

KENT STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
VILLAGE CENTER
KENT, CONNECTICUT



MMI #5011-02
October 21, 2013

Prepared for:

Town of Kent
41 Kent Green Blvd
Kent, Connecticut 06757

Prepared by:

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INTRODUCTION

A number of merchants in the Town of Kent (the Town) met informally and identified the need to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety and to enhance the appearance of the Village Center. As a first official step to address the concerns of the business community, the Board of Selectmen appointed a committee representing various stakeholder interests to undertake a master plan for the village streetscape improvements. Using a planning grant from Connecticut Main Street, the Town commissioned Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) to:

- Analyze the existing pedestrian and vehicular conditions in the Village Center
- Prepare alternative improvement concepts to address the identified issues, including developing a pallet of treatments for consideration by the Town
- Prepare a final conceptual streetscape plan for the Village Center, including potential phasing of the improvements and an opinion of probable construction costs

As part of this effort, the committee conducted three public meetings: the first to seek general comments and opinions about the issues facing the village; the second to review alternative treatments to improve the Village Center; and the final meeting to present the conceptual streetscape plan. The findings of the study are summarized herein.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Village Center in Kent is bisected by US Route 7 and State Route 341. Route 7 extends from Interstate 95 in Norwalk to the Canadian border in Vermont. While sections of Route 7 southerly of Kent are limited-access highway or four-lane median-divided highway, the section through Kent is a two-lane road classified as a minor arterial that carries approximately 5,000 vehicles per day (2011) through the Village Center. Route 341 is a two-lane collector road carrying 3,200 vehicles in an east/west direction through Kent eventually connecting to the state highway system in Dutchess County, New York. The Route 7-341 intersection is signal controlled.

South Commons to the Route 7-341 Intersection

The project area for this study begins in the vicinity of Kent Greenhouses and South Commons Road approximately 1,400 feet south of the Route 7/341 intersection and extends to the vicinity of the Congregational Church located approximately 2,800 feet north of the intersection for a total distance on Route 7 of 4,200 feet. The project area along Route 341 begins at the Maple Street Extension and extends through the Route 7 intersection to the bridge over the Housatonic River, a distance of approximately 2,300 feet. (Fig. 1)

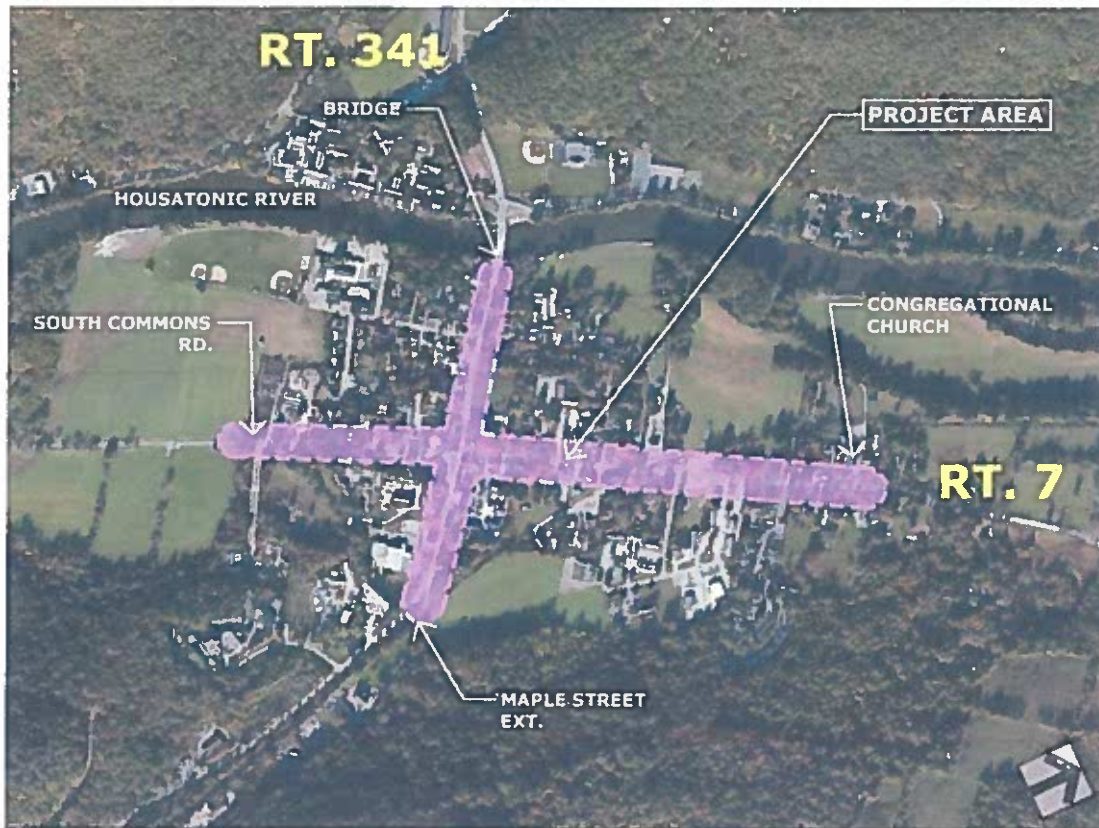


Figure 1: Project Area

Main Street (Route 7) approaching the Village Center from the south has two 12.5-foot lanes with very narrow shoulders. Closer to the intersection, the pavement is slightly wider. There is a five-foot sidewalk in good condition on the east side of the street up to the intersection with Route 341 and there is a narrow grass strip between the street and the sidewalk. (Fig. 2 and 3)

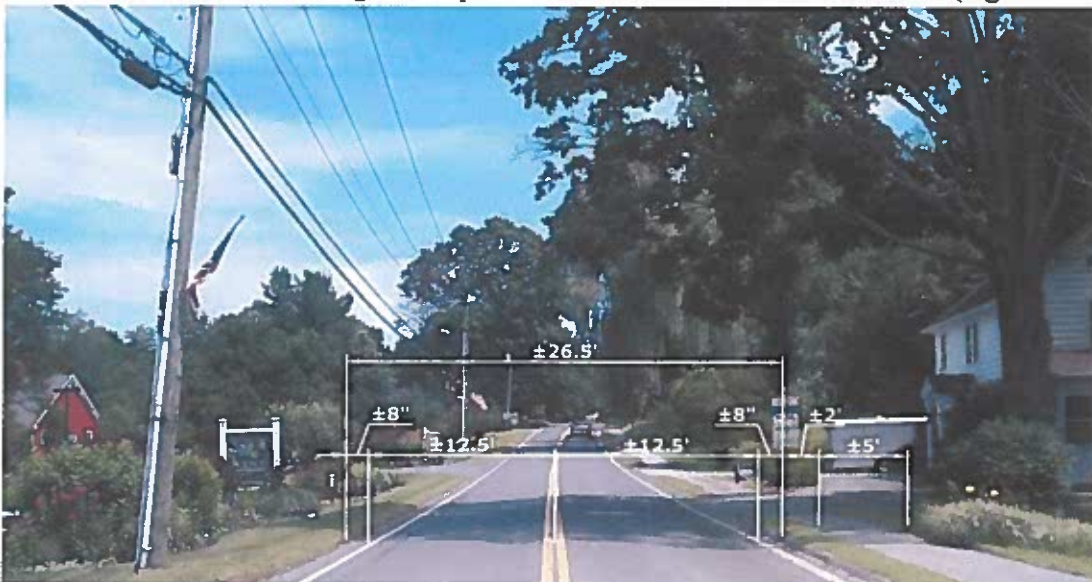


Figure 2: Route 7 at South Commons Drive

There is a short section of sidewalk having a width of six feet on the west side of the street south of the intersection that is in good condition near the intersection, but fair condition farther away from the intersection. Based on Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) maps, the right-of-way throughout the Village Center has a width of 50 feet. The significant issues from a pedestrian perspective in this section of the project area are the wide driveways to the gas station, where the sidewalk is poorly defined, and the reported high speeds approaching the intersection.

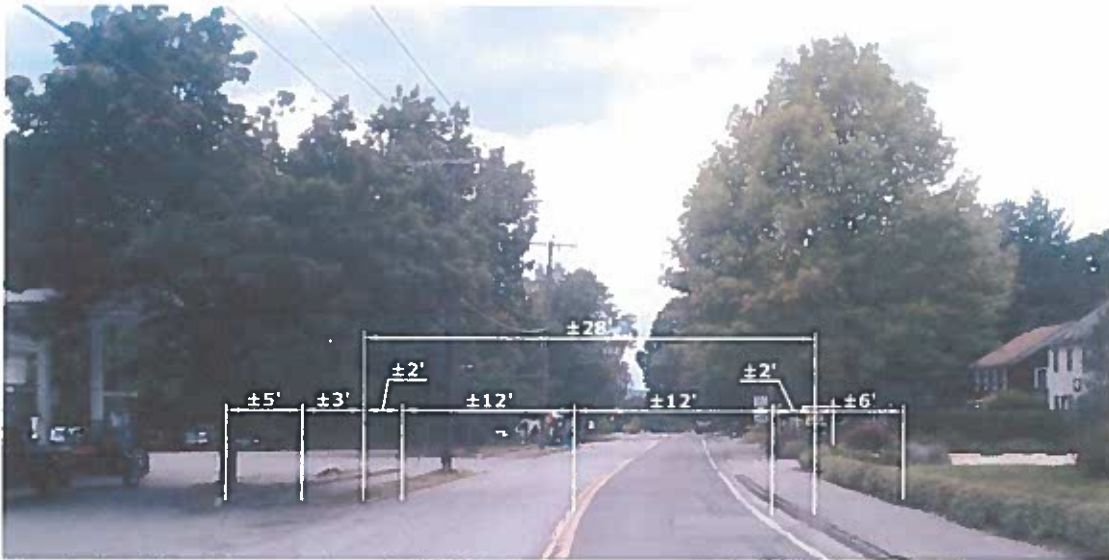


Figure 3: Route 7 south of Route 341 intersection

Village Core

The segment of Main Street north of the intersection to the railroad tracks is considered to be the core of the Village Center where the character is decidedly different from segments to the south and north. Here, the travel lanes have a width of approximately 15 feet with parking on both sides of the street. There are sidewalks on both sides of the street varying in width from six to ten feet. (Fig. 4)



Figure 4: Route 7 in the Village core

It appears that the sidewalks are partially within the right-of-way and partially on private property, although one would not recognize the difference. Most of the sidewalk is bituminous concrete, although there are a variety of other surface materials presumably installed by the adjacent property owner. The curbs are a mix of bituminous concrete, stone, and other materials, mostly in poor condition. Most of the vegetation appears to be on private property. Utility poles are generally on the east side of the street with some interfering with pedestrian activity when located in the sidewalk. The street lights are standard cobra head fixtures. (Fig. 5)

In addition to the iconic monument at the intersection of Route 7 and 341, what defines this segment of the Village Center are the number of retail establishments particularly on the east side of the street where the buildings are close to the sidewalk and the more residential character on the west side, although many buildings have been converted to non-residential uses. (Fig. 6, 7, and 8)



Figure 5: Bituminous concrete sidewalk in Village core



Figure 6: Monument at Route 7/341 intersection



Figure 7: Landscape treatment on west side of street



Figure 8: Landscape treatment between sidewalk and street

The public spaces are separated from the private sitting and outdoor dining areas with changes in pavement materials, fences, low plant material, and slight (and dangerous) changes in elevation. (Fig. 9 and 10)



Figure 9: Curb separating sidewalk from outdoor dining

Clearly, the majority of the pedestrian activity is in this segment of Main Street.



Figure 10: Hedge and wall separating sidewalk from outdoor dining

North Transition Area

The northerly segment of Main Street extending from the railroad tracks to the Congregational Church also has a different character. In this segment, the street has two 13-foot lanes with shoulders that vary from 3.5 feet to five feet in width. There is a five-foot sidewalk on the east side, a part of which is in poor condition as a result of recent utility construction. Vehicle speeds entering the village from the north are reported to be high, similar to the approach from the south. (Fig. 11 and 12)



Figure 11: Railroad crossing



Figure 12: Route 7 in the vicinity of Kent Green

What makes this segment different are the residential uses on the west side of the street and the lower density of uses that are set back from the street on the east side of the street, exemplified by the Kent Green development. Pedestrian activity in this segment is lower than elsewhere in the Village Center. However, there is some vacant land in this segment that could be developed close to the street to promote pedestrian activity north of the railroad tracks.



Figure 13: Temporary sidewalk repair at Kent Green

Route 341

Maple Street (Route 341) has a fairly consistent width of pavement throughout the project area. It has two lanes between 10 and 11 feet wide. The east segment has a sidewalk on the north side separated from the travel lane by a three-foot shoulder and a three-foot grass planting strip. On the south side, there is a sidewalk beginning at Swift's Lane extending the intersection at Main Street. (Fig. 14)



Figure 14: Route 341 east of Route 7

On the west segment, there are bituminous concrete sidewalks on both sides of the street. The most significant issue in this segment is the lack of parking, particularly in the vicinity of the Catholic Church, where the narrow width of the travel lane and shoulders precludes on-street parking. The second issue is the turning movements onto Elizabeth Street, particularly for larger vehicles servicing school. (Fig. 15)



Figure 15: Route 341 west of Route 7

Streetscape Elements

The Village Center is fortunate to have many features that contribute to its unique character. The most obvious are the large metal structures that are strategically placed and highly visible to the motorist and the pedestrian. The sculptures certainly set Kent apart from any other community along the Route 7 corridor. (Fig. 16)



Figure 16: Metal sculptures as part of the existing streetscape

The second significant element is number of small, intimate spaces for pedestrians to gather. Whether the space is part of a commercial establishment for outdoor dining or a group of benches on a public lawn, these spaces are important to the life of the Village Center. In fact, as many as 100 motorcyclists regularly gather on weekends in the Village Center. (Fig. 17)



Figure 17: Intimate gathering spaces in existing streetscape

The signage in the Village Center is fairly consistent. While not uniform, the scale, style, and materials, together with landscape and illumination, are appropriate to the character of the Village Center. (Fig. 18)

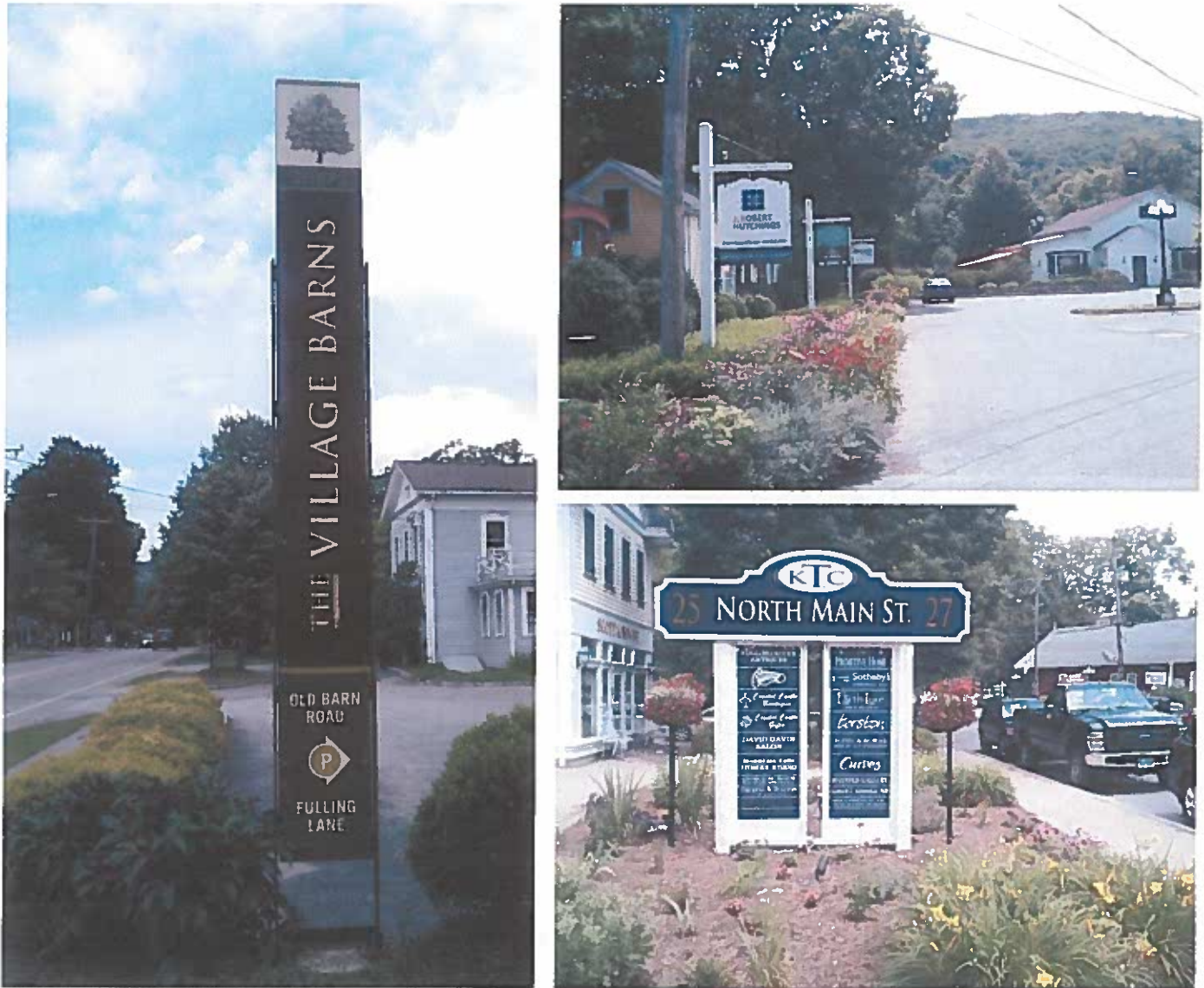


Figure 18: Existing signage in Village Center

On the other hand, the lighting of the street is limited to the standard cobra head fixtures mounted on wood utility poles. Pedestrian scale fixtures are sparse and lack uniformity. (Fig. 19)



Figure 19: Existing lighting in Village Center

Summary of Existing Conditions

The words that best characterize the Village Center are:

- Rural
- Historic
- Scenic
- Eclectic
- Artistic

However, in order to enhance the Village Center, consideration should be given to the following:

- Define the improvement areas, recognizing that the Village Center has different segments and that treatments in the core can be different from the transition areas approaching the Village Center from the north and south and on Route 341
- Expand the sidewalks into areas that lack adequate pedestrian routes

- Clearly define the pedestrian routes with surface materials that are consistent throughout the Village Center
- Define the outdoor gathering spaces, distinguishing them with materials that are different from the sidewalks
- Provide improved connections between the sidewalks and the parking areas
- Improve pedestrian safety at the railroad crossing
- Provide additional crosswalks with improved surface treatments at strategic locations
- Provide an improved treatment of the Route 7-341 intersection (Fig. 20)

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

At the outset of the study, the project committee conducted a public forum to solicit comments from a variety of stakeholders including public officials, retail merchants, residents living in the project area, and the public at-large. The participants were asked to identify positive and negative attributes of the Village Center and to express their vision for what the Village Center could be in the future.

On the positive side of the equation, the consensus is that the Village Center has a walkable core that is desirable with its architectural variety and the diversity of retail establishments. The on-street parking is convenient and serves as a buffer from the through traffic. Public art, mature trees on the west side of Main Street, and the landscaping of individual properties add to the existing quality of the Village Center.

On the negative side, the consensus is that the speed of vehicles, particularly those approaching from the north and south, together with motorists not yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks adversely affects pedestrian safety. In addition the asphalt sidewalks, the unevenness of the walks, the utility poles in the sidewalks, and the sightlines at the crosswalks all detract from the pedestrian sidewalks. Finally, the railroad crossing seems to signify the end of the village which discourages pedestrians from walking to Kent Green retail and office area.

The menu of desires for the Village Center streetscape improvements include:

- Traffic calming at both ends of Main Street
- Crosswalks in appropriate locations
- Consistent sidewalks constructed with practical materials
- Additional street trees
- Wayfinding signage
- Clearly defined access to businesses
- Accommodation for bicycles

ALTERNATIVE DESIGN TREATMENTS

The second group of tasks in the study process involved the exploration of alternative treatments to address the identified problems and to meet the expressed desires of the stakeholders. The alternative treatments were presented and discussed at a second community meeting.

Village Core

Two different alternatives were examined for Main Street, both designed to reduce the width of the travel lanes ("road diet"), expand the sidewalks providing a consistent width throughout, and consider pedestrian scale lighting. The difference between the two alternatives would be the installation of a flush median strip to calm traffic and define the travel lanes. In both alternatives, the goal is to improve pedestrian safety through traffic calming. (Fig. 21 and 22)

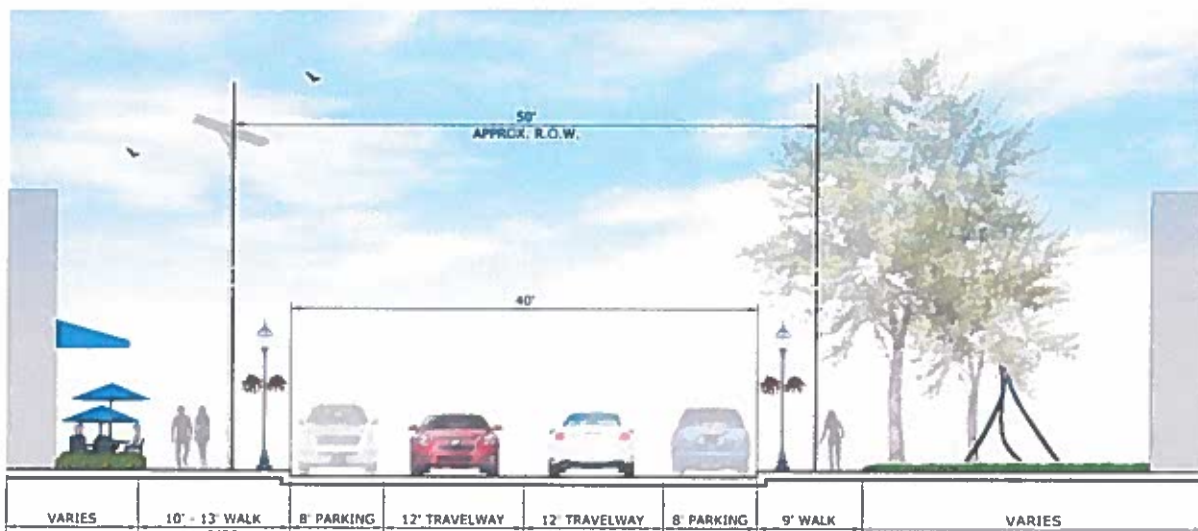


Figure 21: Street cross-section in Village core

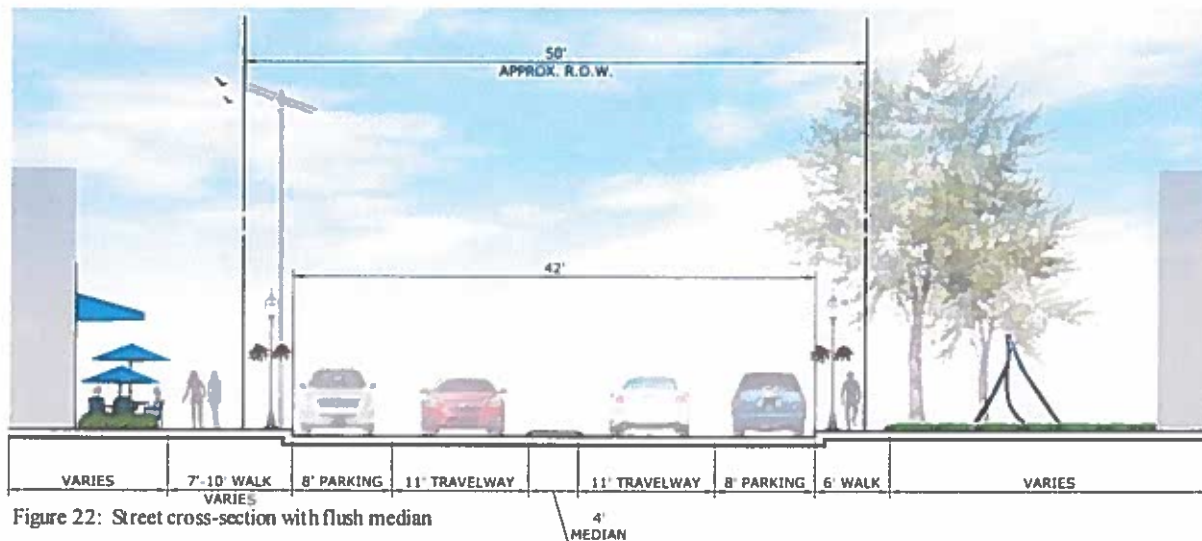


Figure 22: Street cross-section with flush median

Common to both alternatives are curb extensions ("bump-outs"), either raised or flush with the street pavement. However, the impact on the number of parking spaces needs to be evaluated. (Fig. 23)

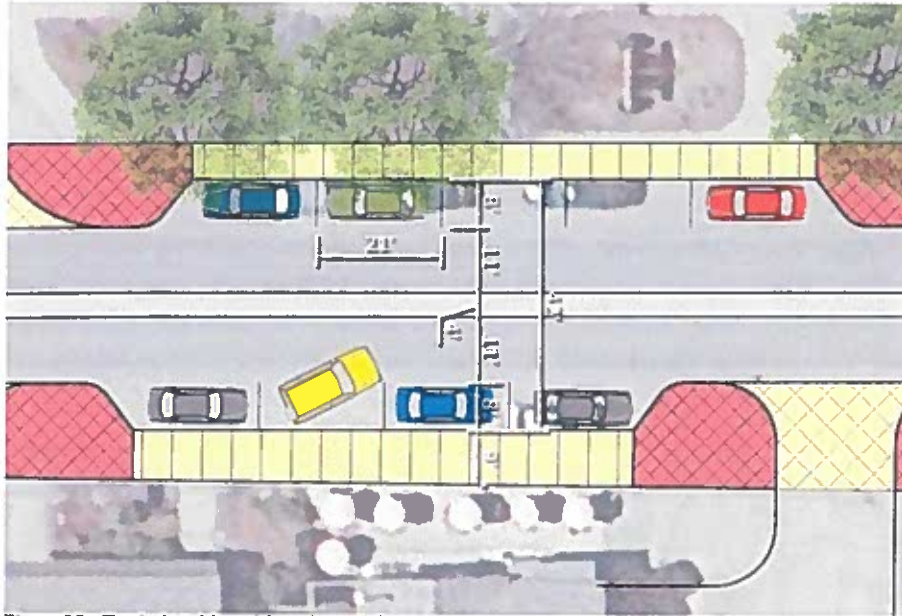


Figure 23: Typical parking with curb extension

Immediately to the south of the Village Center, the treatment could be slightly different adjacent to the service station. In this location, parking should be prohibited, as it is today, given the proximity to the intersection. However, narrowing the travel lanes, widening the sidewalk (particularly at the intersection), and introducing street trees would be appropriate. (Fig. 24)

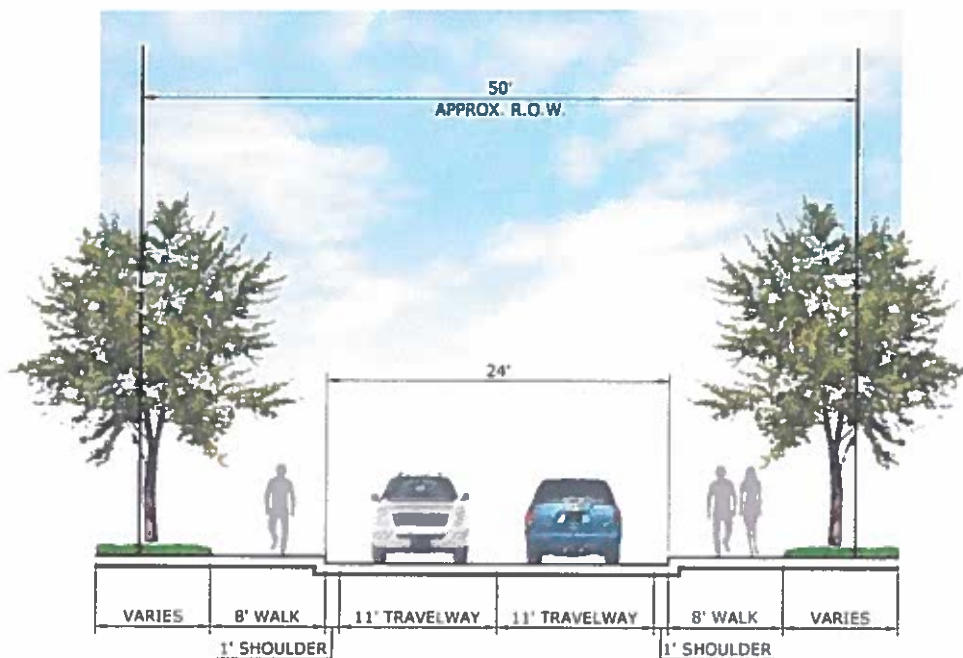


Figure 24: Typical street cross-section south of Village core

Route 7 South Transition

In order to reduce speeds approaching the Village Center from the south, consideration to reducing the width of the road or installing a flush median utilizing a different pavement texture would be appropriate. At the same time, the sidewalk could be extended on the west side and trees planted along the sidewalk, recognizing that there are overhead wires on the west side. (Fig. 25)

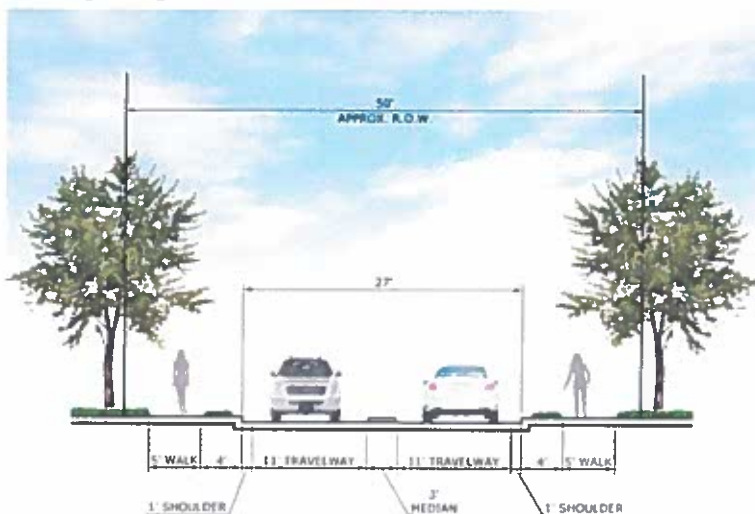


Figure 25: Typical cross-section at south entry to Village Center

Route 7 North Transition

Approaching the Village Center from the north, the road should be narrowed in order to reduce speed. In addition, sidewalks should be extended either on one or both sides. Consideration may be given to introducing a gateway treatment that could include a unique sculpture similar to those found elsewhere in the Village Center. Street trees and other landscape improvements would also be appropriate in this area. (Fig. 26)

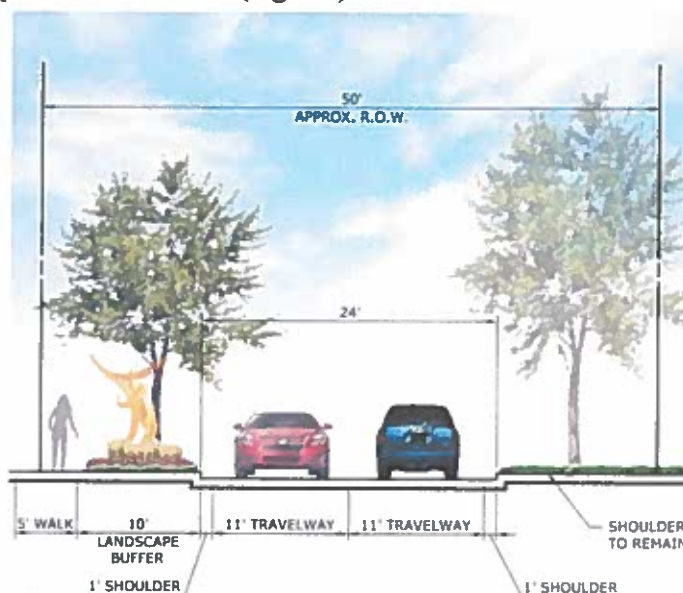


Figure 26: Typical cross-section at north entry to Village Center

Route 341

Similar to Route 7, the width of Route 341 approaching the Village Center from the east can be narrowed with sidewalks extended on both sides. Street trees could be introduced into the landscaped shoulder. As an alternative to narrowing the travel lanes, a flush median could be utilized to reduce speeds in these areas. (Fig. 27)

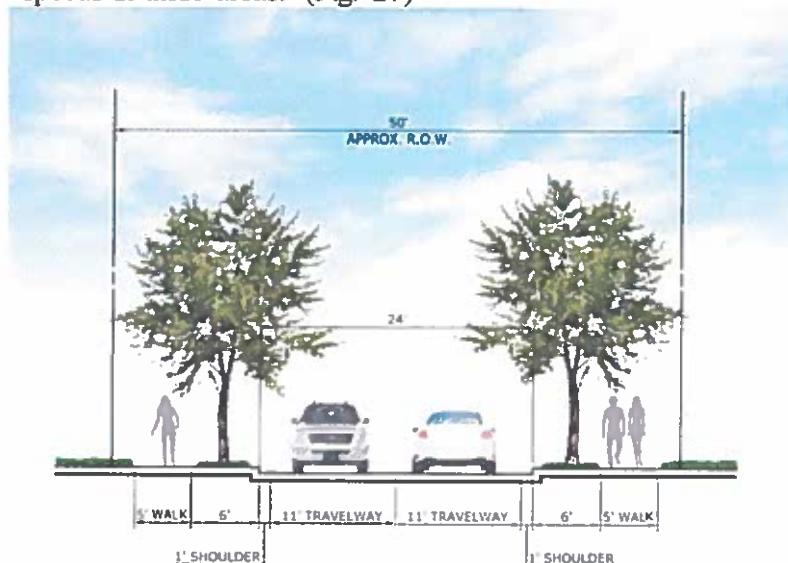


Figure 27: Typical cross-section on Route 341

Railroad Crossing

Even though the use of the railroad is limited, it will be important to provide a simple, clear, safe, and effective treatment of the tracks in order to reduce the perception that the railroad is the end of the core of the Village Center. In order to accomplish this objective, the sidewalk needs to be clearly distinguished from the street using contrasting surface materials, bollards, fencing, and landscaping. Warning strips will provide visual and tactile cues to the potential hazard and appropriate signage should be introduced. Finally, the sidewalk should be extended past the Five and Drum restaurant on the west side of the street and to the north end of Kent Village on the east side. (Fig. 28)



Figure 28: Treatment at railroad crossing

Paving Materials

There are a wide range of materials that can be used to enhance the appearance of the streetscape. In choosing the material that is best for the Village Center, consideration should be given to the durability of the material, the ease of maintenance, the aesthetic quality and compatibility with the existing character of the Village center and, finally, to the cost. As part of this study, the palette of materials that was considered included:

Material: Imprinted Asphalt Recommended Application: Intersections, Crosswalks, Flush Medians



Figure 29

Mat: Concrete Rec. App: Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Accent Areas, Intersections, Curbs



Figure 30

Mat: Concrete Pavers Rec. App: Sidewalks, Amenity Strips, Crosswalks, Intersections, Accent Areas



Figure 31

Mat: Brick Pavers Rec. App: Sidewalks, Amenity Strips, Accent Areas, Crosswalks



Figure 32

Mat: Granite Pavers Rec. App: Sidewalks, Amenity Strips, Accent Areas, Crosswalks, Curbs, Flush Median



Figure 33

Mat: Bluestone Rec. App: Sidewalks, Amenity Strips, Accent Areas

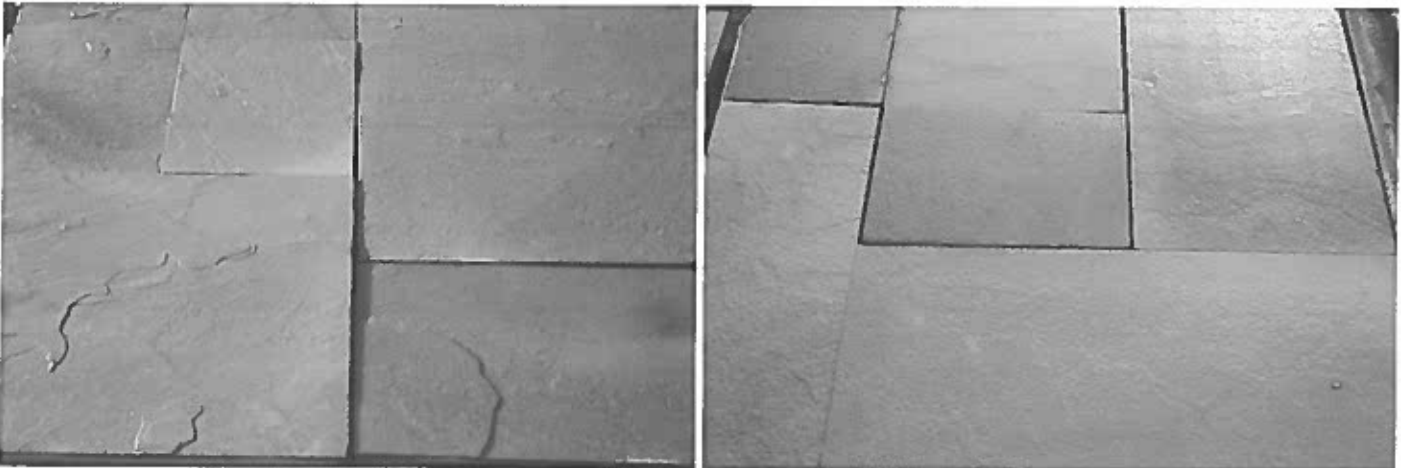


Figure 34

Mat: Quartzite

Rec. App: Sidewalks, Amenity Strips, Accent Areas



Figure 35

STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Subsequent to the second community meeting, the Streetscape Committee reviewed the alternative treatments and the palette of materials. In addition, the consultant reviewed the alternatives with representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) District 4. The general design principles recommended for the Village Center address traffic calming and safety along with streetscape materials. Specific recommendations are made for the Village core, the transition areas on Route 7, and for Route 341.

Traffic Calming and Safety Improvements

- Reduce the width of travel lanes and shoulders in order to reduce the traffic speed in the Village Center, particularly on the approaches to the Village center. The widths of the travel lanes should be reduced to 11-12 feet. This is consistent with the guidance provided by the CTDOT.
- Outside the Village core, provide shoulders having a width of four feet wherever possible, consistent with the guidance from the CTDOT. The shoulders will improve the safety of bicyclists.
- Use flush curb extensions in the Village core to define on-street parking.
- Relocate existing crosswalks where appropriate and add new crosswalks where needed.
- Provide gateway treatments utilizing tapered lanes and landscaping at the entrances to the Village Center.

Streetscape Materials

- Cast-in-place concrete will be used as the primary material for sidewalks. Changes in the scoring pattern should be utilized to identify amenity strips and accent areas. (Fig. 36)

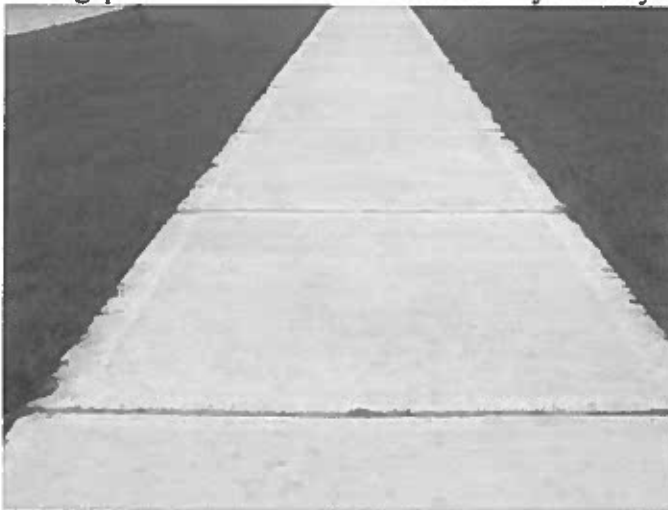


Figure 36: Brooke-finished concrete sidewalk

- Granite will be used for all curbs. (Fig. 37)

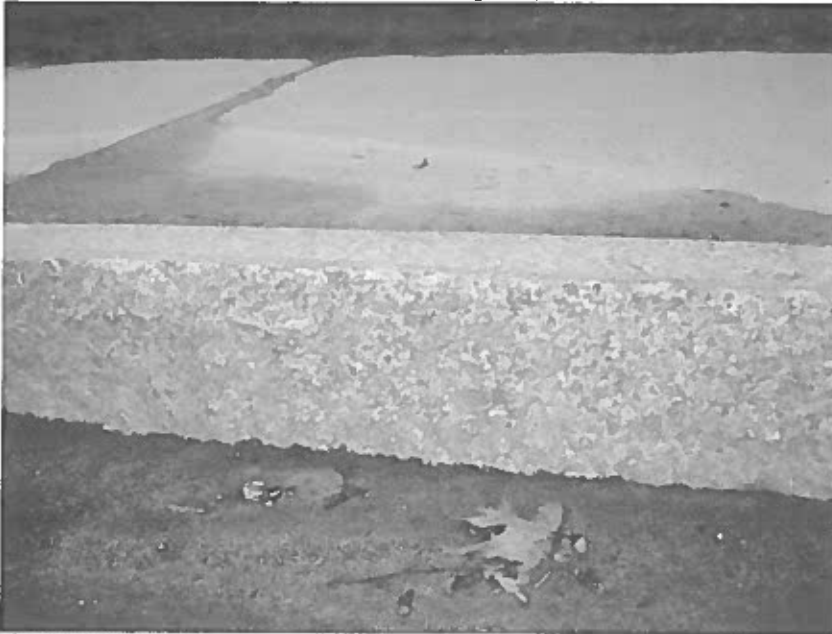


Figure 37: Granite curb

- Stamped and imprinted asphalt will be used for flush curb extensions and in-road gateway treatments. (Fig. 38)



Figure 38: Stamped concrete curb extensions

- Painted pavement markings will be used for crosswalks and lane markings.

- If pedestrian lighting is to be installed, LED fixtures with full cutoffs will be used. (Fig. 39)



Figure 39: Alternative pedestrian lighting

- Conduit and handholes should be installed along the entire length of the project to allow for future illumination and other utility modifications.

Village Core Streetscape

- Narrow the travel lanes to 11 feet with on-street parking on both sides of the street. (Fig. 40)

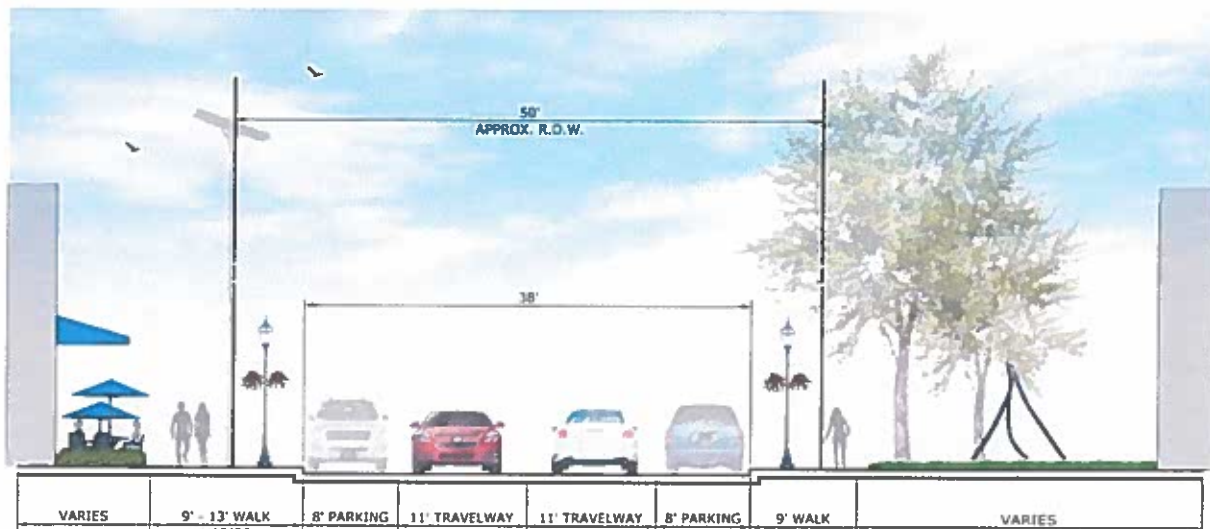


Figure 40: Recommended street cross-section in Village core

- Increase the width of the sidewalks to nine to 13 feet on the east side and nine feet on the west side. This will allow for the installation of pedestrian lights in the future and improve pedestrian safety along the sidewalk.

- Install flush curb extensions instead of raised extensions to facilitate snow removal.
- Reduce the width of curb cuts in cooperation with private property owners.
- Delineate parking stalls and utilize wide painted lines to delineate the end of the parking area.
- Adjust the location of crosswalks as necessary.
- Extend on-street parking and sidewalks to the Kent Green shopping area. Parking should be on the east side of the street only north of the railroad tracks.
- Extend the sidewalk on the west side of the street to the parking lot of the Fife and Drum restaurant and install a crosswalk at Kent Green Boulevard.

Transition Areas (Fig. 41)

- Taper the width of the travel lanes to 11 feet north and south of the Village Center and continue the reduced lane to the Village core.

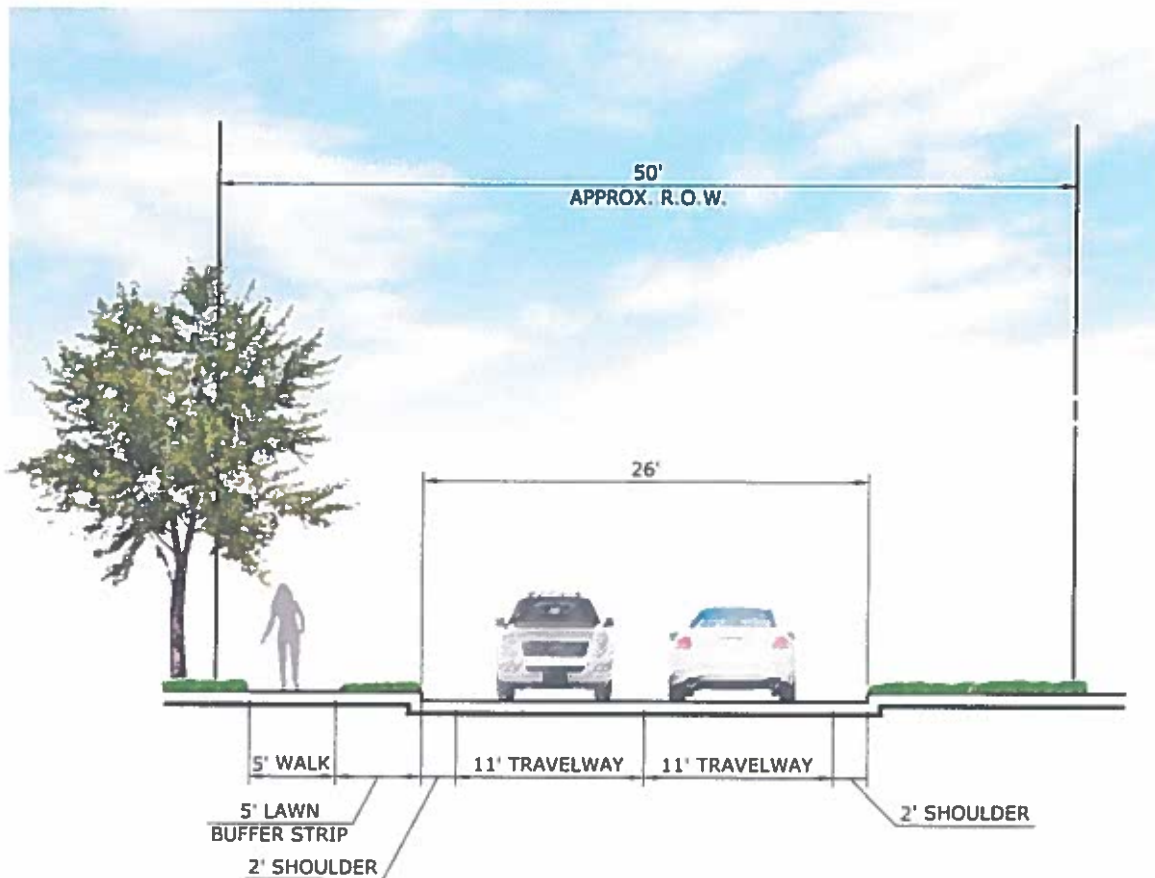


Figure 41: Recommended street cross-section at entries to Village Center

- Install a sidewalk and landscaping on the east side of the street to the vicinity opposite the Congregational Church.
- Work with the CTDOT to reduce the posted speed limit approaching the Village Center.
- Install sidewalks and landscaping south of the Route 7-341 intersection.
- Work with the owner of the service station to reduce the width and number of curb cuts.

Route 341 (Fig. 42 and 43)

- Reduce the width of the travel lanes to 11 feet and provide a four-foot shoulder.
- Install a five-foot sidewalk with a landscape strip on both sides of the street east of the intersection. The sidewalk should extend to the Maple Street Extension.

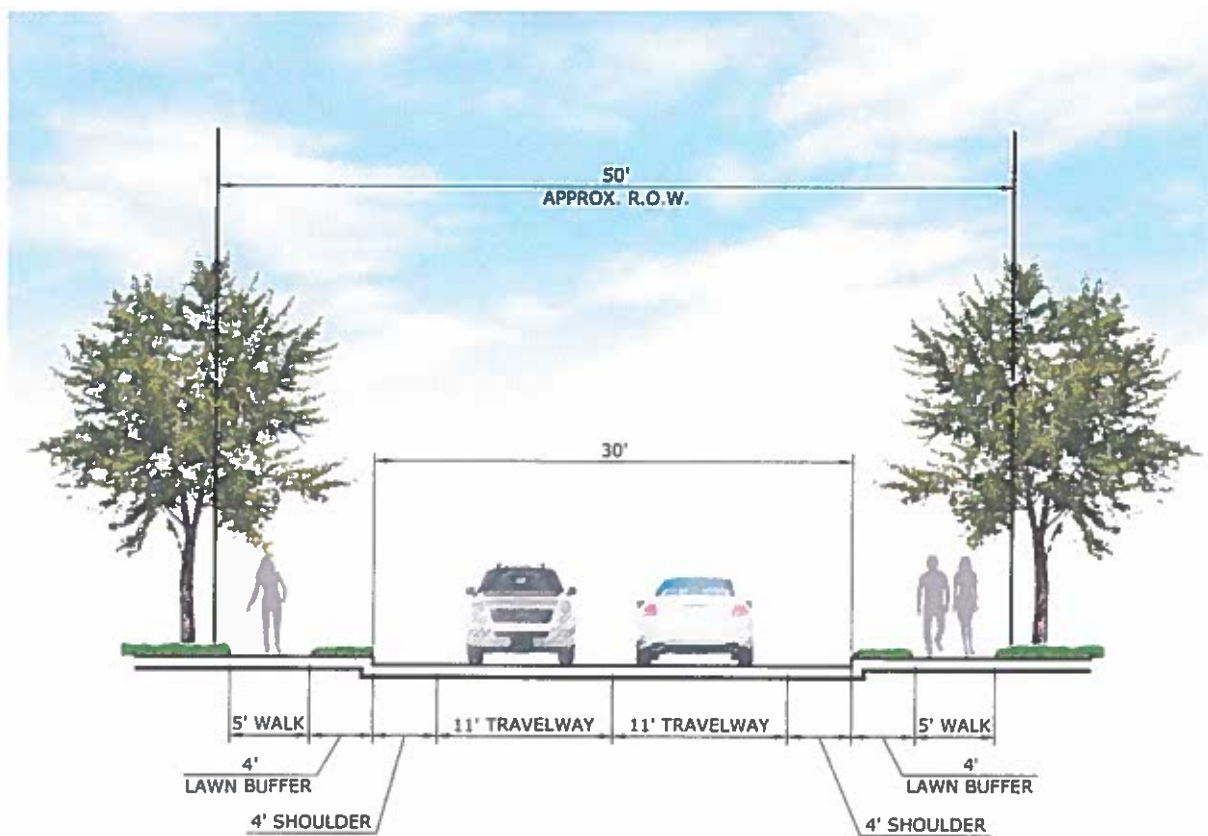


Figure 42: Recommended cross-section on Route 341 east of the Village Center

- Install a new crosswalk at Swifts Lane to accommodate pedestrians from the nearby elderly housing.

- Install a five-foot sidewalk without a landscape strip west of the intersection.
- Adjust the curb radii at Elizabeth Street.

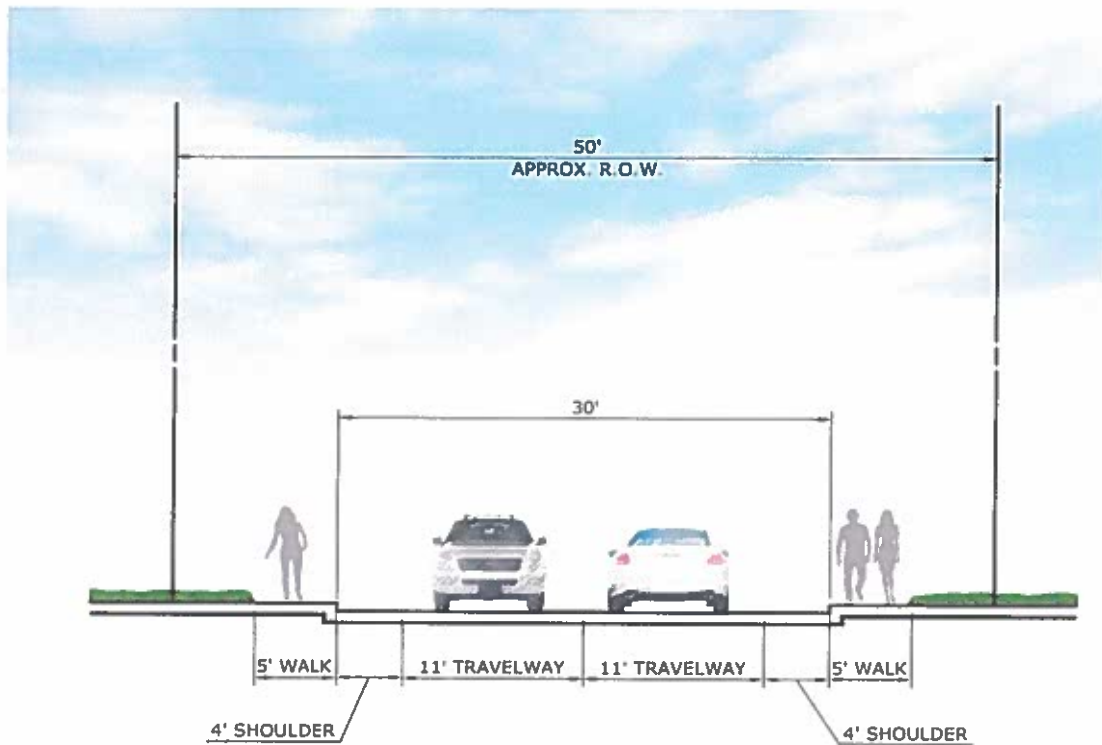


Figure 43: Recommended cross-section west of Route 7

Route 7-341 Intersection

- Add curbed island to protect the existing monument.
- Adjust curb radii to improve turning movements.
- Create an entry statement to the Village Center by providing lighting, wayfinding signage, landscaping, and public art and seating near the intersection.



Figure 44: Route 7/341 intersection



MASTER PLAN - ROUTE 34
 KENT VILLAGE CENTER
 STREETSCAPE
 ROUTE 7 AND ROUTE 34
 KENT, CONNECTICUT
 OCTOBER 8, 2011

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MASTER PLAN - ROUTE 7
 KENT VILLAGE CENTER
 STREETSCAPE
 ROUTE 7 AND ROUTE 24
 KENT, CONNECTICUT
 OCTOBER 8, 2013



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PROJECT BUDGET

The following opinion of probable construction costs has been prepared using 2013 prices. The project has been divided into discrete phases that can be constructed as funding becomes available.

5011-02-01813-rpt

KENT STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**ROUTE 7 and ROUTE 341****MMI# 5011-02****OCTOBER 8, 2013**

ROUTE 7 - KENT GARDENS TO ROUTE 341		
	ITEM/ DESCRIPTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
	Site Preparation and Demolition	\$ 190,000.00
	Street and Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 500,000.00
	Lighting	\$ 30,000.00
	SUBTOTAL	\$ 720,000.00
ROUTE 7 - ROUTE 341 TO RAILROAD CROSSING		
	ITEM/ DESCRIPTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
	Site Preparation and Demolition	\$ 140,000.00
	Street and Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 600,000.00
	Lighting	\$ 250,000.00
	SUBTOTAL	\$ 990,000.00
ROUTE 7 - RAILROAD CROSSING TO CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH		
	ITEM/ DESCRIPTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
	Site Preparation and Demolition	\$ 150,000.00
	Street and Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 500,000.00
	Lighting	\$ 140,000.00
	SUBTOTAL	\$ 790,000.00
ROUTE 341 - FIRE DEPARTMENT TO ROUTE 7		
	ITEM/ DESCRIPTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
	Site Preparations and Demolition	\$ 110,000.00
	Street and Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 270,000.00
	SUBTOTAL	\$ 380,000.00
ROUTE 341 - ROUTE 7 TO HOUSATONIC RIVER BRIDGE		
	ITEM/ DESCRIPTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
	Site Preparations and Demolition	\$ 160,000.00
	Street and Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 400,000.00
	SUBTOTAL	\$ 560,000.00

KENT STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
ROUTE 7 and ROUTE 341
MMI# 5011-02
OCTOBER 8, 2013

CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	
15% CONTINGENCY	\$ 375,000.00
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING	\$ 500,000.00
ROUTE 341 SUBTOTAL (ROUNDED)	\$ 1,000,000.00
15% CONTINGENCY	\$ 141,000.00
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING	\$ 188,000.00

PROJECT TOTAL	
ROUTE 7 ONLY	\$ 3,400,000.00
ROUTE 341 ONLY	\$ 1,330,000.00
ROUTE 7 AND 341	\$ 4,730,000.00
ROUNDED ROUTE 7 AND 341	\$ 4,800,000.00

Note: R.O.W. activities, utility relocations, construction inspection, materials testing costs and DOT soft costs are not included in the totals noted above.

The above quantities are assumed, and are based upon a conceptual plan.