



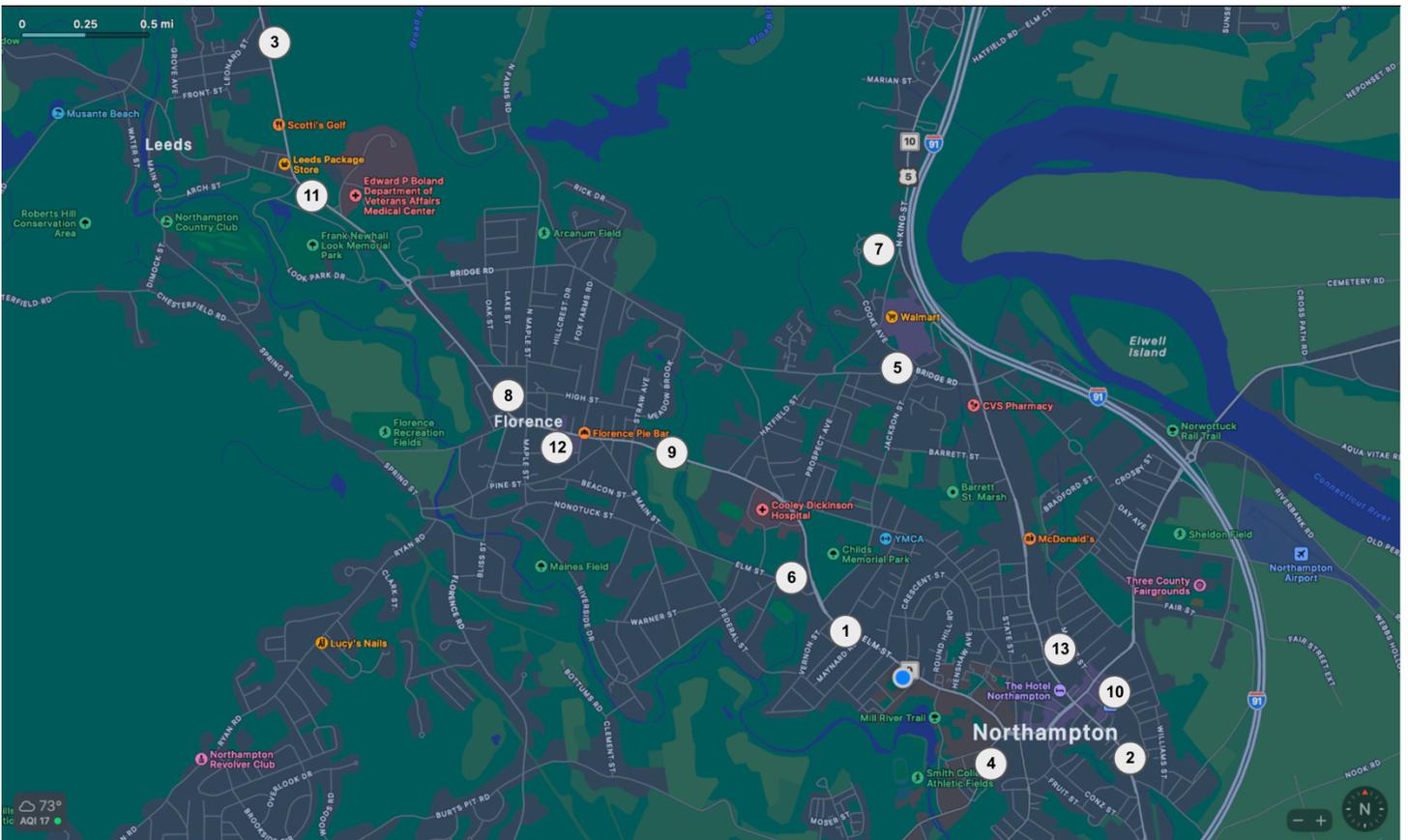
2025 Northampton Walking & Biking Report
Strong Towns Northampton's
Review of Progress
on the 2021 Sustainable Northampton Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan

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Introduction

Transportation is central to how people live, work and connect, and is central to sustainability. Strong Towns Northampton's approach is aligned with the City documents, focusing on creating safe, accessible and sustainable options for all, whether travelling by car, bicycle, foot, or public transit. In particular, to meet sustainability goals, alternative transportation options should be heavily promoted, and safety and comfort are the key strategies that will accomplish this.

The City's transportation strategy, guided by six goals, is listed in its Sustainability Plan:

Goal T-1: Ensure the **safe and efficient transportation** of goods and people by motor vehicles, bicycle, foot, and other means.

Goal T-2: Improve the **circulation system** to accommodate development and encourage bicycle and pedestrian transit.

Goal T-3: Improve and expand **public transit**.

Goal T-4: Support **federal and state investments** in transportation improvement.

Goal T-5: Provide appropriate **bicycle and vehicle parking** to support local businesses.

Goal T-6: Increase **walking and bicycling trips** through education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation programs.

In 2021 the City identified and updated its recommendations to address thirteen "hot spots" extracted from the previous comprehensive plan. Pressed by budgetary and staffing challenges, progress in addressing these thirteen target locations has been difficult to maintain. This report from Strong Towns Northampton summarizes recent improvements, ongoing challenges and potential next steps toward achieving these goals, and also notes some locations where the goals should be amended. By tracking progress and identifying opportunities, Northampton can continue building a transportation network that connects neighborhoods, supports local businesses, and fosters a healthier, more sustainable community.

Summary

This Sustainable Transportation Progress Report is designed to assess progress the City of Northampton has made toward implementing its key strategies and actions outlined within the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan of the 2021 Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan. That 2021 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan identified 13 locations in Northampton, Florence and Leeds and addresses concerns such as bike lane safety, traffic congestion, ADA compliance and pedestrian safety. To analyze these locations, Strong Towns Northampton, assisted by its interns, revisited the 13 sites, evaluating them using the goals outlined in the Sustainable Northampton Plan. The Strong Towns Mobility Team then refined a final draft of this report for public release.

By offering clear and current information on the progress made on the 2021 plan's sites of concern, further improvements can be facilitated to make Northampton a safer city for pedestrians, drivers, and cyclists.

Where Northampton Is Making Progress:

- Pedestrian Safety Upgrades - **Raised crosswalks, curb extensions and pedestrian islands have made intersections safer** by slowing vehicles and shortening crosswalk distances.
- Traffic Calming Successes - **Speed bumps, roundabouts and redesigned intersections have reduced vehicle speeds** at key intersections.
- Bike Network Expansion - **New and improved bike lanes, bike boulevards and multi-use paths have increased safe options for cyclists**, especially along major routes like Damon Road.
- ADA and Sidewalk Improvements - **Newly built or rebuilt sidewalks meet ADA standards**, improving accessibility for people using wheelchairs, strollers or other mobility aids.
- Community Connectivity - **Better access to the rail trail and new spur connections are enhancing alternative transportation options.**

Remaining Challenges:

- Gaps in Sidewalks and Bike Lanes - **There are still many incomplete sidewalks, faded bike lane markings and bike lanes that end abruptly.**
- Inconsistent Design Standards - Infrastructure varies from street to street, leading to uneven safety and accessibility experiences across the city. **Priority alternative transportation travel routes need to be identified and prioritized for safety and consistency.**
- Limited Connections from Neighborhoods to Paved Trails - **In some areas, residents have no safe, direct way to access nearby paved trails.**
- Maintenance Issues - **Overgrown vegetation, deteriorating pavement and worn paint reduce the safety and usability of existing infrastructure.**

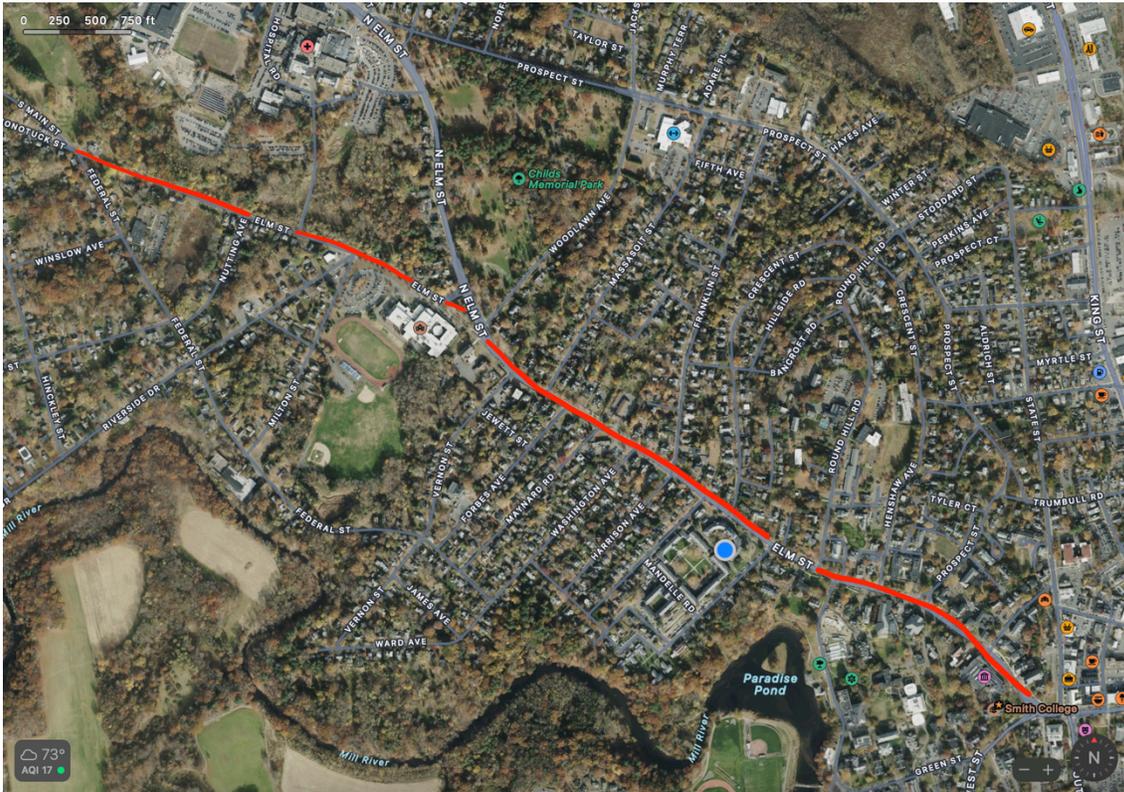
- Comfort and Shade - **Many pedestrian routes lack shade trees** or shade structures, making them less inviting in hot weather.
- Unclear Future Priorities: **Northampton lacks a long-term, prioritized plan** - and associated capital planning - aligned with the 2021 goals

What the City Can Do Next:

- Close the Gaps - **Prioritize high-need areas where sidewalk and bike lane networks are incomplete**, such as the Bridget Street stretch between Jackson Street and King Street, and in neighborhoods with limited connectivity. Other high priority routes for sidewalk and/or bike travel improvements include the State Street corridor, Elm Street and Locust Street.
- Standardize Safe Street Designs - Apply **consistent guidelines** for crosswalks, curb extensions, bike lane widths and markings so all paths meet a common safety baseline. Amend the city's Complete Streets Policy to ensure that even where the full Complete Streets standard cannot be met, the standard applied is *improvement* in the walking and cycling conditions, and that safe walking and biking are prioritized first, over vehicle throughput. In addition to standardizing walking and cycling infrastructure, automobile lane widths are a critical design component, as reduced lane widths lead to lower vehicle speeds, making walking and cycling significantly safer.
- Improve Maintenance - Regularly **trim vegetation, repaint faded markings** and **repair uneven surfaces** to maintain usability.
- Strengthen Links from Neighborhoods to Trails - Incorporate more **safe crossings and direct bike/pedestrian paths** between neighborhoods and the rail trail.
- Enhance Street Comfort - **Plant trees and add shade structures** where possible to make walking routes more appealing year-round.
- Monitor and Adjust - Conduct seasonal audits to **track the performance** of new infrastructure and adjust designs as needed.
- Long-Term Planning - Create a **specific long-term plan** aligned with the 2021 goals, including prioritized locations/projects, target timelines and rough capital budget planning.

Northampton is making progress toward a transportation system that is safer, more connected, more sustainable, and most importantly, people centered. The progress made in traffic calming, bike lane expansion, and pedestrian safety shows that targeted investments can yield real benefits for residents. By focusing on **filling in missing links, maintaining existing infrastructure and applying consistent design standards**, the city can build on its successes and ensure that all residents have safe and accessible ways to get where they need to go.

Elm Street



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-B. Elm Street Separated Bike Lanes (Downtown Inset Project #18)

It may be possible to flip the orientation of the parking and bike lane, so that parked cars buffer bicyclists from moving traffic. Separated bike lanes are on-street bike facilities but intended to evoke a similar feeling of separation as riding along a rail trail or path.

1-C. Removal of gaps in Elm Street Bike Lanes (Downtown Inset Project #19 & 51)

A small number of parking spaces should be removed to create a seamless bike facility along Elm Street from downtown to Cooley Dickinson Hospital. Gaps in the bike lanes can be eliminated with the removal of parking on one side between Prospect Street and Bedford Terrace and on the north side of Elm, just east of the North Elm/Elm intersection.

1-H. Elm and North Elm Street Crossing (Downtown Inset Project #16)

Curb extensions at the Elm/N Elm intersection and the Elm/Woodlawn intersection will reduce the crossing distance and improve safety for students looking to reach Northampton High School.

Current Conditions:

Elm St. is a local roadway that begins at the downtown Main Street and West Street intersection and stretches Northwest to the High School, then continues (after North Elm Street splits off to the North at the High School) until the Federal Street/Nonotuck Street/South Main Street intersection. It is a high priority street for alternative transportation safety, as it is part of the connection between downtown

Northampton and Florence Center. Elm Street traffic counts are between 5,001 and 10,000 vehicles per day. The current striped bicycle lanes on Elm Street are dangerous and do not provide an adequate facility for bicyclists with and level of experience and confidence riding in the roadway adjacent to traffic. [NOTE: this was pointed out as an error in the original report, which claimed that the bike lanes on Elm were 'adequate' for competent users. Being located un-buffered between a high-capacity car travel lane and parked cars (i.e. 'the door lane') makes this an unsafe piece of infrastructure that should urgently be replaced. -STN Mobility Team 3/20/26] Main Street / Elm Street / North Elm Street bike lanes exist between State Street and Prospect Avenue, and there are shared lane markings for a short stretch between Bedford Terrace and Prospect Street.

Also of note, temporary road narrowing is being tested at the High School at this time (September 2025), with jersey barriers on both sides of Elms Street narrowing the road for a short stretch. The redesign of Elm Street at the High School is still in process, and the city is considering curb extensions to promote safer pedestrian crossing at the High School.

Future Improvements:

Because Elm Street is the connector between Downtown, the High School and many neighborhoods (notably, Baystate and the Smith College / Elm Street Neighborhoods), and is part of the main connector between Downtown and Florence Center (continued by North Elm and then Locust St at the High school), it continues to be a high priority for safer and more comfortable alternative transportation. Notably, Elm Street is a major artery with high traffic counts, and it is a long (mostly gradual) hill, making cycling more challenging in the northbound direction.

Since the 2021 Sustainable Northampton Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan was adopted, the Elm Street plan recommendations have not been fully implemented. Elm Street currently has striped bicycle lanes that should be converted into separated bike lanes. The orientation of the parking and bike lane should be flipped so that parked cars can buffer bicyclists from moving traffic. Protected bicycle lanes are particularly helpful on uphill, so perhaps the north side of Elm Street could be prioritized.

Additionally, there continue to be gaps in the bike lanes along Elm Street from downtown Northampton to Cooley Dickinson Hospital that need to be addressed by removing 10 parking spaces. Parking should be removed on the south side of Elm Street between Prospect Street and Bedford Terrace and on the north side of Elm, just east of the North Elm/Elm intersection.

Finally, with the future redesign at the High School, curb extensions are needed at the Elm/N Elm Street intersection and the Elm/Woodlawn intersection to reduce the crossing distance and improve safety for students looking to reach Northampton High School (may involve removal of a fire hydrant).

Other Elm Street goals from the Sustainability Plan include:

- On-Street Bike Facility N Elm St. - From Prospect Ave to Locust Street: Reduce the width of travel lanes and flush the median to provide space for bike lanes. (This has the potential to be addressed with the upcoming redesign of Locust Street.)
- Intersection of Elm St. at West St.: Examine intersection for long-term redesign, including potential removal of right lane from Elm to West St. intersection, prone to conflicts due to awkward geometry and traffic signal phasing.

- On-Street Bike Facility North Elm St. from Child's Park to Prospect St.: Swap parking with bike lane to create a protected facility; create comfortable riding conditions for a broad range of cyclists (This has the potential to be addressed with the upcoming redesign of Elm Street at the High School.)
- Trail Connection Elm St. at Northampton High School, where Elm turns to N. Elm and then back to Elm: Install a cycle track along vacated row, encouraging cycling to and from school by providing new facilities.



Current Bicycle Lane on Elm St. (South Bound from High School), Not Separated from the Main Road

Pleasant Street



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-D. Pleasant Street Traffic Calming (Downtown Inset Project #60)

A raised crossing, curb extensions and related drainage improvements at the rail trail crossing will improve safety and efficiency of pedestrian and bicycle traffic across Pleasant Street.

Current Conditions:

Pleasant St. runs from Fulton Avenue to Main Street. The specific recommendation here has been completed, with a speed table installed at the rail trail crossing. In general, there is a consistent sidewalk from beginning to end, as well as curb extensions, a raised crosswalk, and a pedestrian island. There are curb extensions at Michelman Avenue, Kingsley Avenue, Hampton Avenue and Railroad Avenue. Raised crosswalks are present at Railroad Avenue and Kingsley Avenue, and a pedestrian island is located at the Hockanum Road intersection. There is a bike lane from the roundabout until Holyoke Street, from which it discontinues. On the opposite side, there is a bike lane from Michelman Avenue to the roundabout.

Future Improvements:

Pleasant Street requires evenly distributed raised crosswalks and/or curb extensions to provide shorter and safer crosswalks. It also requires a continuous bike lane to contribute to traffic calming efforts for *all* modes of transportation.



Curb extension and raised crosswalk at Pleasant St. and Kingsley Ave. intersection.

Leonard Street/Haydenville Road Intersection



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-E. Leonard Street Traffic Calming (Florence Inset Project #19)

Improved geometry at the Leonard Street intersection with Route 9/Haydenville Road will help to slow traffic, discourage cut-through traffic, and improve pedestrian safety.

Current Conditions:

Leonard St. is used as a commuter cut-through from Florence St to Haydenville Rd / Route 9. The oblique angle of the current intersection encourages high-speed turns. The sidewalk is overgrown and discontinuous.

Future Improvements:

The Leonard Street Intersection with Route 9/Haydenville Road still needs to be rebuilt with new geometry to include a 90-degree intersection to help slow traffic, discourage cut-through traffic, and improve pedestrian safety.



Sharp turn at the end of Leonard St. towards Haydenville Rd.



Overgrown sidewalk along Haydenville Rd.

West Street / Green St. Crossing



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-F. West Street Crossing (Downtown Inset Project #88) – A raised crosswalk and curb extensions at the West Street crossing at Green Street will reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds on the approach to the Smith campus area.

Current Conditions:

West St. runs from Main Street Southwest to Earle Street. The crosswalk at the Green St. intersection is still too long (reaching almost 70 ft) and discontinuous, though there are recently installed pedestrian warning lights. This intersection has a history of pedestrian injuries and car accidents in the recent past.

Future Improvements: The crosswalk requires curb extensions to significantly reduce its length.

Current Project: West Street Crossing (Downtown Inset Project #88) - A raised crosswalk and curb extensions at the West Street crossing at Green Street will reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds on the approach to the Smith College campus area.

Other West Street plans from the Sustainability Plan include:

- Intersection of Earle St and West: Should be narrowed on the approach to West St., consider dropping the turn lane.
- Examine intersection of Elm St and West St for long-term redesign, including potential removal of right turn lane from Elm St to the West St Intersection prone to conflicts due to awkward geometry and traffic signal phasing.
- Intersection of Village Hill Rd and West St: Reduce size of all corner radii for slower traffic speeds; overly wide intersection invites speeding and creates an uncomfortable crossing distance for pedestrians.
- Intersection of West St and Green St.: Utilize traffic calming: refuge island/curb extensions/raised-table crossing; crosswalk is too long, telephone pole restricts sight lines.
- Intersection of West St and Earle St.: Install refuge island in median area. A refuge island will aid crossing pedestrians on this wide roadway.
- Traffic Signal at West St and Village Hill Rd: Install pedestrian signal phase at existing traffic

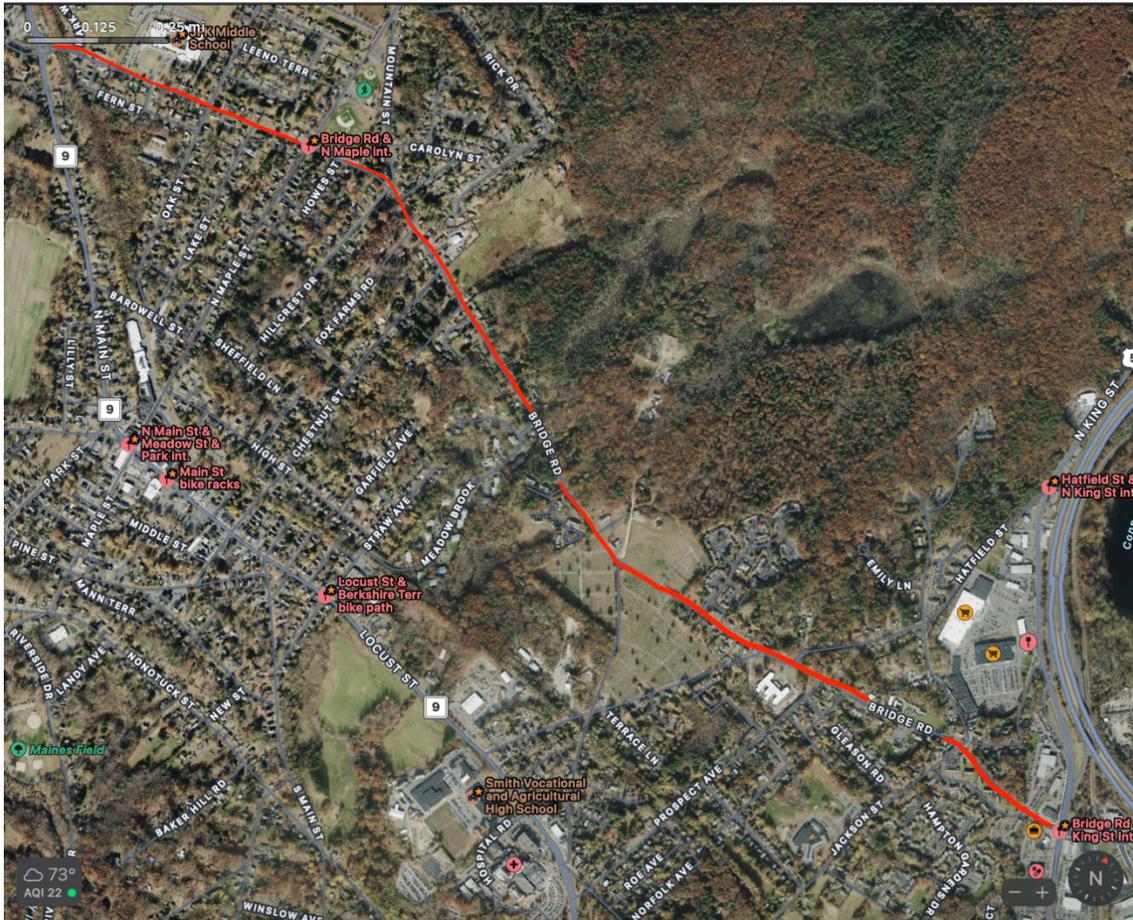


Pedestrian warning sign/lights



West St./Green St. Intersection crosswalk; lack of curb extension

Bridge Road



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-G. Bridge Road Crossing (Downtown Inset Project #4)

A raised crosswalk and curb extensions at the Bridge Road crossing at Orchard Street will reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds to provide a safer connection to Lampron Park.

1-L. Bridge Road Bike Lanes (Florence Inset Project #3)

Bike lanes along Bridge Road between North Maple and N Main Street would improve connectivity and safety for JFK Middle School students who bicycle to school.

Current Conditions:

Bridge Road is a local road that stretches from N. Main Street to N. King Street, and it is a high priority street for alternative transportation safety. There are no sidewalk extensions at the Bridge Rd. and King Street crosswalk, and no raised crosswalk. Additionally, there is a critical sidewalk gap along Bridge Rd. between Jackson Street and King Street. With regard to bike lanes, there is no bike lane at N. Maple Street and Bridge Road. There is a lane on one side of the street, but no signage that this is a bike lane rather than the shoulder of the road for much of the length of the lane - the last signage of this lane as a

bike lane is at the Hubbard Avenue intersection, where the lane narrows then disappears. The lane is inconsistent going towards Leeds, and inconsistent at the roundabout.

Future Improvements: Adding bike lanes between North Maple and North Main Street would improve connectivity and safety for JFK Middle School students who bike to school. Additionally, ABPB-approved bicycle parking is needed at the JFK Middle School. A new sidewalk is required on at least the south side of Bridge Road to address the sidewalk gap between Jackson and King Street, improving circulation between areas of low-income housing and the King Street commercial district. Finally, the Bridge Road Crossing at Orchard Street requires a raised crosswalk and curb extensions to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds to provide a safer connection to Lampron Park.



Bridge Rd. and N. Maple Intersection crosswalk; very wide crossing / lack of curb extension



Missing bike lane on Bridge Rd.

Bridge/N. King/King/Damon 4-way Intersection:



Lengthy crosswalks at intersection; lack of curb extensions



Lack of bike lane along N. King St. after intersection

Milton Avenue and Riverside Drive Intersection



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-I. Milton Avenue and Riverside Drive Intersection (Downtown Inset Project #70)

To improve safety for all roadway users - drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians - Milton should be “T-ed” into Riverside Drive to create a more orthogonal intersection and reduce the length of the current crosswalk across both roadways where they meet Elm Street. Potentially replacing the currently complex intersection with a mini roundabout is worthy of future study as well.

Current Conditions:

This intersection is located west of Northampton High School. It has an unusual long pedestrian crossing, stretching almost 100 ft. The sidewalk discontinues and is overgrown.

Future Conditions/Plans:

The Milton Street and Riverside Drive Intersection needs to be improved by “T-ing” Milton Street into Riverside Drive via the existing parking lot to create a more orthogonal intersection or by installing a mini roundabout. The length of the current crosswalk needs to be reduced to improve safety for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Curb extensions should also be implemented if possible.

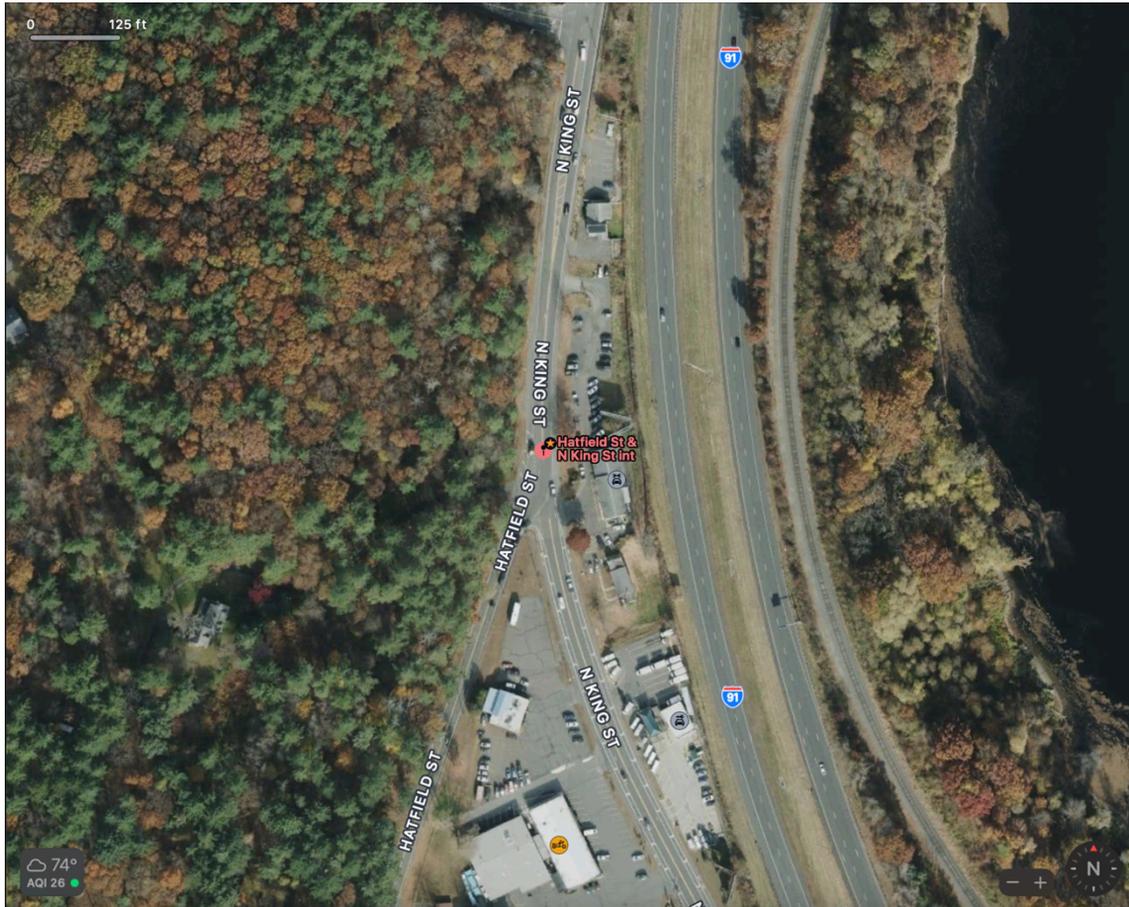


Lengthy crosswalk at intersection



Overgrown sidewalk along Elm St. after intersection

Hatfield Street and N. King Street Intersection



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-J. Hatfield Street/King Street intersection (Citywide Map Project #10)

To improve the wide intersection geometry that creates a challenging environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, replacement with a roundabout is in the planning stages and should be moved forward into final design and implementation.

Current Conditions:

This is a 3-way intersection located in front of the Northampton Transmission auto shop. It has bike lanes on both sides of N. King St. However, the bike lane is inconsistent and discontinues at the intersection of Hatfield and N. King Street. Additionally, there is no sidewalk or crosswalk to aid pedestrians along Hatfield Street.

Future Conditions/Plans:

This intersection is being replaced with a roundabout to improve the wide intersection geometry that creates a challenging environment for pedestrians and cyclists. After some delays, implementation of this project is expected to occur soon.



Bike Lane on N. King St. at intersection ends



Lack of bike lane markings on shoulder on N. King St. at intersection

North Main, Meadow, and Park Intersection



Sustainability Plan Goals:

1-K. Improvements at N Main, Meadow, and Park (Florence Inset Projects #24 and 26)

In order to activate the small common space in Downtown Florence, intersection improvements are needed to enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety. This includes raised crosswalks and curb extensions at the Meadow and Park intersections with N Main, along with a long-term plan to address the complex Meadow/Park intersection adjacent to the Lilly Library.

2-I. Meadow Street Sidewalks (Florence Inset Project #25)

New sidewalks along Meadow Street from N Main Street to Corticelli Street will close an important gap in Florence's walking network.

Current Conditions:

The wide intersection creates unnecessarily long crossing distances for pedestrians and encourages motorist speeding. The existing sidewalk on Meadow Street is narrow and the asphalt is well worn and in need of maintenance. Additionally, there exists a crosswalk at Meadow and Park, as well as an island at the center point of the intersection. Lastly, the bike lane discontinues and is unclear.

Future Conditions/Plans:

The North Main, Meadow, and Park Intersection requires raised crosswalks and curb extensions at the Meadow and Park intersections with North Main, along with a long-term plan to address the complex

Meadow/Park intersection adjacent to the Lilly Library. Additionally, the crosswalk at Meadow St. near N. Main is an ideal location for a raised crosswalk installation as motor vehicles approach the yield sign. The turning radius of the Park Street/N Main Street intersection needs to be reduced dramatically to slow traffic and provide an opportunity to add a crosswalk. These intersection improvements will activate the small common space in Downtown Florence by enhancing pedestrian connectivity and safety. Additionally, the narrow, damaged asphalt sidewalk along Meadow Street from North Main Street to Spring Street needs to be replaced to improve the pedestrian connection from Downtown Florence to the ballfields west of the Mill River and Grow Food Northampton.

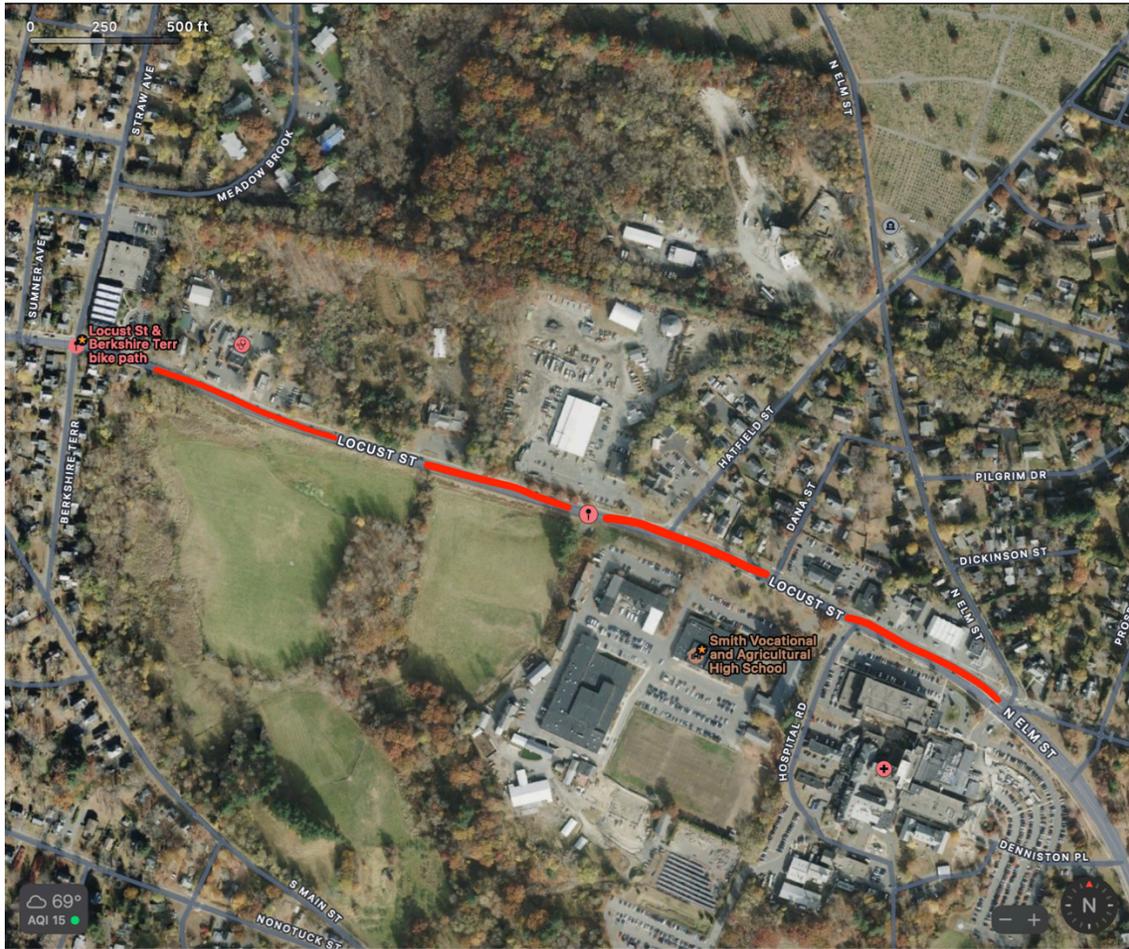


Crosswalk at Park and Meadow St. Intersection



Faded bike lane after intersection on Park St.

Locust Street



Sustainability Plan Goals:

2-B. Locust Street Bike Lanes (Florence Inset Project #20)

The stretch of Locust Street between Straw Ave/Berkshire Terrace and N. Elm Street is one of the most significant gaps in Northampton's bicycling network. The roadway is wide enough to accommodate striped bike lanes, potentially enhanced with a painted buffer and/or delineator posts for additional visual separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists.

Current Conditions:

Locust St. runs from N. Elm St. west to S. Main St. It is a high priority street for alternative transportation safety, as it is part of the connection between downtown Northampton and Florence Center (and connects both to Cooley Dickinson Hospital and Smith Vocational School). There is no striping or lane designation, causing discomfort among cyclists and pedestrians. For example, this creates a significant bike lane gap at Straw Ave/Berkshire Terrace and N. Elm St.

Future Conditions/Plans:

Locust Street between Straw Avenue/Berkshire Terrace and N. Elm Street is one of the most significant gaps in Northampton's bicycling network, with high vehicle speeds creating especially unsafe conditions for cyclists. To ensure safety and encourage cycling use, Locust Street requires separated (not just

striped) bike lanes, enhanced with a physical (not just painted) buffer, such as rumble strip, zebra or delineator posts for safety separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists. Additionally, a refuge island is needed in the median area of the Locust Street/Hatfield Street intersection to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance. Due to the high vehicle speeds along Locust Street, the city should consider fully separated (raised) bicycle lanes, potentially running both along the more rural and scenic southern side of the road.



Bicycle lane ends



Sidewalk ends where guard rails begin

Hawley Street



Sustainability Plan Goals:

2-E. Hawley Street Sidewalk (Downtown Inset Project #26)

The existing sidewalks on Hawley Street are narrow asphalt walkways without proper curb ramps in some locations. These recommendations are for a newly built sidewalk that meets all ADA standards from Bridge Street to Holyoke Street.

Current Conditions:

Hawley Street is a local roadway that stretches from Bridge Street to Holyoke Street. There are narrow, inconsistent asphalt sidewalks along where Bridge Street meets Hawley Street. This narrow asphalt sidewalk continues down on the left side of the street, oriented towards Holyoke Street. On the right side of the street, there is a concrete sidewalk that discontinues halfway down Hawley Street. This is a new sidewalk adhering to ADA standards. There is a raised crosswalk and curb extensions at Bridge/Orchard St, as well as a raised crosswalk on Hancock Street and a speed bump at Butler Place. There is no bike lane, and there are no curb ramps.

Future Improvements:

Hawley Street needs a newly built sidewalk that meets all ADA standards, such as 5-foot sidewalks and curb ramps from Bridge Street to Holyoke Street, as the existing sidewalks on Hawley Street are narrow, deteriorated asphalt walkways without proper curb ramps in some locations. Additionally, the Hawley/Holyoke corridor has the potential to be a critical part of Northampton’s bicycle circulation network. Shared lane markings, signage, and traffic calming features would transform Hawley Street into a “bicycle boulevard,” a shared street that emphasizes bicycle safety over motorist speed and convenience. Ideally, Hawley Street will function as an alternative bike route to Pleasant and Main Street. From Market/Hawley to Strong Ave, white intersection crossing markings with solid green paint in the middle will be used to highlight cross traffic on Hawley and Market, where bicyclists cross the roadway along Main Street. Traditional bike lanes carry the cyclists up to the intersection of Strong Avenue.



Narrow asphalt sidewalk from Main St. intersection and lengthy crosswalk at Hawley, Bridge, and Main St. intersection

North Main Street/Haydenville Road/E Florence Intersection in Leeds



Sustainability Plan Goals:

4-B. MassCentral Rail Trail access at N Main Street in Leeds (Florence Inset Project #13)

To maximize the long-term investments made in Northampton's rail trail network, improved access points and spur trails are needed.

Existing Conditions:

North Main Street towards Leeds runs from E. Florence St. to Meadow St. There is no access point to the Mass Central rail trail at the intersection, and the bike lane towards Leeds is inconsistent. Currently, there are very limited connections from the Leeds community to the rail trail.

Future Conditions/Plans:

North Main Street in Leeds requires improved access points and spur trails to the MassCentral Rail Trail. A trail connection to and from North Main Street with a side path and a long ramp up the embankment is needed to improve access, use, and safety of the trail for both pedestrians and cyclists.



Bike lane on N Main St. narrows, then ends

End of bike lane along Haydenville Rd and towards Leeds:



Main Street in Florence Center



Sustainability Plan Goals:

5-B. Enhanced Bike Parking in Downtown Florence (Florence Inset Project #32)
The current lack of bike racks in Downtown Florence discourages bicycling to the commercial district. New racks that meet current standards should be installed in various locations along Main Street between Park Street and South Main.

Existing Conditions:

Main St. in Florence stretches from S. Main St. west to Park St. The current lack of bike racks in Downtown Florence discourages bicycling to the commercial district.

Future Conditions/Plans:

Bike Parking on Main Street in Downtown Florence and adjacent to the Bike Path is needed. New racks that meet current standards should be installed in various locations along Main Street between Park Street and South Main. More generally, Florence Center is not adequately addressed in the Sustainability Plan and should be revisited with an eye toward enhancing pedestrian and bicycling comfort and safety. In addition, the green spaces around and near the Florence Civic Center and the Pine and Meadow intersection should be rethought for potential enhancements.

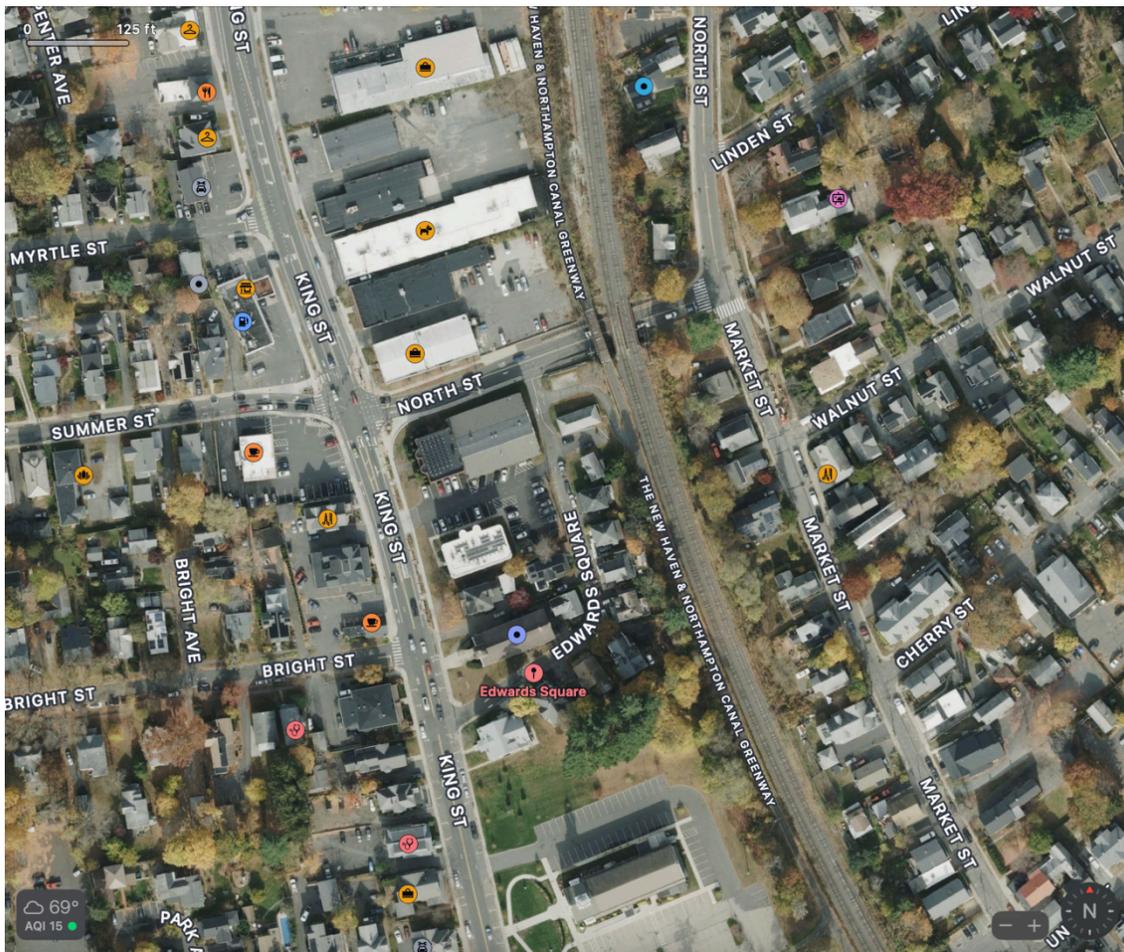


Missing bike lanes



Lack of bike lane and bike racks along/on street; cyclist biking on sidewalk

Edwards Square



Sustainability Plan Goals:

4-A. Mass Central Rail Trail access at North Street (Downtown Inset Project #60)

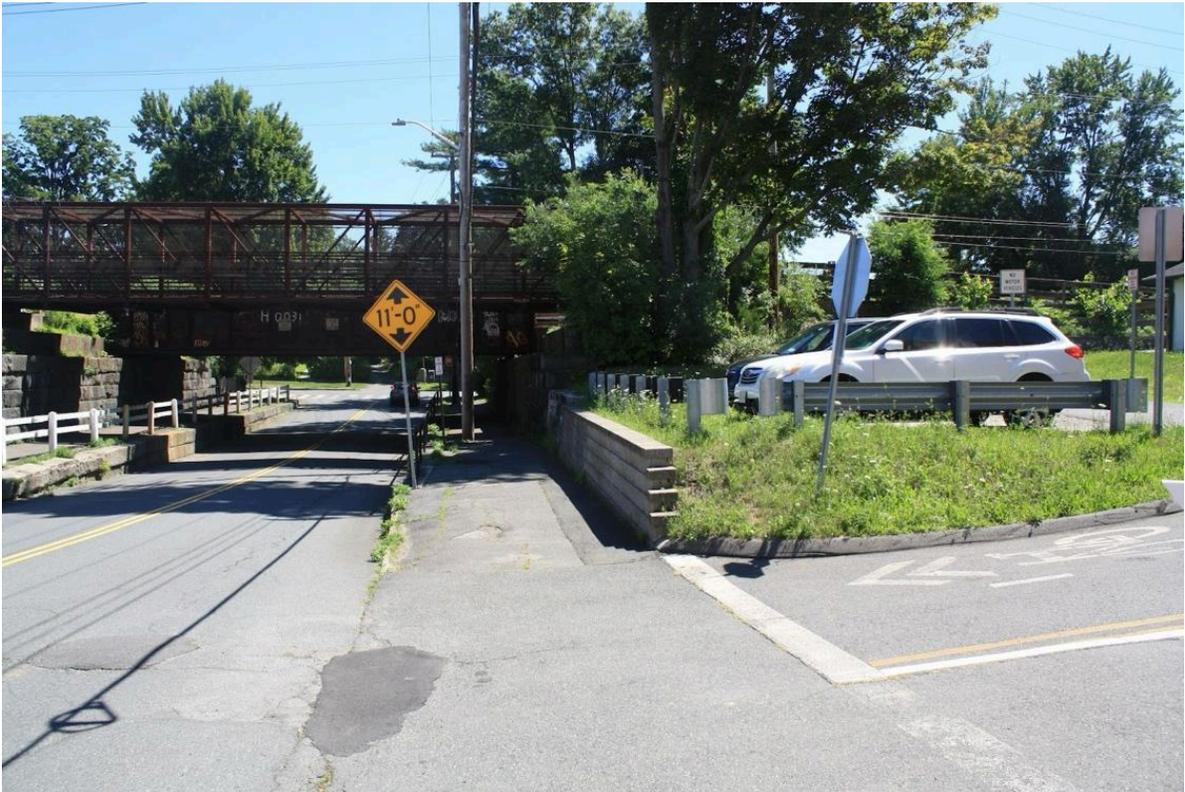
To maximize the long-term investments made in Northampton's rail trail network—including the 2017 Norwottuck Trail underpass project—improved access points and spur trails are needed.

Existing Conditions:

Edwards Square is located at the corner of King St. and North St. There is no distinct bike lane to access Edwards Square from North St.

Future Conditions/Plans:

An ADA connection from the rail trail to North St. via Edwards Square would satisfy this need and enhance connectivity from the rail trail to the commercial district along King St.



Shared road between cyclists and drivers; bike lane from Edwards Square discontinues

Conclusions

As Strong Town members visited each of the 13 specific “hot spot” sites listed in the Sustainability Plan, we found progress that varied across the target sites, and in some cases (e.g. Pleasant St) very significant progress. However, there is still much more to be accomplished, as has been outlined in the Future Conditions section for each site. Further, in some instances (in particular Locust Street, and Main Street in Florence Center), while the city’s stated Sustainability Plan goals are a good start, they do not fully reflect the safety (and comfort) needs in those locations.

A few common issues were encountered through this study, including bike lane discontinuity, sidewalk discontinuity, a lack of raised crosswalks and adjacent unsafe automobile travel speeds. We recommend that the City of Northampton prioritize addressing these in particular as they develop and release specific details of their comprehensive plan for the future, especially in high priority locations, targeting completion dates for pedestrian and cycling improvements. In addition, the next city plan could potentially include additional locations that are problematic for pedestrians and cyclists, including State Street and Riverside Drive.

We share the city’s goals of promoting the safety and well-being of Northampton residents, and the goals stated in the 2021 Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan, especially creating safe bicycle and pedestrian transit and encouraging / increasing walking and cycling trips. We expect the city to improve their specific commitments as they accelerate implementation of the improvements to all target sites listed in the Sustainability Plan. As a voice of concerned citizens, we look forward to working with the city on these and other continued improvements to our transportation network.

Edits (shown in document in underlined text)

3/11/26 P.7 - The current striped bicycle lanes on Elm Street are dangerous and do not provide an adequate facility for bicyclists with moderate-to-high levels of experience and confidence riding in the roadway adjacent to traffic.