

Public Statement about Kelley's Corner Infrastructure Project
Approved by Green Acton Directors 2018-05-18

Green Acton looks forward to changes in Kelley's Corner to help it become, in the words of the Acton 2020 plan, "a busy, walkable Town center." Green Acton advocates for sustainable, walkable, ecologically sound and human-friendly land use, consistent with the Acton 2020 plan. The Kelley's Corner Steering Committee (KCSC), started by the Acton 2020 committee, is charged with creating and implementing a plan to achieve the Acton 2020 goals for Kelley's corner. So, there is a great deal of alignment between Green Acton's goals and the KCSC goals.

The directors of Green Acton have some concerns about the current 25% design for the Kelley's Corner Infrastructure Project. We do not have a shared position on whether addressing these concerns will require a delay in the TIP process or can be accommodated within the current design. We do share a concern that the goal of reducing traffic wait times has been prioritized too far "above" other goals. We plan to continue working with the KCSC to understand how best to address our concerns.

We share these concerns, and offer some suggestions on how to resolve them. We don't have a shared understanding of which of these suggestions may represent the best ways forward. We plan to work with the KCSC to see if research and discussion will help us converge on the best ways of addressing these concerns

1. The destruction of large trees that are sequestering major amounts of carbon and contributing to quality of life, especially the trees on the north side of Mass. Ave. between Main Street and Charter Road. *Suggestions include:*
 - a. have an arborist report on the health and estimated remaining lifetime of these trees for use as guidance in judicious removal of any "senior" trees
 - b. fund sufficient trees to match the total of diameters of any trees that may be removed in the course of the project; these replacement trees do not all need to be sited in Kelley's corner, and probably shouldn't be
 - c. reconfigure sidewalks, traffic lanes, and bike lanes to keep the embankment as is in order to protect the trees on the north side of Mass. Ave. between Kelley's Corner and Charter Road
 - d. ensure that the landscaping for the project:
 - i. responds to the need for "green visual corridors," or vistas, along the length of the project on Mass. Ave. and Main St.
 - ii. is designed with human needs in mind, i.e., more natural/fluid/organic than rectilinear (note how few straight lines exist in nature)
 - iii. employs a diverse assortment of hardy, long-lived *native* trees and other plantings
2. The wider crossing distances at the main Kelley's Corner intersection that create extra risks and concerns for people with disabilities and children, and may threaten the viability of parking-dependent businesses by removing parking. *Suggestions include:*
 - a. remove additional turning lanes to shorten walking distances
 - b. raise and widen crosswalks to create a more compelling zone of safety for pedestrians
 - c. provide additional persuasive information on how new traffic light systems increase safety for children and people with disabilities by extending the time allowed to cross — even with longer crossing distances
 - d. create specific parking plans to allay the concerns of business owners

- e. lower the speed limit to that used for other arterial numbered highways in area towns (such as in Wayland at Rt. 27), and make any other “traffic-calming” changes that would implicitly communicate the new, slower limits

We urge the Committee to continue to work with concerned citizens to develop a plan that addresses these concerns, and to prioritize any “fixes” that would impact the Town's path through the state and federal approval and funding processes. Green Acton looks forward to continued cooperation and communication with the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee, Town Staff, and DOT and MPO officials, in bringing “a busy, walkable Town center” to Kelley's Corner, and in finding a shared sense of priorities that center people and the environment in this critical project, which will shape our Town for decades to come.