

## Project Specific Recommendations

Research by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has demonstrated the link between safe, convenient, lower stress facilities and higher levels of bicycling and walking (NACTO). At the same time, infrastructure improvements alone are not enough. Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation all play key roles in ensuring safety for all road users. Plan recommendations are grouped by these “5 Es”. Examples of key recommendations are included below. [See the complete Plan document for the full project list.](#)

### Engineering

The Plan includes 50 project specific recommendations for improvements in crossing safety, extending sidewalks to connect neighborhoods, widening shoulders for safer bicycling, and improving access to trails. Highlights include:

- Improving safety and visibility at more than 30 crossing locations with signs, pavement markings, and in some locations flashing beacons, overhead lighting and curb bump-outs.
- Extending sidewalk on Hampton Road and Guinea Road to connect to the Cooperative Middle School (CMS).
- Pursuing a Complete Streets realignment of Portsmouth Avenue including one center turn lane, buffered bike lanes and improved crossing safety.
- Realigning the intersection of Front and Winter Streets and adding a safe crossing to Winter Street Playground.
- Realigning the intersection of Park Street and Epping Road and adding safe crossing to Park Street Common.
- Extending sidewalk on Court Street from Bell Avenue to Gary/Lary Lanes.

### Education

Ensure all road users in Exeter understand rights, responsibilities and rules for safe driving, walking, and bicycling.

- Community outreach campaign on traffic calming and safely sharing the road using multiple media.
- Bicycle safety and traffic skills instruction for kids and interested adults through schools and Parks & Recreation.

### Encouragement

Continue/expand activities that get more residents to try walking and bicycling for recreational and utilitarian trips.

- Promote participation in annual events for Seacoast Bike Month, Bike/Walk to Work Day, Bike/Walk to School Day and the CommuteSMART Seacoast B2B Challenge.
- Promote awareness and use of Exeter’s town trail network.

### Enforcement

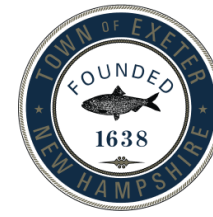
Community input showed desire for expanded enforcement to minimize speeding and driver distraction.

- Continue and expand use of speed feedback signs where state highways enter residential areas and downtown.
- Review reporting procedures for crashes involving bicyclists/pedestrians to ensure all are recorded, potential role of distraction is identified, and analysis of crash locations and patterns is possible.

### Evaluation

Effective planning requires data on where and how many people bicycle and walk in town, on crashes involving vulnerable road users, on ped/bike facility conditions and how these change as the Plan is implemented.

- Establish an ongoing ped/bike counting program with 8-12 standard counting locations throughout town.
- Analyze ped/bike crash data at least biannually to identify patterns in location and contributing factors.



# Exeter Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

## Executive Summary

### Why Improve Walking & Bicycling in Exeter?

Encouraging and improving safety for walking and bicycling in Exeter will support travel and recreation needs for residents of all ages, from youth not yet driving, to adults seeking healthy recreation and alternatives to the automobile, to older adults who no longer drive seeking engagement and connection. Improving access for walking and bicycling also enhances Exeter as a vibrant and attractive place to shop, dine and recreate – whether for residents walking from a nearby neighborhood or visitors arriving via the Downeaster.

### Planning Process

This Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was shaped by extensive public input. This included a community survey that drew over 880 responses; outreach events with interactive maps and other input opportunities at Exeter Farmers Market and outside the polls on Election Day in November 2022; a pair of focus group meetings with Exeter residents and downtown business owners; and numerous meetings with town staff and the Master Plan Oversight Committee.

### Key Findings from Community Input

Not Feeling Safe Keeps People from Walking and Biking. Top stress inducers when bicycling or walking cited by survey respondents include Lack of Traffic Separation when bicycling (cited by 60%), Lack of Sidewalks (54%), Driver Distraction (51%), High Traffic Speeds (49%), and Design of Intersections and Crosswalks (42%).



High visibility signs and pavement markings added at crosswalks on Front Street in 2023.



Facility Improvements Make People Feel Safer and More Likely to Walk or Bike. The Community Survey gauged preference for safety investments by asking how much more likely respondents would be to walk or bicycle based on different types of improvements. For each strategy respondents indicated if they would be Much More Likely, A Little More Likely, or No More Likely to bicycle and walk. The strongest preference was for more traffic-separated bicycling and walking paths, where 52% of respondents indicated investments here would make them Much More Likely to bicycle and walk. This was followed closely by more and better-connected sidewalks, and more active enforcement to minimize driver distraction, which 49% and 47% of respondents respectively said would make them Much More Likely to bike or walk. Next most highly rated were intersection and crossing safety improvements at 43%, and more and better connected on-street bicycle lanes at 40%.

### Top stress inducers when walking & bicycling cited by survey respondents



Lack of Traffic Separation **60%**



Driver Distraction **51%**



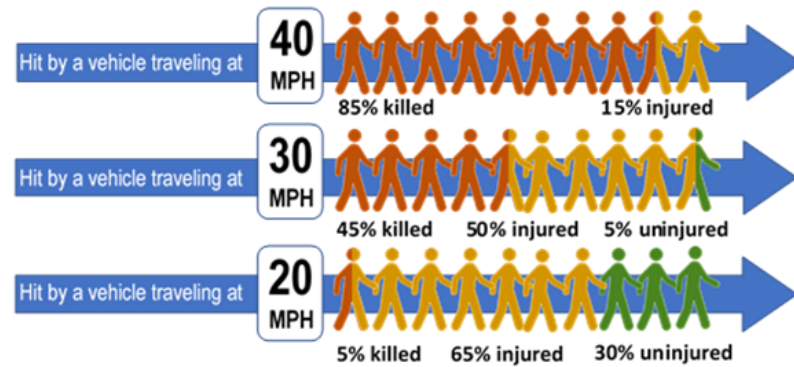
High Traffic Speeds **49%**



Intersection Design/ Lack of Crosswalks **42%**

**Traffic Speed was a Key Concern for Respondents**

—Small differences in speed have big impacts on crash severity. The difference between 20mph and 30mph, or between 30mph and 40mph, seems quite small when behind the wheel of a car, but it has major implications if a car hits a person walking or bicycling. The speed readout signs installed by the town on High Street and Water Street, where state highways enter residential areas, are an effective tool for speed management.



*Relationship Between Auto Speed and severity of Pedestrian Injury (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)*

**Proven Strategies to Improve Bike/Ped Safety in Exeter**



**65%-89%**

reduction in ped crashes on roadways with sidewalks

**71%** reduction in pedestrian crashes on roadways with paved shoulders

**Walkways**



Up to **53%**

reduction in crashes from converting shoulder bike lanes into buffered bike lanes with flexible delineator posts

**Bicycle Lanes**



Up to **47%**

reduction in pedestrian crashes with RRFBs installed

Up to **98%**

Increase in motorists yielding at crosswalks

**Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons**



Up to **42%** reduction

in pedestrian crashes with intersection lighting

Up to **40%** reduction in pedestrian crashes with high visibility crosswalks

**Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements**



**19%-47%**

reduction in total crashes on 4-lane to 3-lane road diet conversions

**Road Diets/ Roadway Reconfiguration**



Up to **56%**

reduction in crashes with installation of refuge islands

Up to **46%** reduction in ped crashes for medians with marked crosswalks

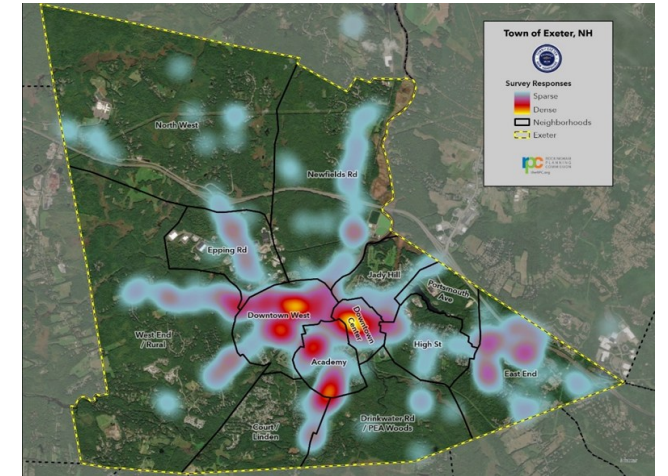
**Medians/ Pedestrian Refuge Islands**

Source: *FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures (2021)*

**Plan Goals**

**Goal 1. Improve safety for walking and bicycling in Exeter**

**Goal 2. Increase the number of people walking and bicycling in Exeter for recreation and utilitarian trips.**



*Heat map of over 300 location specific comments on community survey, identifying safety concerns and/or proposed improvements.*

**Broad Infrastructure Recommendations**

- Ensure safety at pedestrian crossings with signage and pavement markings, overhead lighting for nighttime visibility, curb bump-outs to shorten crosswalk lengths, and flashing beacons in some locations.
- Extend sidewalks and shoulder bike routes to connect schools, parks, trails and outlying neighborhoods.
- Establish narrower standard lane widths for local and urban compact roads to allow wider shoulders and calm traffic. Eleven foot lanes are now standard for state highways and ten foot lanes are adequate for many local roads.
- Install signage and pavement markings that raise motorist awareness of people bicycling and walking including Sharrow pavement markings, *Motorists Share the Road* signs and in some locations *Bikes May Use Full Lane* signs.
- Continue to improve accessibility on the sidewalk network with curb ramps and tactile plates at curb cuts/crossings, and avoiding brick sidewalks which tend to deteriorate quickly creating uneven surfaces.
- Adopt a town Complete Streets policy that ensures safety for all road users is considered from the earliest stages of design in all town road and street projects.
- Ensure regular maintenance of existing facilities including keeping shoulder areas free of debris and vegetation, keeping sidewalks clear of snow and ice, and ensuring crosswalks are repainted regularly to maintain high visibility.
- Review town zoning and site plan review ordinances to ensure new development provides safe accommodation for bicycling and walking on site and connects to the town’s bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Explore creation of an Exeter Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee to work with town staff in implementing recommendations included in the Plan.



*Proposed crossing safety improvement at Water & Center Streets including curb bump-out, signs and flashing beacons. Rendering by LaVerriere Landscape Design*