

## **Citizen Emails on Sidewalks**

“I am writing to express my support of the Complete Streets program. Thank you for your work and the work of Select Board members for your efforts toward safer and more accessible travel options. Being able to walk, bike, and drive in town center is important to me. Not that it takes first hand experience to have empathy, but I DO have first hand experience with mobility problems. I learned to highly value level sidewalks and accessibility enhancements.

Safe *level* sidewalks and clear travel lanes and crosswalks are important for safe access to town center. I believe sidewalks will offer more access to our beautiful and quaint town center. While I do not wish to diminish the parking available to the General Store nor Fivesparks, the benefit clearly outweighs the risks. Curbing and level sidewalks will hardly urbanize the town center that I know and love.

I drove through Barre, MA this afternoon after my child’s basketball game.  
We both noticed that Barre has lovely and accessible sidewalks in their town center.

Barre is more rural than Harvard. Sidewalks in no way, shape, or form contribute to the urbanization of Barre, MA. I recommend members of the Select Board take a drive out there or see if there are any Google Earth images. It looks great and helps many with accessibility.”

*Jen Manell  
Stow Road*

“This may be a moot point by now, but in case it isn't, I would like to be a voice in support of the planned sidewalks in the town center. We're talking about safety and accessibility, both of which are laudable concerns. Times change, and our town should change with it when it makes sense to do so. I believe this is one of those times.”

*Liz Ruark  
12 Orchard Hill*

“We are writing in support of the sidewalk project at the center of town. We believe the Selectboard would be doing the right thing by voting to approve the \$370,000 "Complete Streets" grant, and to use these funds to provide safety for our children and walkers through the building of sidewalks and safe crosswalks, as previously recommended by several town studies over the last decade.”

*Jennifer and Brian Sundeen  
35 Scott Road, Harvard*

“Looking towards our future as a town, our senior population is increasing, and accessibility will be an issue sooner than we all want. But seniors shouldn’t be your only concern. Disabled, those on crutches, those using walkers, those pushing strollers, and the general safety of every resident and visitor should be at the forefront of your minds.

In the Town Center Action Plan, it was noted as imperative that we make our town center pedestrian centric, not vehicle centric. I believe that making the town center intersection safer meets this goal. Further, I believe that adding sidewalks and improving existing sidewalks is a must. I have walked in the street with my children and felt unsafe. I have walked in the mud, as I know you have as well. Not supporting the needs of all of our residents would be negligent.

I implore you to support the Complete Streets grant as proposed. This is an opportunity we have been given, and we should be grateful for the chance to make the improvements we so need.”

*Jennifer Finch*  
*165 Codman Hill Rd*

“We elect select board members to make executive decisions, and/or appoint others to do so. The town voted 12 years ago to give the control of sidewalks to the select board. In my opinion, this is not some shadow campaign to disenfranchise Parks & Rec, or the Historic Commission - it is town law. If the citizens want to change the law, there are mechanisms to do so - but a concerned citizens mob is not that mechanism.

Thank you all for all of your efforts in helping run the town. I'm sorry that you have to deal with angry mobs from time to time.

In summary - I support the sidewalk plan, since I will use it on a daily basis due to my proximity - but ultimately support your obligation to make the final decision.”

*Ben Guthro*  
*13 Fairbank St.*

Subject: Land Use - Conservation, Planning & Zoning Board of Appeals  
Message:

“I would urge the Planning Board and the Parks and Rec Board to consider the impact that failing to implement the improvements proposed in the town center sidewalks plan will have on future grant applications and the walk-ability of the common. I believe that any future state grant to repave and reconstruct Mass Ave or Ayer Road would also be from the Complete Streets Program, and as such a refusal such as the one proposed now would set a dangerous precedent and jeopardize funding for what would be a much more expensive and important project. Additionally, any such Mass Ave or Ayer Road reconstruction under complete streets would also include and impose the same sidewalk requirements; the stretch proposed encompassing the general store site would be the linchpin connecting the two, without which there is no continuous sidewalk from the Ayer Road commercial district, from town hall, to the town center.

The Town center sidewalk project provides important, critical handicapped accessibility to the town common. Even if Harvard's rural character doesn't want to consider an non automotive centric mode of travel, it should not

impose a burden by inaction. This requires no property takings; the General Store Lot is town property. It should be done, with state funding. This short stretch of sidewalk is in the middle of the most walkable part of town. Impaired automotive access to the general store should not stop Harvard from encouraging pedestrians, of any age or ability. Therefore, I urge the town to look past the cries of those who won't accept a 21st century reality, and instead focus on what is needed.”

*Jeffrey Lin*  
*cc'd - Parks and Rec, Select Board*  
*283 Littleton Road*

### **Feedback from Congregational Church**

## **Town Center Safe Streets**

A quorum of the Congregational Church of Harvard Property Committee met on Sunday to walk the site of the proposed changes, discuss our concerns, and vote on a group response. I was asked to represent views of the committee. These statements represent our consensus viewpoint.

1. In our opinion, the process followed by the town was faulty. You may have followed the legally-mandated procedure but you made little effort to truly engage with abutters, neighboring residents, or Harvard residents. In the future, we'd like to see the town establish a working group composed of representatives drawn from multiple interested parties to tackle similar projects.
2. Multiple church members not on our committee offered their comments to us. Not a single person supported the proposed plans.
3. We insist that the town hire a professional surveyor to mark the boundary between our church and the highway right-of-way and between our church and the General Store parking lot. This work must not be delegated to the contractor, town employee, or anyone who is not a professional surveyor.
4. We respectfully, and strongly, request that you make every effort to protect our two memorial trees that are placed on the grassy berm in front of our building! One is in honor of Robin Kennedy. (I am still researching the 2nd tree). We expect that both trees will be fully protected. We will look to the town to compensate us should there be any damage to either tree by the workers or their equipment.
5. We note the loss of 2 parking spaces along 110.
6. We intend to closely monitor the users of our driveway once your project is complete. We are concerned for the safety of people and vehicles using our driveway and parking spaces. Should conditions warrant, we may declare the connector between our driveway and the General Store parking lot to be one-way out of our property. We also reserve the right to close the connection entirely.