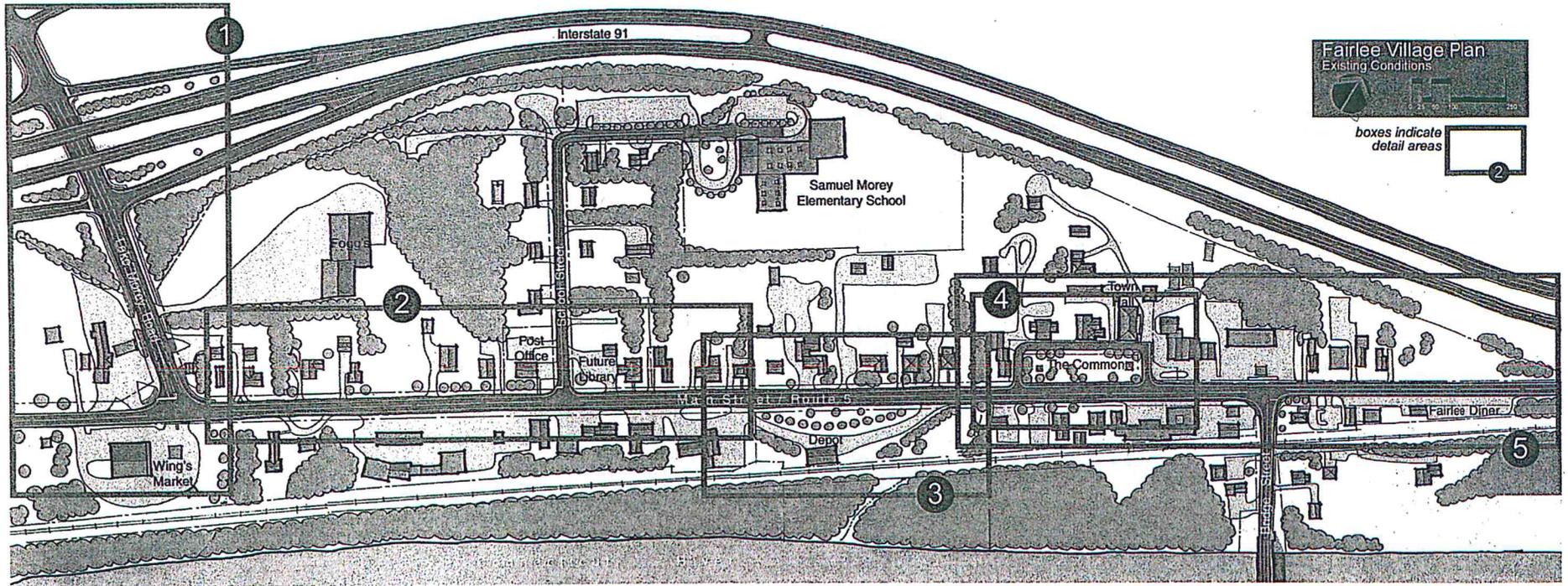
The arching truss bridge replaced a covered bridge in the late 1930's making a unique village gateway and one of the region's landmark structures along the Connecticut River. These historic photos of Main Street show a tree lined street with sidewalks through a compact village.



On-street parking, sidewalks and street lights were once a part of Fairlee's tree-lined Main Street.

The population of Fairlee peaked in the 1830's, at the height of the Merino Sheep production in this region. Reviewing the history of Fairlee can guide and inspire design for the future. In the following photographs, notice the importance of sidewalks, trees shading the streets, the presence or absence of utility poles and other features.

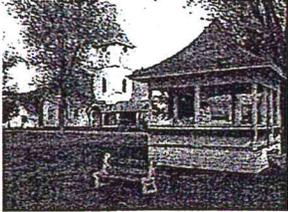




Main Street has long been a tree lined street with sidewalks to walk through town and to local shops. Today the sidewalks have been paved over or fallen into disrepair, but there is room within the right-of-way for sidewalks.

B. Public Guidance to the Process

The townspeople have defined the problems and desired possible improvements through open public meetings, review of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway and interviews with local businesses, regional interests and state officials. In the future, additional meetings will include the Fairlee Planning Board, the Rivendell Interstate School and the public.



PUBLIC MEETINGS

Two open public meetings regarding this project have been held in Fairlee on November 2, 2000 and February 5, 2001. The November meeting was advertised and held in Fairlee for the purpose of gaining public comment on the goals and objectives of the village traffic calming plan from local residents. Some 12 people participated, including town staff and Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) and design team members. The second meeting was part of the February 5th Selectboard Meeting. The goals of this meeting were to present a draft report and initial design concepts, and to receive further input and feedback from the town officials, public and interested parties.

At the November 2000 meeting the following issues were discussed:

- The activity of the farmers market and flea market and other businesses has encroached on the public Right Of Way (ROW) and raises a number of safety and enforcement issues
- Safety at the Lake Morey Road/Wing's Store intersection
- Speeding traffic
- Wide shoulders might be best for pedestrians; the town has historically not maintained sidewalks, and would not do so in the future
- Future changes that were identified were: occupancy of the former Wing's building with an antiques dealer, the possible (and now successful) purchase of the Pottatch Tavern building for a new town library, the potential redevelopment of the Thurber House and surrounding properties, the addition of a new sidewalk as part of the Fairlee - Orford bridge project, changing patterns of pedestrians as a result of the new Rivendell Schools.
- Need for improved crosswalks - in the past year or so some of the existing crosswalks have been removed by VTrans because they were underutilized.
- Parking problems at the flea market, Post Office, and both the town and depot greens
- Speeding traffic and other "road problems" are a disincentive to good business development
- There was a question about the possibility of a traffic signal at the intersection with Route 5 and Lake Morey Road (see below for response)
- The town should not get involved in economic development issues - private businesses could take care of themselves.

At the February 2001 meeting the following issues were discussed:

- Findings and input from the November meeting and interviews with local business owners and town officials
- Findings in state traffic volumes, safety data and pedestrian crossing records
- Design alternatives for the Village of Fairlee
- The need to develop cost estimates for potential traffic calming and bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- How and if the alternatives could be phased in over time
- What the priorities for implementation might be and how priorities could be set
- Need for the town to continue the public involvement process with the TRORC

LOCAL BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

On January 31, 2001, the design team went on an informal walkabout through the village business district. They met and spoke with almost all the business owners/managers and available staff about village traffic, and economic concerns, and specific issues their businesses had to deal with regarding Main Street in Fairlee. As could be imagined, not everyone was in 100% agreement about what was needed, but there was near-consensus on many issues with regard to traffic, pedestrian safety, and vehicular speeding in the village. This shared perspective is somewhat surprising and an all too infrequent occurrence in our experience with town transportation planning. Many businesses held positive visions about the future of Fairlee Village, and we heard an enthusiastic anticipation that prosperity and improved "quality of life" for residents and businesses lies ahead. Town leadership in guiding this future was seen as essential. The following list of issues presents a summary of those discussions in order of most to least consensus. The last items are those we heard from only one or a few of those interviewed:

- Traffic speeds are too high through the village, although the posted 35 m.p.h. is ok
- Sidewalks, crosswalks and sidewalk repairs are needed
- The Lake Morey Road / Route 5 intersection needs improvement (safety)
- Wide road makes it hard to drive speed limit, too straight and linear
- Flea market parking on the street in front of the Depot is unsafe
- Spruce up the common
- Maintain small town atmosphere
- Pedestrian lighting
- Create a Chamber of Commerce for business coordination (happened in past)
- Trucks parking on the road at the Lake Morey and Route 5/Bridge Street intersections are problematic
- block sight distances and create a safety hazard
- Trees are needed along the street
- Access to the train, passenger service
- More places to "go" are needed in the downtown:
- A café or large grocery store, clothes store, natural foods market, bike rentals
- Create a trail from Lake Morey Road to the school
- Create a trail from the Depot to the Fish & Wildlife lands south of Batchelder Farm
- Define the village center with signs and other identity
- Everything is fine, nothing should be improved
- A map of downtown businesses should be posted

INTERVIEWS WITH TOWN OFFICIALS AND REGIONAL PLANNING STAFF

A site walk was held with the town planning administrator, Dick Hodge, and Lucy Gibson from the Ottauquechee Two - Rivers Regional Commission in October 2000. The team walked Main Street to discuss current planning issues and specific aspects of the project.

- Primary focus of attention was on the speeding vehicles in the village.
- The fact that Route 5 is very wide through the village may compound the speeding problems, but also provides a range of flexibility for adaptive use of the road within the ROW.
- Many Main Street businesses have wide driveways and off-street parking. These could be improved with access management design, and conversion of the wide shoulder to on-street parking.
- The farmers market will be relocated next year to a site next to the depot/flea market site. Parking and access in this new location may be a major issue.
- The intersection of Route 5 and the Lake Morey Road is another area of major concern.
- It appears that in the past, sidewalks extended through much of the village. They have either been removed or have severely deteriorated.
- There has been a significant increase in pedestrian (and some bicycle) traffic between Orford and Fairlee for the new Rivendell Schools and there are no continuous sidewalks or trails for the school children.
- Parking impacts to the trees and landscape were observed at the depot (soil compaction, tree damage, and erosion). Perhaps alternative ways to accommodate demand for parking for the flea market and the planned relocation of the farmers market should be considered.
- There is a desire to have a trail connection from the depot to the river over the tracks, and to have that trail eventually connect along the river to the Orford bridge as well as southbound to several farmland properties protected by the Upper Valley Land Trust. Jay Barrett has developed a plan for some park improvements on some town-owned land in this area. Also, a private developer is interested in including a trail as part of his development plans for the Thurber House on Main Street and the property on the other side of the tracks.
- There is also a desire to understand the town-wide implications of increased bike use of state and town roads, and the possible need for shoulder improvements, signage, and the possibility that town or state paving projects could enhance bike safety and accessibility. This will be addressed as a separate aspect of this project.

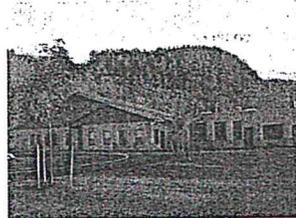
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SCENIC BYWAY

Route 5 is part of the designated Scenic Byway for the Connecticut River. Over the past 5 years, a three-state effort to promote corridor planning, and to protect scenic, historic, and recreational value has been underway. Fairlee is the recipient of a federal byway grant to renovate the Village Depot as a wayside interpretive and information center to be operated during the summer and foliage seasons. The improvements are primarily focussed on the repairs and adaptive reuse of the building.

The designation of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway, according to research on other Scenic Byways, could generate additional scenic travel in the region if promoted as a tourism venue. As a wayside location, Fairlee could see additional traffic. The present traffic conditions could be exacerbated as the peak hours appear to be on Saturdays when tourism traffic would also be at its highest. Pedestrian activity would also be at its highest points with the farmers market and flea market in full swing. Improvements to parking, safety, pedestrian accommodations, and village enhancements could be part of improved scenic-travel-economic development focus for the village. Village enhancements will need to be part of a funding strategy for Main Street.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE UPPER VALLEY TRAILS ALLIANCE REPRESENTATIVES

- Lake Morey Trail Association provides trails for hiking.
- Vermont Association of Snow Travelers maintains trails in the Lake Morey area, with one route crossing the lake.
- The Fairlee Baldtoppers Snowmobile Club maintains several local snowmobile trails.
- The Palisades are being considered for a Connecticut River Birding Trail site.
- On the Connecticut River south of Wing's there is a Connecticut River Water Trail campsite.
- Routes 5 and 244 are used by road bicyclists.
- At least one elementary school student bikes to school year-round, while others bicycle when there is no snow, indicating a need for bike safety education, a bike path or marked lanes through the village, and bike racks.
- There are four Valley Quests in Fairlee, which are short walks to help residents and visitors access and enjoy special places in the community.
- The Cross Rivendell Trail will come through downtown Fairlee, connecting the four Rivendell School District town's highest points.
- The Hulbert Outdoor Center and other Aloha Foundation programs utilize the lake, river and area trails for recreation-based business year round.
- The railroad that runs between White River Junction and St. Johnsbury should be studied for rail with trail and rail-trail conversion opportunities.



INTERVIEW WITH RIVENDELL SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

- The schools in Fairlee and Orford should be connected with a sidewalk to provide students with a safe place to walk.
- The Cross Rivendell Trail will come under I-91 and hopefully connect to the Samuel Morey Elementary School before crossing the bridge to Orford and the middle and high schools.

C. Supporting Data

Traffic and safety were resounding concerns of the town.

ACCIDENTS

VTrans does not designate this corridor a High Accident Location, however the data is from several years ago, and the cut-off value for VTrans recognizable accidents is \$2,500, which may be above the trends of accident costs in the corridor. Local input identified a number of recent accidents.

PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians cannot walk the length of Main Street except in the shoulder of the road. With one exception, interviews with every local business owner along the corridor indicated a need for sidewalks. VTrans data supports the general feeling that there are more pedestrians every year. At the Lake Morey Road (Fairlee State Highway) intersection, VTrans traffic counts indicate a 400% increase in pedestrians in the morning and an 825% increase in the afternoon between 1998 and 2000. The 1998 and 2000 counts were conducted in July with clear, sunny weather conditions.

SPEEDING

Speeding vehicles are a major community concern. In the words of one business owner, "The road is so wide you just can't help but drive fast." Speeding is also an inherent pattern of the wide intersections and long curb cuts along Main Street. Wide-open intersections promote wider, faster turns, and sweeping or veering into driveways, as opposed to slower, more methodical turns. The driving psychology of the community is largely effected by the wide-open road context of Main Street.

Speeding at the Route 5/ Lake Morey Road intersection also creates an awkward traffic pattern for motorists turning onto Route 5 from Wings Market and Lake Morey Road. While a speed study has not been completed, it is highly recommended that the local constable be requested to record speeds at AM/ PM and weekend (SAT AM - mid day) peak hours. Having solid speed data will be a valuable tool to justify traffic calming funding for improvements. Because speeds are fast, motorists are hesitant to pull out. This hesitation adds to the confusion over who has the right of way between Wings and Lake Morey Road.

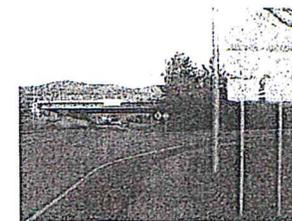
CONGESTION

There are no locations in the corridor where traffic volumes and delays warrant a traffic signal. According to a study done by the Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission, neither the Route 5 / Lake Morey intersection nor the RT 5/RT 25A intersection come near warranting a signal.

TRAFFIC DATA

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) from VTrans the corridor is as follows:

Traffic volumes in the village did not change significantly between 1996 and 1998. Intersection counts in July of 2000 at the Route 5/ Lake Morey Road intersection indicate that traffic levels have not changed significantly between 1996 and 2000. However, there may be additional buses and parents traversing through town to the new schools, and the planned tourism wayside at the depot will bring new traffic. The town should request that additional traffic counts be made in July and October 2001 to determine new peak levels.



| AADT Traffic Table: | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Route 5 Locations Between: | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 |
| Theftord town line and RT 244 | 1185 | 1200 | 1200 |
| RT 244 and Lake Morey Road | 2095 | 2300 | 1800 |
| Lake Morey Road and Bridge Street | 3850 | 4000 | 4000 |
| Bridge Street and Bradford town line | 2560 | 2900 | 2900 |

D. Economic Development Potentials

While this study is primarily related to physical improvements to Route 5 for the purpose of making a safer, more attractive Main Street, it is worth noting that there is a strong relationship between improvements to the Route 5 corridor and the future economic vitality of Fairlee's Main Street. The land uses along the corridor and the town's policies for guiding future development are inextricably linked to whatever changes to the road might be proposed.

DOWNTOWN STORES AND SERVICES

There is a vast array of local businesses that serve Fairlee residents and visitors. Many of these businesses are traditionally found in most Vermont town centers.

Among the businesses that exist in Fairlee are:

- Gas stations (4)
- Grocery/ Convenience stores (3)
- Restaurant (3)
- Ice cream shop
- Video store
- Antique dealers (3)
- Hardware store
- Feed store
- Watersports & Snowmobile Sales store
- Automobile repair shops
- Professional offices: lawyers – 1, accountants – 1,
 - Other offices:
 - Graphic design
 - Interior design
 - Real estate

Businesses and services that don't exist, but that have been identified as desirable additions to the local business mix:

- A Grocery Store or Natural Foods Market
- Café or Coffee Shop (with outdoor seating area)
- Clothes store
- New book store
- Bakery
- Bike and kayak rental shop
- Summer theater
- Art or art supply store
- Office supply store

UNDERUTILIZED COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

A walking tour of the village shows that a number of properties are potentially subject to transition in ownership and use. Some of these properties are also underutilized for commercial, residential, public and other uses. A list of properties seen as potentially "soft" and therefore subject to change, in need of reinvestment, or planned for improvements/expansions follows:

- Cumberland Farms block: vacant space
- Chapman's Store: planned expansion to or development of back buildings
- Thurber House: in the process of renovations but progress has been slow. The owner has larger plans for a mixed-use development of several parcels on both sides of the railroad tracks, but presently cannot get a grade crossing over the tracks from the State.
- The Depot: planned renovations have not yet been completed; renovations will be for the building, not the green nearby.
- The redevelopment of the former Potlatch Tavern building as the new town library will create greater vehicular and pedestrian demand on the busy corner intersection.
- The post office facility should be considered as the current facility is small and traffic and parking needs to be improved, but it should remain in town.

Planning for the future of the village should recognize that changes to Main Street could have very positive effects upon the economic viability of redevelopment. Public investment to make a more attractive village center could leverage private development with financial return for the town in many ways.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT REINFORCES THE VILLAGE'S CHARACTER AND ECONOMY

There is a perceived need to enhance the local economy to have year-round economic strength. For many years the "tourism" economy of Lake Fairlee and Lake Morey has been the seasonal driver in the local economy. Businesses desire and need to have a year-round business season. The town center is seen as the place where future economic activity could be centered. Since there are public services, facilities, and a built infrastructure of attractive building stock available, redevelopment could be readily and attractively accomplished.

The town has a large "bedroom community" constituency, where professionals travel to Hanover and other employment centers of the region. However, recent trends in employment, higher home occupation employment, lack of available space and cost of land issues in other locations could make Fairlee a viable and popular job center in the future.

Improving the village center of Fairlee will create significant incentives for new businesses to either come to town or for local business owners to diversify and create these new desirable and marketable goods and services.

A Series of Economic Development and Zoning Alternatives:

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROUTE 5 CORRIDOR AWAY FROM THE TOWN CENTER

A review of the town zoning bylaws and zoning map indicates that the entire commercial district for the town parallels the Route 5 corridor from north to south. While there are different areas of this corridor such as the historic village center, those differences are not reflected in terms of development policies that could preserve and enhance the historic character of the village center.

While perhaps not as obvious as in other nearby communities, such as the southern end of Bradford, Fairlee could easily become a commercial "strip development" corridor. In general, and as stated in the Fairlee Town Plan, encouraging business location within the definable town center will result in greater economic activity and (hence) more successful businesses. Compact development also leads to efficient and less costly town services. If the preservation of the town's rural character is a priority, then changes to the Commercial Zone should be contemplated.

At a minimum, even if the current Commercial zone is unchanged, the town should consider amending zoning provisions and design guidelines for the historic village center as either a separate zone or any overlay zone. This will promote desirable downtown development, and steer undesirable uses to other locations where their employment benefits could still be realized but not be in conflict with the value and character of the town center. It could also be the focal point of a Tax Improvement District, where municipal improvements and increased tax values might not be subject to ACT 60 taxation.

THE CURRENT LOCAL ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS MAY BE A DETRIMENT TO IMPROVING THE BUSINESS CLIMATE IN FAIRLEE:

A review of the zoning requirements for the commercial district indicates several site plan criteria for commercial projects that could be a disincentive for commercial development, reinvestment, or in-fill projects that bring new vitality to the village center.

Setbacks: the present 65' setback from the centerline of Route 5 (which has a 66' ROW) means that new commercial

buildings must be set back at least 32' from the front property line of each property. This requirement creates a development pattern that essentially prescribes commercial strip development in the village. Whereas many of the buildings are set closer to the road in a traditional historic Main Street arrangement (the former Wings building for example), current zoning requires buildings more like Cumberland Farms. These buildings are set back from the street, have parking along the whole front yard, and provide minimal landscaping or other site amenities.

Revised setbacks to maintain the historic pattern of buildings in closer proximity should be developed. An alternative requirement would be to go to a maximum setback of 15–20' unless a conditional use waiver was sought so that all buildings would face the street, and parking was required in either the side and/or the rear yard. The same setback doesn't have to be used and may not even be appropriate along the whole of Main Street. Greater setbacks should be defined where there are residential scale homes with front yards.

Parking: The universal requirement for one parking space for each employee and every 200 square feet of building area is far above what one would expect for a traditional village center. In an environment where people typically come "downtown" for a number of reasons, they usually park in a single space and walk from business to business doing their shopping. This is contradictory to the requirement where the space on each commercial parcel has more than twice the area of buildings taken up by parking. We suspect that the parking requirement is a carryover from older commercial zoning imported many years ago. It is more appropriate to locations not in a historic village setting such as Route 12A in West Lebanon, NH.

Additionally, the requirement for on-site parking is a disincentive for downtown redevelopment because many of the parcels in Fairlee are small and are bounded by the highway on the front and the railroad on the back. An alternative method could be to allow on-street parking spaces to be counted. Waiving the on-site parking altogether could also be considered, perhaps with a contribution to a municipal parking fund.

The town should pursue a Vermont Municipal Planning Grant next year to update the town center sensitive zoning ordinances in order to create village design guidelines.

E. Goals & Objectives

Through the public involvement discussed above, the following goals and objectives have been defined for improving the pedestrian, bicycle and motorist safety of Main Street and therefore the vitality of downtown Fairlee.

MAKE A "WALKABLE" VILLAGE

Walking on Main Street:

Virtually every business owner we interviewed along Main Street indicated that sidewalks are a needed improvement to the downtown. While this is stated as a solution, it is also noteworthy that as a sentiment, the desire for sidewalks represents a clear response to a problem with the way people come to and move through Fairlee Village. Historically, Fairlee had sidewalks on at least one side of Main Street. Over the years they have deteriorated or have been removed. The incremental changes to commercial access drives, redevelopment of properties, and the widening of Route 5 by the state has created an auto-only zone. Currently there are no sidewalks except in a few sporadic locations. Currently, without a way to walk about the village without being in the road, the best opportunities for seeing the village, engaging in business as a traditional "Main Street" might offer, and really seeing the interesting parts of the community are lost.

Paths to the river and countryside:

A number of trails and paths are possible, both for improving children's access to school and for creating additional recreational and tourism opportunities for the town. Two possible paths to the school include: a path along I-91, extending from Fogg's Hardware and the sidewalk to Lake Morey to the School, and another from the school following back lots and side streets to the Village Common. These two footpaths would formalize short-cuts children are already making and provide a safe off-road walkway. These paths could also become the village section of the planned Cross-Rivendell Trail, linking schools and highest mountains in the four-town Rivendell School District. This path would also allow for trail connections to be made from the village to the wider network of Lake Morey Trails on the other side of the interstate.

Other walkable village improvements could include:

- Restoring sidewalks and crosswalks through the village would allow school children and summer visitors a safe and pleasing way to access the village.
- Planting the roadside as a "tree lawn" with grass and street trees will shade the sidewalk and better define the Common and Depot greens.
- Creating trails and paths to the school and along the river would provide a place for recreation and interpretive environmental education.
- Relocating the farmers market closer to the flea market will entice more people to walk between the two Saturday morning events.

IMPROVE VILLAGE APPEARANCE

- Enhancing the Common will create an attractive centerpiece for the village.
- Creating village gateways at the entrances to the

downtown will not only alert motorists to reduce speeds, but also provide an aesthetic entryway.

- Adding trees, pedestrian lighting and landscaped medians would fill in the wide, paved roadway and improve the road's appearance.

USE PUBLIC INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

- Revising current zoning, setbacks and other provisions would allow for more appropriate development.
- Incorporating public parking accommodations into building permits would enable appropriate parking lot sizes for commercial enterprises.
- Improving drainage might attract further private improvements and improve pedestrian walkways. Route 5 experiences significant drainage problems through Fairlee Village. In winter months, given that there are only 3-4 catch basins, and no overall stormwater system, snowmelt accumulates in deep puddles, making pedestrian access impossible or hazardous. In the summer, large puddles also accumulate. The discharge from the Route 5 catch basin near the Depot has eroded a massive ravine below the railroad tracks extending down to the Connecticut River, and has rendered the town's land largely unusable.

ENHANCED VILLAGE "QUALITY OF LIFE":

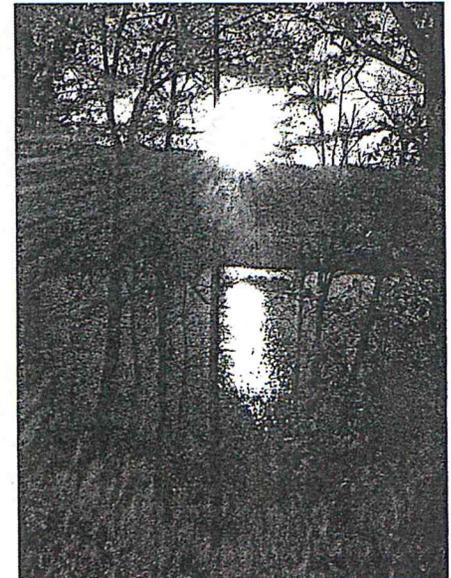
- Improving the safety and look of the village for pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists alike would increase the desirability of living in Fairlee.
- Improving economic development would lead to job creation and more year-round opportunities.

ENHANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Creating aesthetic opportunities for redevelopment of existing sites and in-fill development in the downtown village center would attract additional revenues to the village.
- Creating a coordinating body, such as a chamber of commerce or business exchange, would allow businesses to coordinate promotional events and joint projects.

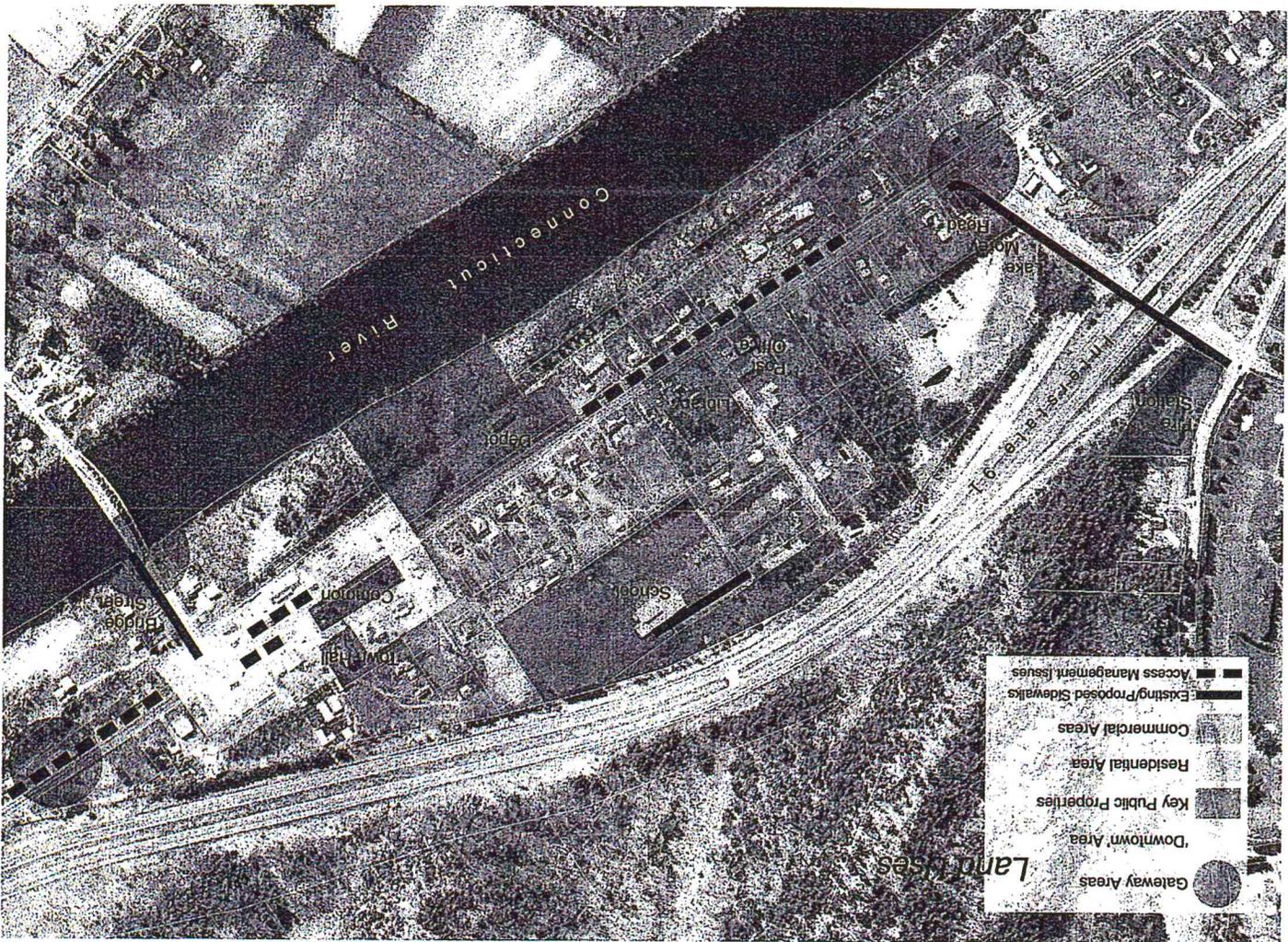
ENHANCED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A recreational trail along the Connecticut River would be a tourism attraction. River walks lend themselves to interpretive programs on the ecological, social, cultural and historical features of the river and place. Having the Connecticut River Scenic Byway Waypoint Visitor Center at the Depot would provide an access point to the trail and trail head facilities, such as parking, signage, and bathrooms. Heading south, the trail could follow the state's property and would provide public access to conserved lands on an agricultural peninsula. To the north, the trail would end on Bridge Street and traverse at least one parcel of private property. At the Depot, access to the river could be created with a boat dock for non-motorized boats and a picnic area. Although Orford, NH does have a boat launch, it is very busy with motorboats and their wake is often uncomfortable for paddlers. Also, in Fairlee there is no other known public access to the Connecticut River, a wonderful and beautiful public resource.



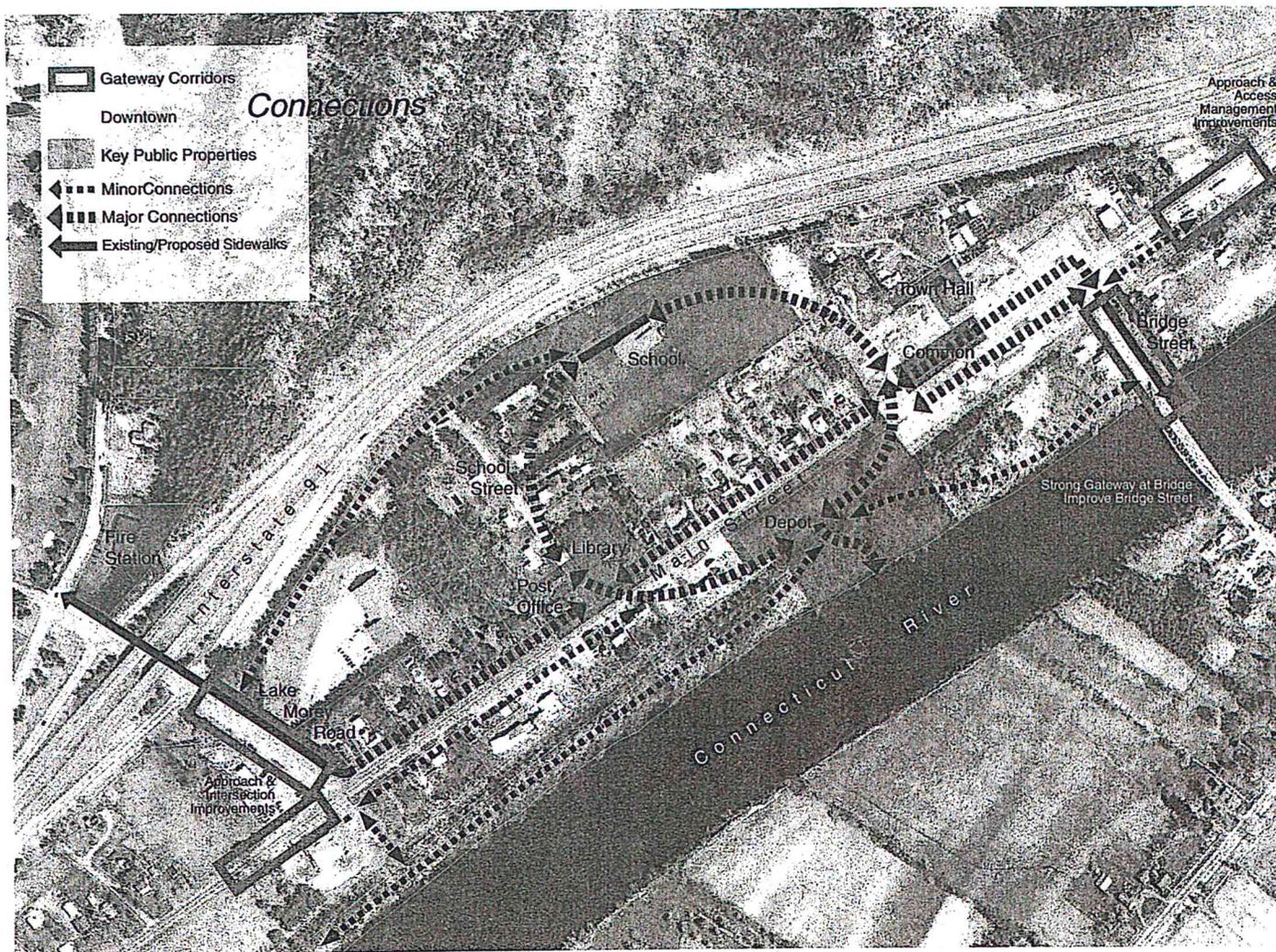
A Connecticut Riverwalk would be utilized by local merchants as well as tourists visiting the village. Riverwalks are ideal for natural history interpretive programs and for finding a moment of solace. Efforts will need to be coordinated with the Connecticut River Scenic Byway, which may have possible funding opportunities available for the waypoint and the riverwalk.

F. Analysis of Existing Conditions



Land Uses

This map highlights the main land uses in the village and their relationship to the Route 5 corridor. The map shows where the lack of sidewalks and access management concerns exist. Access management is the location, number and size of driveways along a public right-of-way. The map also highlights the gateways, or points at which the traveler enters the village from the surrounding rural area. It is worth noting that there are a series of linked public facilities and businesses up and down Main Street that all combine to make Fairlee a popular destination for both local residents and visitors.



Connections

This map illustrates obvious pedestrian circulation needs through the village, with emphasis on connections between major public facilities and businesses.

WESTERN GATEWAY
Access to the village from Interstate 91 and Lake Morey is along the 4 lane Lake Morey Road.

Sidewalks at interstate ramps are set back from the road, making it difficult for traffic turning on to the interstate to see pedestrians.

4 lanes of traffic on Lake Morey Road is too many for the traffic volumes now and far into the future, and create an 'highway like' feel entering the village.

Sidewalks exist on both sides of Lake Morey Road, but presently don't connect to any other pedestrian facilities.

Very large radii at corners encourage high speed turns, and create long, dangerous pedestrian crossings.

Southern Gateway
Entering the village from Route 5 South.

Wide crossing distance and high speed of oncoming traffic makes safe judgement of when to pull out difficult for opposing vehicles at Lake Morey Road and Wing's.

Very large radii at corners encourage high speed turns and create long pedestrian crossings.

There is no clear clue that you are entering a village area and need drive accordingly.

There is limited sight distance pulling out of Fogg's driveway.

