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## CITY OF HAVERHILL

HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS 01830-5843

### MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

February 9, 2026

A Planning and Development Committee Meeting was held on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers, Room 202

Committee Members: Committee Chair, John Michitson, Councilor Catherine Rogers and Councilor Daniel Diodati

Councilors Present: President Timothy Jordan, Councilor Devan Ferreira, Councilor Sullivan and Councilor Lewandowski (remote)

City Officials: Mayor Melinda Barrett, Lt. Kevin Lynch, Police Department, Andrew Herilhy, Community Development, Robert Ward, DPW Director and Jacki Byerly, Planning Director

The following item was discussed: **Pedestrian Safety in Haverhill**

Chairman Michitson opened the meeting with an overview of the proposed five-year pedestrian safety plan being developed in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC); aligned with the City of Haverhill's commitment to Vision Zero—an international initiative focused on eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries while improving equitable mobility. The plan's high-level goals include creating a data-driven dashboard to identify high-risk intersections, conducting prioritized road safety audits, deploying low-cost "quick build" safety improvements, and formalizing a funding strategy to access state and federal resources. The intent is to establish an ongoing, quarterly rhythm for reviewing data, recommending projects, and advancing implementation.

Al Perreira (39 Smith Street) presented videos and photos documenting frequent pedestrian and traffic violations at Winter Street, Main Street, River Street, and Monument Square, citing red-light running, failure to yield, inadequate lighting, inconsistent pedestrian signals, and speeding. He recommended enhanced lighting, high-visibility crosswalks, temporary traffic calming measures, reduced speed limits, and stressed that

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enforcement must accompany infrastructure improvements. Norman Rheame (484 West Lowell Avenue) stated he became blind two years ago and is unable to safely cross River Street to access the bus, requesting a crosswalk and bus stop and noting the lack of audible signals at River Street and Lowell Avenue. Cory Thurlow (70 Washington Street) raised concerns about inconsistent pedestrian signal timing on Washington Street, with crossing times often too short, and inconsistent “No Turn on Red” signage, recommending review for safety and consistency. Steve Comei (22 Lansing Avenue) called for better public education on concurrent and exclusive walk signals and push-button requirements, questioned safety at the former Oasis area on River Street, suggested curb bump-outs to shorten crossings, and cited ongoing issues near Mark’s Deli where drivers fail to stop before turning right, endangering pedestrians.

Lt. Kevin Lynch reported 32 pedestrian crashes over the past year, including one fatality, with 53% occurring at intersections and pedestrians involved in about 2% of total crashes. He cited distracted driving, noting 823 hands-free violations, and discussed challenges with crosswalk placement on state roads like River Street, ADA noncompliance, and the funding required for upgrades. He also outlined enforcement efforts supported by municipal road safety grants, including pedestrian decoy operations, and explained that traffic cameras can only be used for bus red-light violations.

President Jordan encouraged expanding traffic safety education in schools and incorporating high-accident areas into a five-year plan while pursuing grants. Councilor Diodati asked about fines, with Lt. Lynch detailing hands-free penalties ranging from \$105 to \$500 and noting jaywalking fines are \$1 and rarely enforced up to the individual officer; sidewalk snow enforcement is handled with discretion. Councilor Ferreira raised concerns about downtown parking, blocked crosswalks, and pedestrian safety near schools and bus stops, while Lt. Lynch described enforcement as most effective when officers are visibly present. Councilor Rogers asked about speed bumps and signal timing, with Lt. Lynch noting challenges such as snow removal and emergency response delays and referencing ongoing striping issues on River Street requiring MassDOT intervention. Chair Michitson inquired about voluntary educational videos. Mayor Barrett highlighted city efforts including traffic signal maintenance, 50 miles of sidewalk plowing the city does, a

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proposed tiered snow fines is in the planning stages, \$80,000 budgeted for roadway paint, and continued pursuit of Complete Streets and Safe Streets grants.

Councilor Ferreira reviewed current pedestrian safety grants and timelines and discussed low costs improvements like bollards and striping and considered longer term solutions such as flashing beacons. She noted reactivating the city's 2018 complete streets policy and committee to strengthen coordination moving forward.

Robert Ward, DPW Director, addressed the committee. He discussed the City's Complete Streets policy and related grant programs. He explained that the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, developed through a MassDOT grant with Beta Engineering, identifies citywide projects with defined scopes and cost estimates, allowing the City to apply for competitive construction grants. Haverhill has received two Complete Streets construction grants: one for the Main Street/March Avenue intersection and another for improvements near Whittier School, though the latter may require additional City funding to cover costs exceeding the \$500,000 award. He also outlined two federally funded Safe Streets for All (SS4A) demonstration grants for pedestrian safety improvements at Columbia Park/Main Street and along Main Street from Monument Square to Merrimack Street; these projects require a 20% local match and include temporary measures with data collection before permanent funding can be sought. Members discussed public outreach, committee involvement, prioritization methods using crash and traffic data, and opportunities to incorporate Complete Streets elements into private development. Additional grant applications include a federal BUILD (formerly RAISE) grant for the Route 110/River Street corridor and MassDOT LEAP and Bottleneck grants for targeted roadway improvements.

Jacki Byerley, Planning Director, addressed the committee. She noted elements maybe incorporated into special permit projects on a case-by-case basis through the city's review process. Traffic studies and mitigations measures would be evaluated as needed. The city may work with developers to include upgrades such as crosswalks, or sidewalk improvements as part of the required roadwork.

Councilor Ferreira stated she provided a packet to the committee from Lowell's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program as a model for addressing cut-through traffic and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. Lowell uses data-driven criteria phased speed

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hump installations, and tools such as flex posts, bump-outs, and striping, while ensuring emergency access is maintained. The system also includes a 311 and GIS tracking system for resident requests. She would like to go back to city council to guide implementation and support. Chair Michitson stated I think that is a good specific recommendation. You would come forth with it and the council would consider it, it would probably go out to all the departments to get their assessment through the Mayor's Office and then come back to the City Council.

Brendan MVPC stated MVPC worked with them to install a demonstration project on 113 putting in flex posts and painting. The project went out a little late and we didn't end up putting the flex posts in before the winter, but they should be going out there this spring. We are going to do traffic counts before and after to see what impact it has.

Chair Michitson stated I think the way ahead is that we get minutes together and we will make sure that we get them out to everyone and we will come back to the City Council and hopefully come up with specific recommendations.

Committee Member Rogers motioned to adjourn. Second by Committee Member Diodati.

YEAS 3, NAYS 0

**ADJOURNED: 19:40:41**

Respectfully submitted:

*John A. Michitson*

John A. Michitson

Chair Planning and Development Committee