

CASE STUDIES OF BICYCLING & WALKING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES: *FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT*



February 2022

Prepared by the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University's Small Urban, Rural, and Tribal Center on Mobility (SURTCOM) for the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Vermont Agency of Transportation and AARP Vermont, as well as the input and information provided by leaders, advocates, and residents within Fair Haven, Vermont.

COVER IMAGES

Front Cover Top: The Marble Mansion Inn in downtown Fair Haven

Front Cover Middle: Historic slate sidewalks in Fair Haven

Front Cover Bottom: Long painted crosswalks in historic Fair Haven

The back cover presents a photo collage of people walking and bicycling in Fair Haven, as observed by the case study researchers while on-site.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this case study was to identify bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and programs in Fair Haven, Vermont that would be of interest to other peer communities. The architectural masterpieces within Fair Haven have yet to be fully leveraged, not only the buildings, but also the historic slate sidewalks which highlight that placemaking for walking has been a need for more than a hundred years.

Overall, the active transportation infrastructure provisions focus on walking facilities (i.e. sidewalks); however, people within the community also bicycle. Some come from other communities and use the Fair Haven Park-and-Ride as a trailhead for on-road, long-distance bicycle rides. Children were also observed bicycling throughout the community. In addition, their use of this mode is visible in the numerous bicycles that can be found at the bicycle rack at the Fair Haven Grade School, even in the summer.

While the crosswalks across Main Street (VT-4A/VT22A) are clearly visible with fresh paint, 2021 funding from the Vermont Agency of Transportation will help create more formalized and protected pedestrian infrastructure through curb extensions, additional sidewalks, and mid-block crossings, which will provide an additional level of safety for all roadway users. Additionally, a recently constructed sidewalk along Mechanic Street provides a formalized space for students from Fair Haven to walk to the high school.

Finally, a short asphalt multi-use trail connects an apartment complex with a transit stop.

INTRODUCTION

Walking and bicycling have become increasingly popular modes of transportation and the existence of dedicated infrastructure to support active modes offers benefits to a community and its residents. While examples of active transportation infrastructure found in larger communities are well documented, this infrastructure can look different in rural communities and documented examples are lacking. This research effort aims to address this gap. Case studies from fifteen communities with fewer than 10,000 residents were developed. The case studies feature existing rural bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure located across five states, to include: Arcadia, LaBelle, and Taylor Creek in Florida; Calvert City, Corbin, and Morehead in Kentucky; Pelican Rapids, Pipestone, and Walker in Minnesota; Ruidoso, Silver City, and Truth or Consequences in New Mexico; and Fair Haven, Morristown, and the Town of Hartford in Vermont. Communities were selected using a prioritization process developed through a cooperative effort between the state departments of transportation and the researchers. More details about the research project, Case Studies of Communities of Less Than 10,000 People with Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure, as well as additional case studies can be found at:

https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/research_projects/case-studies-of-communities-of-less-than-10000-people-with-bicycle-pedestrian-infrastructure/

Case studies provide a detailed description of each community including a discussion of recent planning efforts related to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, supporting programs, and partnerships. Site visits, approximately one day per community, were conducted from June through December of 2021. During these visits, researchers collected spatial data and photographs to document existing infrastructure. Within this day visit, researchers also captured photos of people walking and bicycling in the communities, which can be found on the back cover of each case study. They also reached out to local advocates and community leadership. Lessons learned and best practices were documented from reviewing the planning documents and speaking with advocates and community leadership. The case studies aim to provide peer communities with the knowledge and encouragement to support additional implementation of active transportation infrastructure in rural communities across the US.

This case study focuses on Fair Haven, Vermont.

BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY

Fair Haven, Vermont has approximately 2,585 residents (2019), and has experienced a 0.7% population increase since 2010. It is located in Rutland County, in southwestern Vermont. The community's boundaries encompass 18.2 square miles.

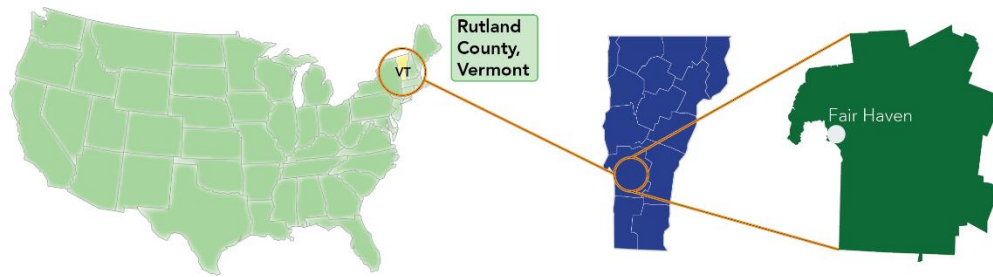


Figure 1: Map of where Fair Haven, Vermont is located in Rutland County.

The following paragraphs provide demographic and socioeconomic data about the community, so that peer communities can better understand similarities and differences between their community and this case study community.

The average age of Fair Haven residents is 38.8 years old (2019). Approximately 13.3% (2019) of homes in Fair Haven are vacant which includes seasonal housing, vacant housing for rent/sale, and vacant housing held off the market.

Approximately 7.9% (2018) of Fair Haven residents are employed within the community; a statistic which may provide a level of understanding regarding residents' commute distance and potential interest in walking or biking to work. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, 6.8% of people in Fair Haven walk and 0.0% bicycle to work for their daily commute. Fair Haven has a 5.2% (2019) unemployment rate. Fair Haven's median household income is \$54,250 (2019), with 4.2% of households earning less than \$10,000 and 0.9% earning more than \$200,000. Approximately 13.9% (2019) of Fair Haven's population lives in poverty, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Directive 14.

COUNTY TYPOLOGY

According to the rural classification methodology used in *Emerging Technology and Opportunities for Improved Mobility and Safety for Rural Areas*, Fair Haven is located within a county that was designated as a Micropolitan County Type. A Micropolitan County Type is defined by having one or more urbanized areas with a population over 10,000 but less than 50,000 people or are adjacent to and linked economically with such a county.

COMMUNITY HISTORY

Chartered and settled in 1779, Fair Haven has a unique history with stone. This history is visible in the plethora of historic buildings within the Fair Haven Village Historic District. This includes the famous Marble Mansion (see cover page, top left) which is listed on the Vermont Marble Trail, a guided driving tour. In addition, identifying as the "Slate Center of the Nation," Fair Haven has long been tied with the slate industry. The first slate quarry began in 1839. This is embodied in both the buildings (Figure 2) and the historic walking infrastructure in the community (see the center picture on the cover page, a slate sidewalk).



Figure 2: A home in Fair Haven, Vermont built of slate.

The community is also proud of its large village park (see Figure 3, left), locally known as “The Park,” which the community boasts as being the largest in the state. The Park is unique in that it retains its spoke design with several walkways, arranged like spokes of a wheel, that lead to a fountain at the center. The Park hosts summer concerts and more recently a farmer’s market (see Figure 3, right).

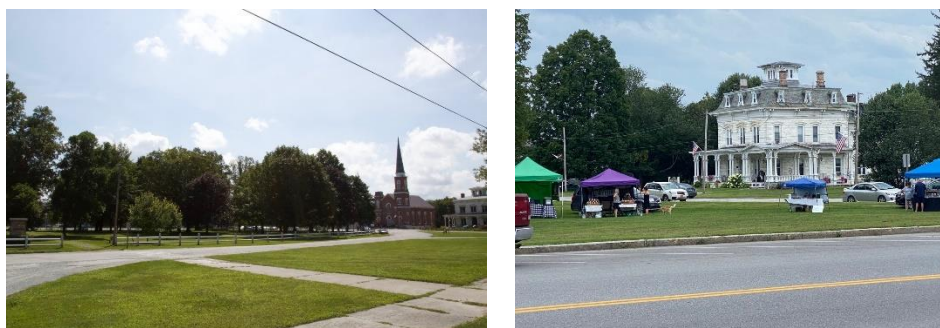


Figure 3: The Park.

In addition, the historic downtown has a park-and-ride where many road bicyclists gather for long distance rides. The park-and-ride also provides a connection to the Fair Haven Route, a public transportation route, which takes riders to the Transit Center in Rutland City (about 19 miles East of Fair Haven). Portions of the state routes that run through Fair Haven (VT-4A and VT-22A) are designated as Class I Town Highways. A Class I Town Highway is one where the municipality has control in order to make improvements.

Historically, Fair Haven had several bed and breakfast establishments. They reported catering to families of students at Green Mountain College. Unfortunately, Green Mountain College closed in 2019. Now, the bed and breakfasts are popular with those enjoying nearby Lake Bomoseen. Fair Haven is a mere fifteen-minute drive from New York, and VT-4 is a key gateway to Vermont for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and western Connecticut. Some

tourists passing through may take note of the stately historic downtown buildings and choose to stay a night.

Fair Haven is currently divided into two sections: the newer part in the northwest which is closer to the US highway, and the historic downtown to the southeast (Figure 4). The Town Plan identifies drawing people from the stores and truck stops near the northwest part of town to the southeast historic downtown as a need.

Fair Haven has a Carnegie Library built in 1905 for \$8,000; it is one of only four Carnegie libraries in Vermont. It is located in the historic downtown.



Figure 4: City map of Fair Haven showing boundaries and services.

TIMELINE

A timeline of events is provided in Table 1 to describe major milestones for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure development and supporting programs in Fair Haven, Vermont.

Table 1: Timeline of major milestone events for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Year	Events
1779	Fair Haven was chartered and settled
2016	Fair Haven completed their most recent Town Plan
2018	On September 16, 2018, an ice cream social was held in The Park to distribute the survey and obtain input on the Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan progress to date
2018	Alternatives were presented to the public in November for the Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan
2019	Green Mountain College in nearby Poultney closed in January of 2019
2019	The Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan was completed in April of 2019
2019	A presentation to the public and Selectboard for the Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study was made on August 13, 2019
2019	The Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study was completed in December of 2019
2020	The Mechanic Street sidewalk project was complete
2020	Alternative 4: Pedestrian-Only Improvements, was endorsed by the Selectboard at their August 11, 2020 meeting
2021	Fair Haven was awarded a Vermont Agency of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian grant

EVOLUTION OF *PLANNING* FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Four plans, discussed next, help to describe how planning within the community relate to the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: the 2016 Town Plan, the 2019 Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan, and the Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study.

2016 TOWN PLAN

The 2016 Town Plan identifies as one of its main goals encouraging visitors to explore and consequently support the community's historic downtown. On the topic of housing, the plan identifies a need to provide opportunities for both youth and seniors; both user groups may prefer to walk or bicycle more. The plan also identifies the Transportation Alternative Program and the Vermont Community Development Program as prospective grants that the community may want to pursue to update its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The plan also noted that Fair Haven was previously an Amtrak stop, which has since moved to Castleton. Within the transportation discussion, the plan notes that the sidewalk system provides access to the post office, library, and the historic downtown. The plan's goal is to support multi-modal transportation with an action to inventory the sidewalks and repair or

replace sidewalks as needed. Other action items include building additional sidewalk and potentially providing bicycle trails, providing accommodations for pedestrians when the Adams Street bridge is replaced and the Depot Street Bridge is repaired, and upgrading the crossing at Main and South Park Place to a “high visibility crosswalk.” The plan states that the Fair Haven Union High School serves students from the five communities of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Orwell, and West Haven and that the high school track may be used by community members to safely walk or run when school is not in session.

The plan states that, “the Town could benefit from downtown transportation funds intended to improve pedestrian and other public safety” and pedestrian accessibility is highlighted within the economic development section of the plan. More specifically, an Economic Development Action Item is listed as, “Consider installing pedestrian-friendly street lighting” in The Park and in the downtown area that “maintains historic integrity while being aesthetically attractive and providing pedestrian safety.”

FAIR HAVEN DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In April of 2019, the community completed the Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan. Fair Haven is identified as the “Slate Center of the Nation,” and a western gateway to Vermont for those from New York. The plan was developed with an interest in both attracting visitors and retaining residents. The plan had three components: 1) a market and retail leakage analysis, 2) a traffic calming study, and 3) a beautification plan.

Placemaking is discussed and the following definition is offered: *“a collaborative process in which people come together to create vital public spaces that bring health, happiness, and social connection to their communities.”* The plan also highlights how improving safety for all modes (walking, biking and driving) can bring benefits to a community and notes that people are attracted to a community when they see other people out and enjoying that same community.

The Park and surrounding buildings are all listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation reflects the Victorian-era architecture found throughout the community, with a concentration in the historic downtown, including buildings that are made of marble (see Marble Mansion Inn, top left photo on cover page). The plan notes the formation of a Fair Haven Revitalization Committee. The town put out a call for interested community members to join and the subsequent committee created a survey to support the planning process. The survey was distributed to business and property owners and community members. Five questions were asked:

- 1) What types of new businesses would you like to see downtown?
- 2) What are your top two thoughts about vehicular and foot traffic in Fair Haven downtown?
- 3) What are your top two thoughts about how you would like Fair Haven Downtown to look?
- 4) Do you shop in downtown Fair Haven?

5) Are you a resident, business owner, or visitor?

Input received favored restaurants and a brewery as the preferred new businesses for downtown. In 2021, a new brewery had just opened (Figure 5).



Figure 5: A newly opened brewery in downtown Fair Haven.

Flashing lights at crosswalks, lighting in The Park, and bicycle lanes were listed as “pedestrian/vehicular traffic concerns.” Regarding Fair Haven’s appearance, input suggested a need to repair sidewalks. A comment highlighted is as follows, *“If we can find a way to make the people of Fair Haven welcome change, we will graduate from the stasis...and flourish. Let’s diversify. Let’s allow change.”*

On September 18, 2018, an ice cream social was held in The Park to distribute the survey and obtain input on the plan. Community members voiced concern for the intersections of 1) Washington Street and North Park Place; 2) North Park Place and Caernarvon Street; and 3) South Park Place and Main Street. They identified The Park, the bus stop at the south end

of The Park, the library, and the monument within the triangle between North Park Place and Main Street as positive, well-functioning areas of the community.

The plan highlighted that both professionals and an aging population are looking for communities where basic services can be found within walking distance of their homes. It also highlights that while sidewalks and crosswalks are provided, the crosswalks are long and the visibility of pedestrians walking across them may be obstructed and that some crosswalk paint may need a refresh. Some sidewalks were also identified as being asphalt, without a curb (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Asphalt sidewalk without a curb.

More specifically, the plan suggested that physical connections to The Park are limited. There is a need for a crosswalk at Liberty Street, where many people are observed crossing the street, but a crosswalk does not currently exist. The plan also identifies that there are not any bicycle facilities within Fair Haven, except for the well-utilized bicycle rack at the elementary school. Bicycles have been tied to trees or just parked (Figure 7).



Figure 7: A bike is parked near a gas station.

The wide roads in Fair Haven are a challenge because they leave pedestrians with long distances where they are exposed to vehicular traffic. However, this extra space also provides an opportunity for changes to the constructed environment (i.e., sidewalks and bike lanes could be provided).

The Plan also expresses concerns about the visibility of pedestrians by motorists using the angled parking throughout the downtown. Similarly, there are concerns that the Maple Valley Transit District vehicle may be obstructing the view of pedestrians using the

crosswalk that provides access to the bus stop. The plan authors suggested moving the bus shelter closer to The Park. Other observations from the plan include:

- Main Street is a high crash segment.
- Parents use the retail store next to the Fair Haven Grade School for dropping off and picking up their children.
- Bicyclists use the sidewalks.
- Tenants and business employees park in the spaces in front of the businesses, as they prefer not to use the rear parking.

Regarding art, the plan suggests that while art is *“often assumed to be linked to class status...by utilizing and displaying art in public spaces, art becomes available and less tied to income as more people participate in enjoying it.”* As such, the plan recommends that art be installed on the facades of some of the buildings. They note that if the art is created by community members, it will create community ownership and pride. For vacant store fronts, art could be installed in the interim. The idea behind the provision of art is that it can encourage visitors to stop and ideally walk around Fair Haven as well as engage the community, hopefully at the pedestrian scale.

The plan encourages the use of pilot projects, to implement ideas, which they proposed could be facilitated by Local Motion, a bicycle and pedestrian advocacy group whose original focus was Burlington, Vermont. The plan also identifies AARP as a potential partner. A bicycle loop around The Park was also suggested. Finally, the plan notes that summer concerts (Figure 8) are a significant asset, and the community should capitalize on these events by attracting more patronage of the businesses.



Figure 8: A summer concert in The Park.

DOWNTOWN BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN STUDY

In December of 2019, the community completed a Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study. As implied by the name, the focus was on the historic downtown portion of the community; it is a scoping study. In addition to a no action alternative, the plan identified four potential alternatives. The first three included some type of provision for bicycles. These alternatives were not preferred by the public and Selectboard based on concerns with the loss of parking spaces, winter maintenance, and cost. The fourth one, preferred by the public and Selectboard, focused on pedestrian movements and was ultimately endorsed by the Selectboard. The estimated cost is \$472,270. Alternative 4 improves the sidewalks and crosswalks and adds curb extensions and curbed islands. It was estimated that the alternative would only reduce the number of parking spaces from 125 to 120 spaces. The historic downtown's current sidewalks are "exposed to multiple potential conflict points," due to the significant length of the existing crosswalks (fifty feet, ninety feet, and one hundred and fifty feet in length).

Other issues include: the park-and-ride is not well-marked; two locations where the sidewalk is bituminous (asphalt) and does not have curbs (Figure 6); and no bicycle facilities in the project area. The plan also pointed out that there was a bus shelter that serviced the Marble Valley Regional Transit District's Rutland to Fair Haven/Poultney route.

As a part of the project, the consultants reviewed the existing crash data. While the section in the project area was on a high crash location (HCL) list based on 2012-2016 data, the plan highlighted that there were no pedestrian crashes. The plan also discusses a \$25,000 commitment that the Concert in the Park Committee had made towards installing lights in The Park. Approximately six hundred people attend this concert series, many from outside of Fair Haven.

The notes from the August 13, 2019, Selectboard Meeting, which was included in the Plan Appendix, discussed addressing grade school sidewalk needs and painting crosswalks. It also expressed interest in providing bicycle helmets to children. The Appendix also included notes from the July 14, 2020, Selectboard meeting, noting that the Mechanic Street sidewalk project was finished that same day and cost \$200,000 less than was budgeted and had four change orders. The notes reported that Fair Haven had sold some of the slate sidewalk. Concerns were discussed regarding plowing around curb extensions. The notes also identified that thirty-two speeding tickets had been issued on South Main Street. Finally, like the 2019 notes, in response to the beginning of the school year, the notes reported that Fair Haven would repaint the crosswalks.

EXISTING BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Table 2 summarizes bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure identified across all case study communities, noting which ones were observed while on-site in Fair Haven, Vermont.

Table 2: Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure found across all case study communities, noting those found in Fair Haven.

Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Infrastructure in Case Study Communities	Presence in Fair Haven
Bicycle Lane	
Bike Rack	X
Shared Lane Markings	
Side Path	
Defined Bike Route (by signage)	
Multi-Use Pathway	X
Trail (soft surface)	
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Crossing	
Mid-Block Crossing	X
Crosswalk	X
Sidewalks	X
Bridges that enable walking or biking	
Underpasses that enable walking or biking	
Parklet	
Benches	
Repair Station/Air Pump	
Speed Bump/Speed Table	X
Speed Feedback Sign – Permanent	
Speed Feedback Sign – Portable	X
Signage	
<i>Bike/Ped Crossing Sign with light emitting diode (LED) lights</i>	
<i>Bicycle May Use Full Lane</i>	
<i>Share the Road</i>	
<i>State Law, Yield/Stop for Pedestrian in Crosswalk</i>	
<i>Steep Grade</i>	
<i>Drive Slow in Residential Areas/Please Slow Down</i>	
<i>Traffic Calming Area</i>	
<i>Weight Limitations</i>	
<i>Interpretative/ Wayfinding Information</i>	
<i>Walking Routes</i>	
<i>Entertainment District</i>	

Traveling northbound on VT-4A/VT-22A (Main Street) through town, one encounters the mural painted on the building at the intersection with River Street (#1 on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Map found in Figure 11). As highlighted in the Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan, this enables art to be enjoyed by all community-members. It also creates a sense of place for the community. Also identified in both plans, crosswalks are long, but well-marked in the historic downtown (#2 in Figure 11). However, these existing facilities are set to be upgraded in the near future, as the community has received funding from the Vermont Agency of Transportation to add curb extensions and new sidewalks, enhance existing sidewalks, and add pedestrian islands. This project is expected to bring clarity regarding vehicular paths and reduce a pedestrian's exposure to vehicular traffic. Overall, it will improve the safety of downtown Fair Haven.

The Park is a source of pride for the community (#3 in Figure 11). As discussed above, music and a farmer's market are both hosted in The Park. A large park-and-ride (#4 in Figure 11) adjacent to The Park serves as access to a transit stop and a starting point for long distance, recreational bicyclists (Figure 9). These bicyclists, along with children, enjoy low-volume local roads like Caernarvon Street.

The history of the community is well-reflected in the infrastructure including Victorian architecture and slate sidewalks (#5 in Figure 11). A Vermont Agency of Transportation funded project installed sidewalk along Mechanic Street to provide space for Fair Haven students to walk to the high school (#6 in Figure 11). It was reportedly an unpopular project when it was installed. However, after the installation, parents of the students ended up thanking the Town of Fair Haven for installing the sidewalk. The community's grade school is also located in the downtown core; a well-utilized, long bicycle rack is located at the front of the school (#7 in Figure 11).



Figure 9: Starting point at The Park for long distance, recreational bicyclists.

While the 2019 planning documents only identified the bicycle rack at the grade school, in August of 2021, bicycle racks are present at a business in downtown Fair Haven, next to the library's main entrance, and at the high school (Figure 10).

Downtown



Library



High School



Figure 10: Bike racks found in downtown Fair Haven, the library, and at the high school.

A curb extension is provided at the crosswalk that accesses the grade school (#8 in Figure 11). A portable speed feedback sign (#9 in Figure 11) was located on one of the main arterials in the community. An asphalt multi-use trail provides a connection from the Appletree Apartments to a bus shelter (#10 in Figure 11).

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

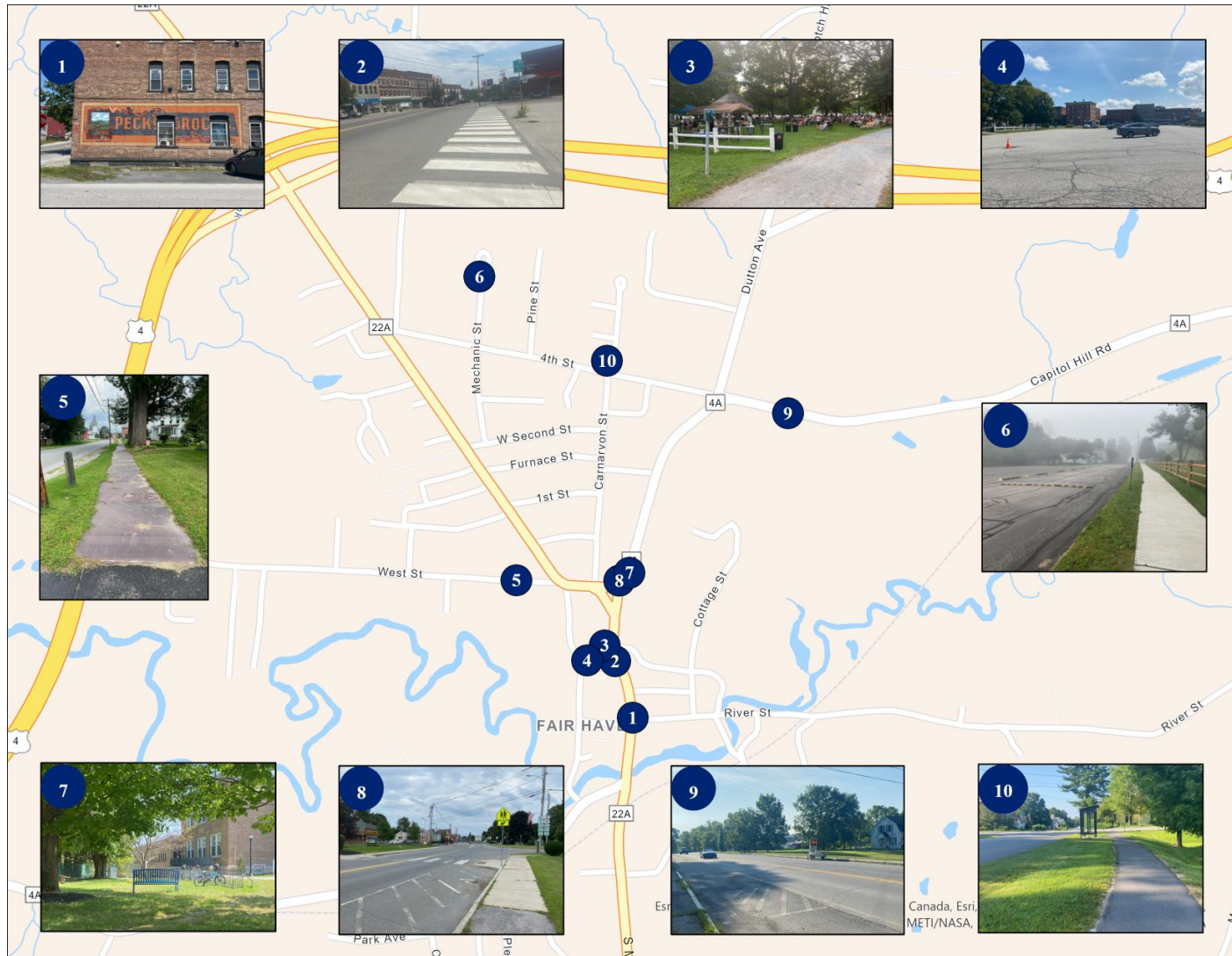


Figure 11: Fair Haven, Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Map.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Several supporting programs were identified across multiple case studies and are shown in Table 3. Two examples were uncovered as related to Fair Haven that were observed while on-site or documented in reports: a mural and a pilot project. For the mural, see #1 in Figure 11.

Table 3: Bicycle and pedestrian supporting programs in case study communities, noting those found in Fair Haven.

Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Supporting Programs in Case Study Communities	Presence in Fair Haven
Demonstration/Pilot Projects	X
Art Walks/Historical Walk/Children's Walk/Health Walk	
Sculpture(s)/Statue(s)	
Mural(s)	X
Little Free Library	

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission reported assisting Fair Haven with piloting a pop-up park. The intent was to allow residents of Fair Haven to better understand treatments that may make the historic downtown more pedestrian-friendly.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the Fair Haven Grade School reportedly had a bikeshare program. Unfortunately, no additional information is known.

Two groups were identified as working to make the community more walkable. The Town of Fair Haven's Economic Development Committee reportedly held an interest in improving the walkability of downtown for economic considerations. There is also reportedly a small, more independent committee of "elderly ladies" that are advocates for pedestrian-level street lighting and additional lighting in the center of the historic downtown.

PARTNERSHIPS TO PLAN & IMPLEMENT BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Partnerships are important in planning and implementation for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, especially in small, rural areas. In Fair Haven, partnerships with two entities have been beneficial: the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

Fair Haven has benefitted from support from the Vermont Agency of Transportation with respect to funding infrastructure improvements (i.e. Mechanic Street and the 2021 grant award).

Fair Haven's July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020, Annual Report highlighted the on-going cooperation between the community and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

Specifically related to walking and bicycling, the Rutland Regional Planning Commission assisted the community with applying for a grant from the Vermont Agency of Transportation to upgrade the sidewalks in the downtown core. The Rutland Regional Planning Commission has a unique understanding of Fair Haven, as one of its employees grew up there.

FUNDING FOR BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Fair Haven has leveraged three main funding sources: its own capital funding, Vermont Agency of Transportation grants (i.e. Transportation Alternative Program), Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) program grants, and an AARP grant. They also reported applying for, but did not receive, one additional unknown grant.

Fair Haven reports including in its capital plan a budget to repaint the crosswalks once a year as well as repair any broken streetlights. The Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study was paid for by Fair Haven and cost \$18,569.80.

A 2018 Vermont Agency of Transportation grant provided funding to construct the sidewalks along Mechanic Street, which provides access to the Fair Haven Union High School. A 2019 Transportation Alternative Program grant provided funding for the park-and-ride. Fair Haven is a 2021 recipient of funding from the Vermont Agency of Transportation to improve safety in the historic downtown. The project is set to add curb extensions, sidewalks, pedestrian islands, and to enhance existing sidewalks.

The Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan was paid for by a FY18 Vermont Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) program. The MPG program *“encourages and supports planning and revitalization for local municipalities in Vermont.”* The program awards funding annually and is administered by the State of Vermont’s Agency of Commerce and Community Development. In addition, Fair Haven had investigated applying for Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) grants to pay for the sidewalk improvements identified in the Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study.

In 2020, Fair Haven was awarded a grant from AARP Vermont to support their placemaking efforts.

The Downtown Bicycle & Pedestrian Study indicated that Fair Haven had applied for a grant that would have been used to install lights in The Park but did not receive it.

LESSONS LEARNED

While both adults and children were observed bicycling in Fair Haven, the community seems more comfortable with designing for the walkability of the community. The Town of Fair Haven has been successful in funding sidewalk improvements, with the Mechanic Street improvement already implemented and improvements in downtown Fair Haven yet

to come. The Town of Fair Haven received some pushback for the first installation along Mechanic Street, but ultimately some community-members found value in the walking infrastructure once it was installed. Therefore, it appears that Fair Haven is taking such improvements incrementally.

Fair Haven has many placemaking assets that the community can more fully capitalize on including the grand historic buildings, a large centralized green space, and at least one mural. As placemaking can encourage walking and bicycling, this is a lesson that can be applied in other peer communities.

THE FUTURE OF BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

The future for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in Fair Haven is bright. With many of the plans (discussed previously) only completed in 2019 and funding allocated in 2021, it is expected that the infrastructure for walking and bicycling will change soon as projects are implemented. One focus that the community reported is better connecting the downtown with the Fair Haven Grade School.

Lastly, The Rutland Regional Planning Commission is working to develop a Rutland Walk Bike Council. The Council is planned to be at the county level and would incorporate representatives from Fair Haven. The Council is expected to primarily focus on planning; however, there is a possibility that the Council may engage in some advocacy and educational efforts as well.

KEY POINTS

The following are key points learned from this case study:

1. Start small. Small improvements can help to allow residents to experience change.
2. Engage the community in planning for improvements. The first plan was identified as being much more successful, and it was reported being because it was led by community members who helped to design and distribute a survey to their fellow residents.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO APPLY IN OTHER SMALL COMMUNITIES

Fair Haven is a small, rural community. The community reported much more success with the first plan created for the downtown, which engaged community members through the development of a community-led committee and presented improvements that proposed

less drastic improvements to the streetscape. Therefore, it is recommended to engage community members that can be advocates for the planning process.

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