

HADDAM ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between
Middletown/Haddam Town line and
Walkley Hill Rd



NOVEMBER 2023

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1 COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM



1.1 Program Background

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has created a Community Connectivity Program that focuses on improving the state's transportation network for all users. A major component of this program is conducting Road Safety Audits (RSAs) at selected locations. An RSA is a formal safety assessment of the existing roadway. It is a qualitative review by an independent team experienced in traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle operations and design that considers the safety of all road users and proactively assesses mitigation measures to improve the safe operation of the facility by reducing the potential crash risk frequency and/or severity.

The RSA team includes CTDOT staff, municipal officials and staff, municipal police, local stakeholders, FHI Studio staff, and community leaders. The RSA team is established for each municipality based on the requirements of the individual location. They assess and review factors that can promote or obstruct safe walking and bicycling routes. These factors include traffic volumes and speeds, topography, roadway geometrics, crash data, roadway inventory (i.e. signage, curbs, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, amenities, safety components), and sidewalks.

Each RSA is conducted using RSA protocols published by the FHWA. For details on this program, please refer to the CT Connectivity RSA site on the CTDOT webpage.

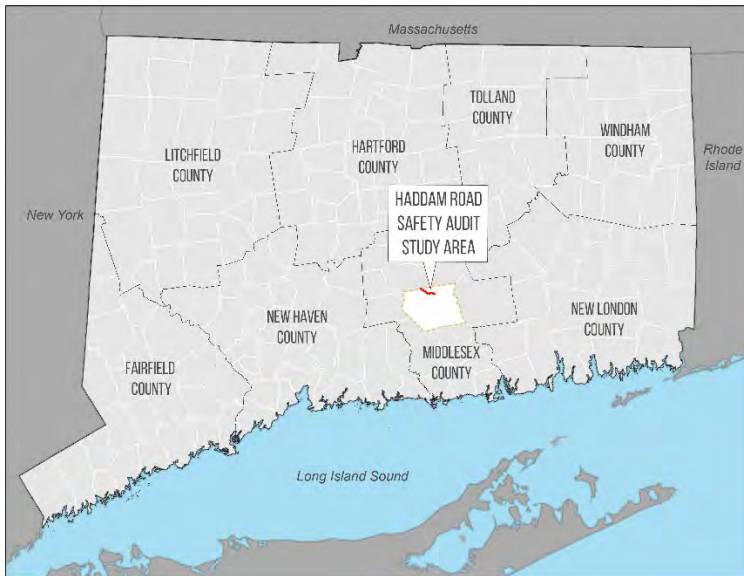
Prior to the site visit, area topography, land use characteristics, intersection sight distance concerns, sidewalk locations, parking, and bicycle facilities are examined using available mapping and imagery. The site visit includes a "Pre-Audit" meeting, the "Field Audit" itself, and a "Post-Audit" meeting to discuss the field observations and formulate recommendations. This procedure and the summary results are discussed in the following sections.

1.2 Haddam RSA Study Area and Location

CTDOT sponsored an RSA for the Town of Haddam in the Route 154 (Saybrook Road) Higganum Center area. The study area encompasses Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between the Middletown/Haddam Town line and Walkley Hill Road.

Exhibit 1 shows the study area in context to the State of Connecticut, while Exhibit 2 shows the study area in further detail.

Exhibit 1: Haddam RSA Regional Location



The purpose of the RSA is to observe any safety concerns while discussing possible safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists travelling along the study area corridor. The study area serves many purposes including local residential access, restaurant and commercial business access, service industry uses. Additionally, the closure of the Elementary School, north of the intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Route 81(Killingworth Road), has allowed the Town to consider the potential opportunity to relocate the municipal offices or potentially the Senior Center to this location. See Exhibit 3 for points of interest located along the corridor.

Route 154 (Saybrook Road) is a collector roadway that provides regional connections to points north and south. The study area has sidewalks and crosswalks in various areas but lacks bicycle facilities.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) in the study area ranges between 6,300 vehicles per day on Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between Route 81 (Killingworth Road) and Thayer Road to about 4,200 vehicles per day on Route 154 (Saybrook Road) east of Walkley Hill Road.

Exhibit 4 displays daily traffic in the study area. There is a four-way signalized intersection in the study area, at the intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Route 81 (Killingworth Road) and Depot Road. The other intersections are controlled by stop signs. These intersections are signed as two-way stop control where Route 154 does not stop.

Exhibit 2: Haddam RSA Study Area

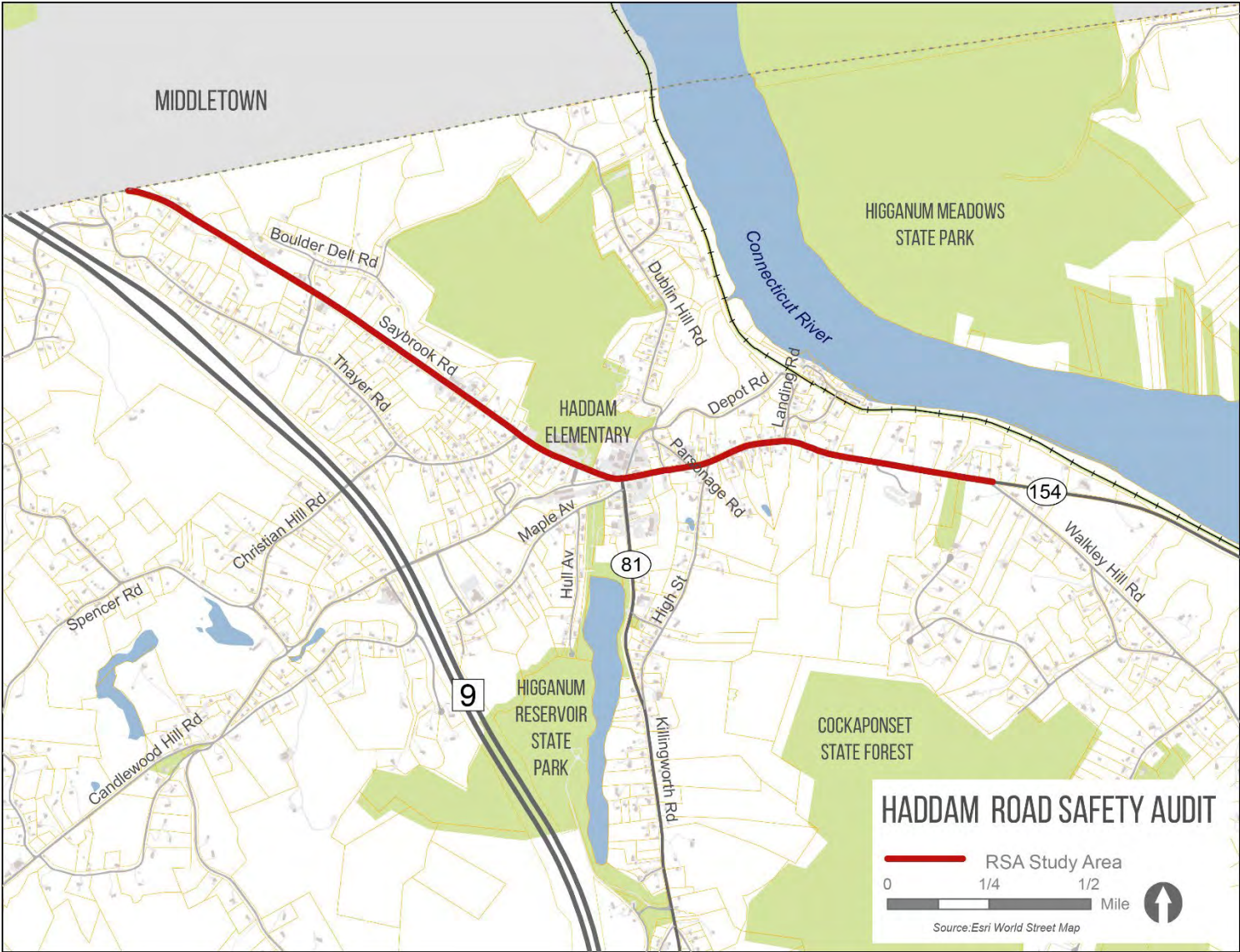


Exhibit 3: Study Area Points of Interest

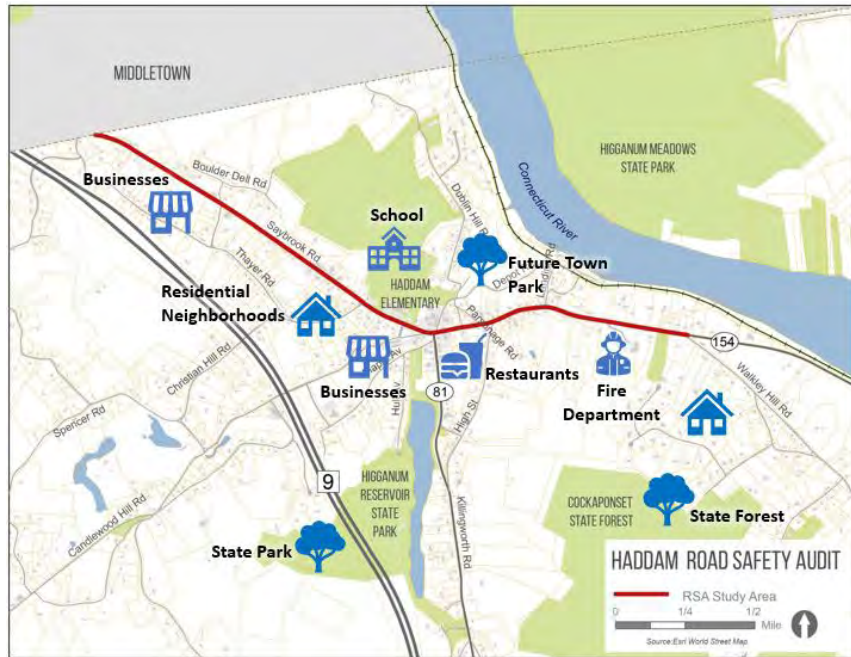
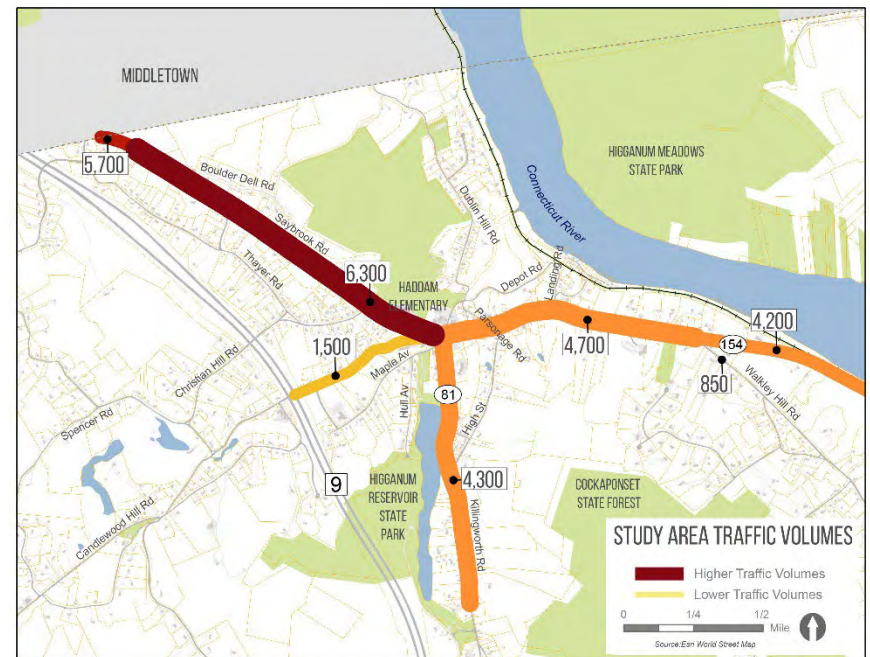


Exhibit 4: Average Daily Traffic Volumes



2 PRIOR EFFORTS IN STUDY AREA

2.1 Growth and Development

There is the potential for an increase of commercial development and mixed-use development in Higganum Center. Development projects located in the vicinity of the study area include:

- Scovil Hoe Factory/CTDOT Garage Redevelopment - 11 Candlewood Hill Road, Higganum. This four-acre site with two 1800's factory buildings was recently purchased by the Town for redevelopment. The Town is partnering with a developer to address environmental concerns and convert the buildings, approximately 18,000 square feet total, into retail shops, office space and a full-service restaurant. Exhibit 5 displays the property.
- Rossi Lumber Company Redevelopment - 300 & 305 Saybrook Road. This five-acre industrial site was purchased by the Town in December 2022. Haddam received a \$1.5 million grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to fund remediation. The Town is currently evaluating a response from a developer to build retail/office/commercial facilities on the site. The development may include a limited number of apartments.
- Haddam Elementary School - 272 Saybrook Road. This ten-acre site was acquired by the Town in 2019 when the school district consolidated schools. The Town is currently exploring moving the senior center, community center and some municipal offices to the school. Building a playscape and multi-generational park on the site has also been proposed. Commercial use of part of the

building is also being considered. The site is already seeing increased use by various community groups such as the Higganum Farmers' Market (summer and fall) and a local theater group.

- Higganum Cove - vicinity of 196 Dublin Hill Road. The Town is converting this former superfund site into a Town park. The cove connects to the CT River and was an important industrial area for Haddam since before the Revolutionary War. The property includes historic mill ruins, an impressive waterfall, swimming area and access by foot or boat to the river. One of the Town's goals in developing the cove is to increase the number of visitors to Higganum. Visits to the site are already increasing as parking and walkways to it have been improved.

Exhibit 5: Scovil Hoe Factory/State DOT Garage



Source: Google Earth Imagery

2.2 Higganum Bridge Replacement – 2015 -2016

The bridge over the Higganum Creek was replaced in 2015-16. Construction included updated traffic signals, new sidewalks and stamped crosswalks, as shown in Exhibit 7. Lane narrowing, reducing the lanes from 12' to 11' was completed in 2013 to allow for speed control and to provide a wider shoulder for bicyclists.

Exhibit 6: Bridge Replacement aerial view before and during construction



Exhibit 7: Bridge Replacement and Streetscape after construction



Source: Google Earth Imagery

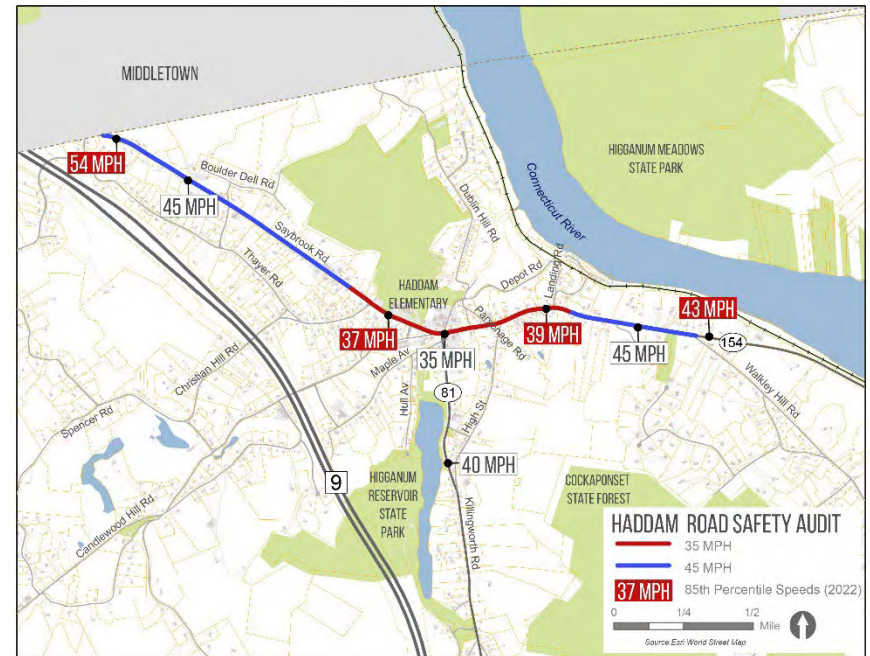
3 PRE-AUDIT MEETING

3.1 Pre-Audit Information

The RSA team conducted a pre-audit meeting in the afternoon of Monday, June 13th, 2023. The RSA team presented a brief presentation that included an overview of the Haddam RSA goals and purpose, the study area, and key existing conditions findings. Key themes discussed during the pre-audit meeting are presented below.

Speeds: Speed limits in the study area in the vicinity of Higganum Center are 35 miles per hour (MPH), but on either end of the study area (Haddam/Middletown Town line) and at Walkley Hill Road, Route 154 (Saybrook Road) speeds are 45 MPH. Route 81 (Killingworth Road) that intersects the study area is marked at 35 MPH. 85th percentile speeds, taken from CT DOT's Traffic Monitor Station Viewer, 2022 indicate that actually speeds in the study area are exceeding the posted speeds. Exhibit 8 displays speed limits and 85th percentile speeds in the study area.

Exhibit 8: Study Area Speed Limits

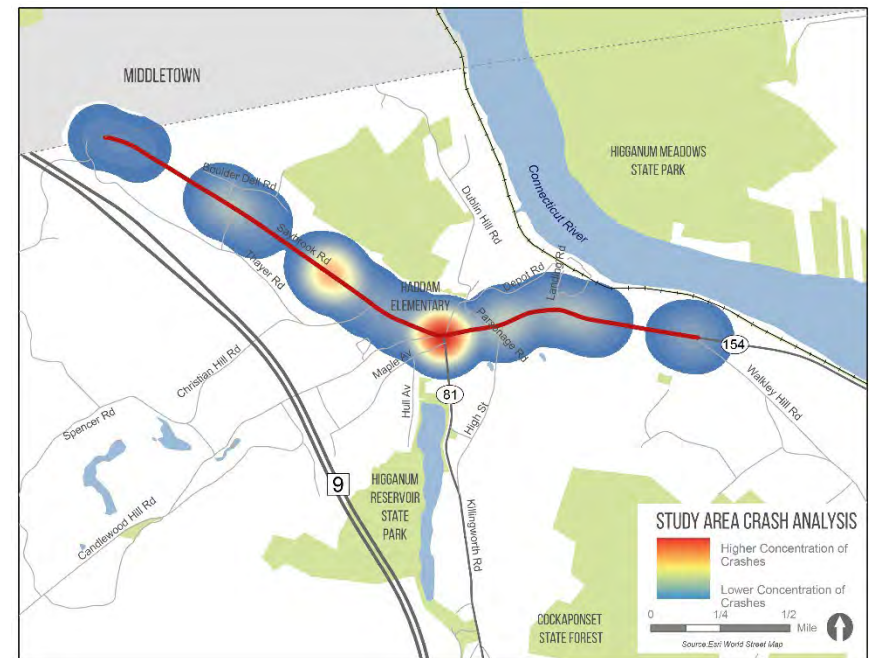


Crashes: Based on data retrieved from the Connecticut Crash Data Repository (CTCDR) for the five-year period between January 2017 through December 2021, there were a total of 54 crashes in the Haddam RSA study area. Crashes were concentrated in the vicinities of the Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Route 81 (Killingworth Road) and Candlewood Hill Road intersection, the vicinity of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Dunkin/Fuel Plus gas station (at 210 Saybrook Road), and the vicinity of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Thayer Road Extension. Exhibit 9 displays the study area crash summary and Exhibit 13 displays a study area crash heatmap.

Exhibit 9: Study Area Crash Summary

Year	Fatality	Serious Injury	Minor Injury	Possible Injury	Property Damage Only	TOTAL
2017			1	2	4	7
2018			6	1	10	17
2019			1	2	12	15
2020			2	2	7	11
2021			0	0	4	4
TOTAL	0	0	10	7	37	54

Exhibit 10: Study Area Crash Heatmap



Crashes by Type: The majority of crashes are single vehicle (Not Applicable label) or angle crashes. Single vehicle crashes are indicative of crashes where motorists veered off the road, ran into a fixed object. Angle crashes, sideswipe crashes and front to rear crashes are common in areas with ingress and egress movements such as business areas. Exhibit 11 and Exhibit 12 display the location and breakdown of crashes by type in the corridor.

Exhibit 11: Crashes by Type

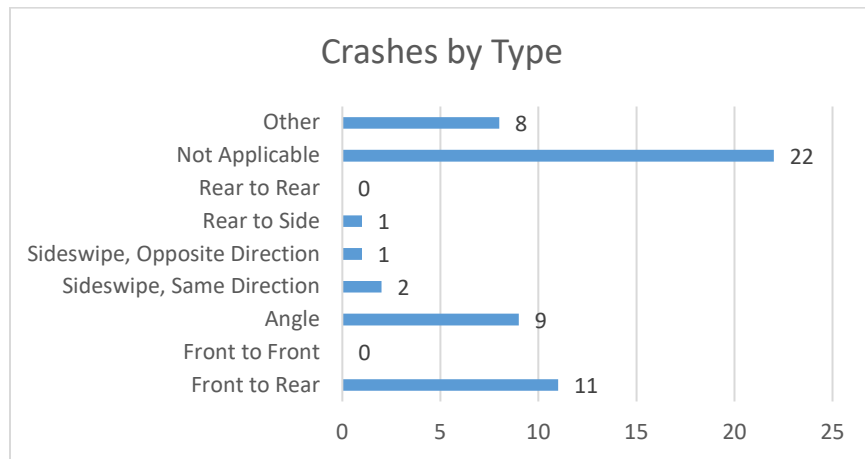
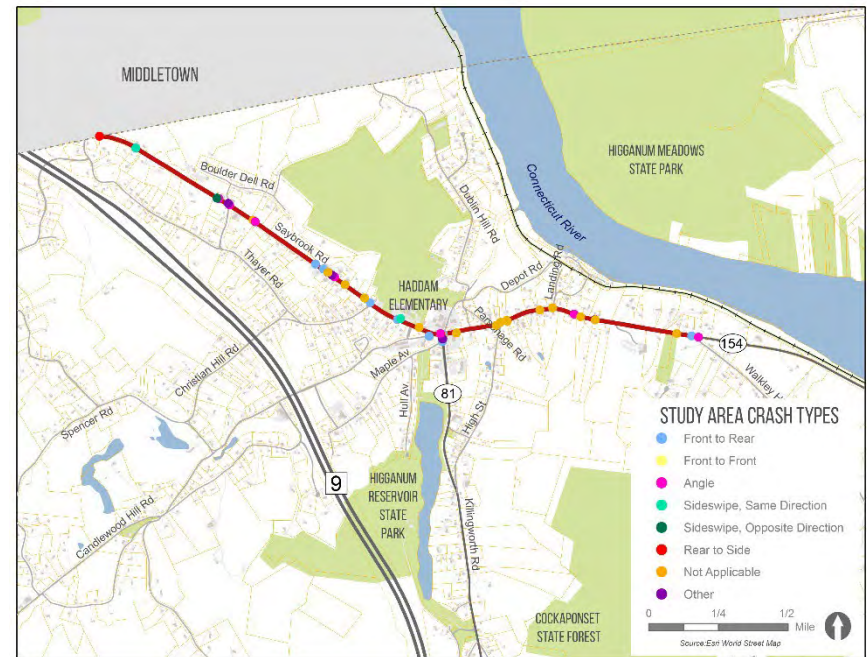


Exhibit 12: Crashes by Type



Crash Severity: The majority of crashes (37) are classified as no apparent injury/property damage only. This is typical for single vehicle type crashes that are prevalent in the study area. Suspected minor injuries occurred during 10 crashes. There were no fatalities reported in the past five years. Exhibit 13 and Exhibit 14 show crash severity by location and a summary of total crashes by severity.

Crashes by Involved Person: There were no crashes involving bicyclists or pedestrians in the study area.

Exhibit 13: Crash Severity by Location

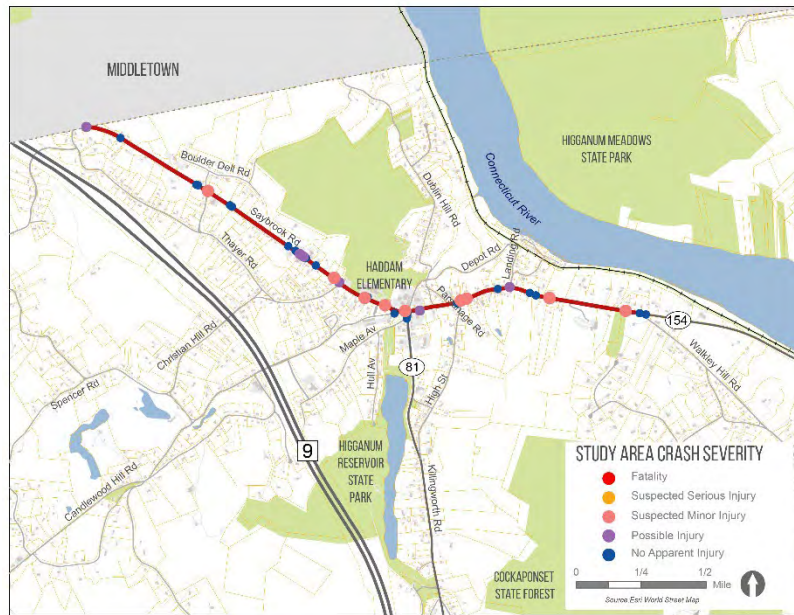
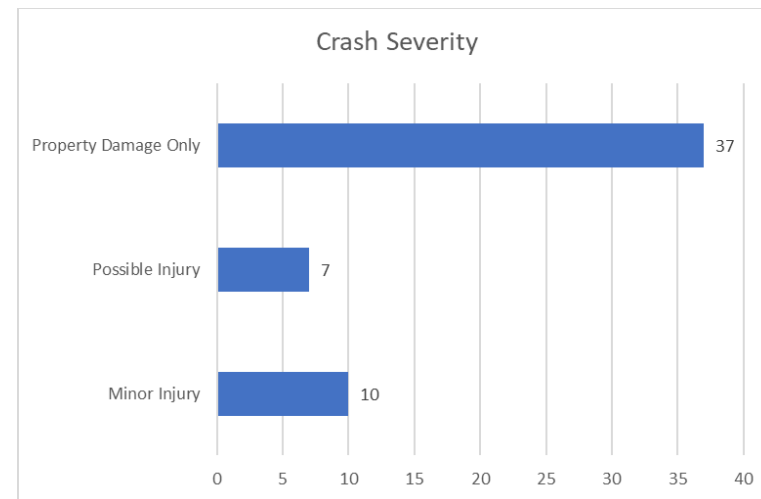


Exhibit 14: Crash Severity Summary



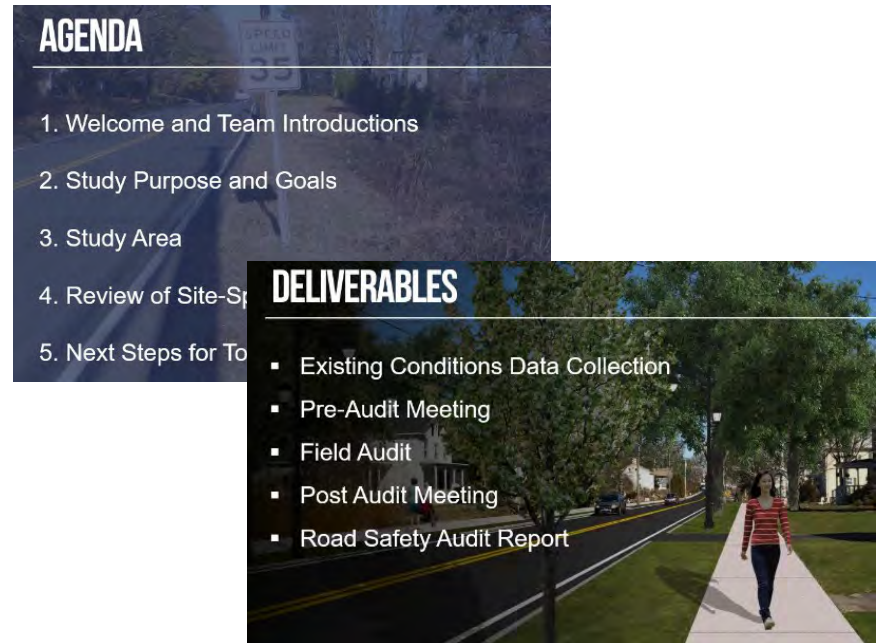
3.2 Pre-Audit Discussion

Immediately following the pre-audit presentation, a discussion followed that highlighted concerns and notes regarding the Haddam RSA study area. Highlights from this discussion are presented below:

- Town officials noted that traffic speeds are the biggest concern throughout the study area. It is signed between 35- 45 MPH but traffic appears to be going well above.
- The area of Higganum Center is poised for significant growth, with development plans for many properties. Ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists are accounted for and considered with this growth is a major priority for the Town. There is expected to be a lot more foot traffic in this area.
- Drivers turning right from Candlewood Hill Road often mistake the shoulder for a right turn lane onto Route 81 (Killingworth Road).
- On-street parking in front of the Higganum Green is not well utilized and there is some interest to potentially converting it to a bike lane.
- There are gaps in the sidewalk network on the east side of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between the crosswalk north of Depot Road and the crosswalk at the northern corner of the Higganum Green. Additionally, the sidewalk ends on Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at the driveway to 323 Saybrook Road (Hairpinz LLC).
- Town officials noted that the visibility pulling out of Thayer Road Extension onto 154 (Saybrook Road) is poor. Sight lines and ledge outcropping make this a challenging location.

Sample slides from the pre-audit presentation are shown in Exhibit 18.

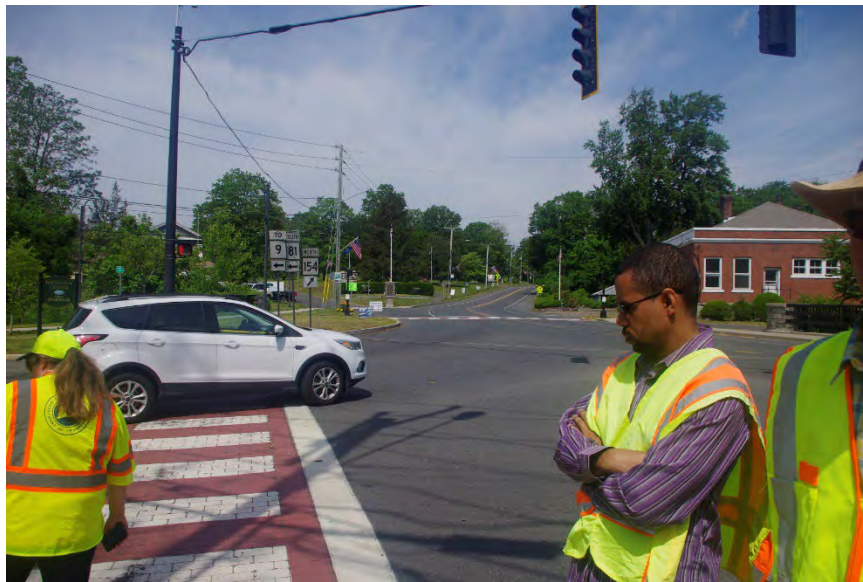
Exhibit 15: Sample slides from Pre-Audit Presentation



4 RSA ASSESSMENT

The following summary describes observations and discussion regarding issues and concerns throughout the Haddam RSA study area. Exhibit 16 shows RSA participants observing conditions during the RSA. Discussions were held at each of the noted locations below.

Exhibit 16: RSA participants during the RSA Assessment date



4.1 Intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Thayer Road Extension

- Pulling out onto Route 154 from Thayer Road Extension is challenging at this location due to sight lines to the west and high speeds on Route 154.

- A rock outcropping at this location hinders visibility, and a house atop the outcropping would make removal challenging.
- Sunoco Gas Station is also located in this area, so vehicles are often exiting/entering here.
- There is a narrow shoulder on Route 154 at this location, as shown in Exhibit 17.

Exhibit 17: Intersection of Route 154 and Thayer Road Extension looking west



4.2 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between Thayer Road Extension and Higganum Green

- The Town is concerned about speeding in this area.
- A pedestrian-actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) was installed at the crosswalk that is located south of the entrance to the former Elementary School driveway, as shown in Exhibit 18. Despite this, drivers do not always stop for pedestrians.
- Roadway is wide (36-feet) in the area along the Higganum Green. On-street parking is allowed adjacent to the Higganum Green but is not often utilized, as shown in Exhibit 19.
- Sidewalk that spans from the former Elementary School that is on the north side of Route 154 terminates at the crosswalk, just south of the former Elementary School driveway. This encourages pedestrians to cross and utilize the walkway that runs through the Higganum Green. This walkway is separated from the road and meanders through the green, the walkway is not ADA compliant due to grades. This is shown in Exhibit 20.

Exhibit 18: Route 154 crosswalk with an RRFB south of former Elementary School entrance



Exhibit 19: On-street parking spaces along Route 154



Exhibit 20: Pathway through the Higganum Green



4.3 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at Candlewood Hill Road

- ADA ramp to the crosswalk at Candlewood Hill Road is not in the correct location. See Exhibit 21.
- Drivers exiting Candlewood Hill Road onto Route 154 often assume that shoulder on Route 154 is a turning lane for the intersection with Route 81. This causes confusion. See Exhibit 22 for a view of the shoulder at this location.

Exhibit 21: Crosswalk at the intersection of Route 154 and Candlewood Hill Road



Exhibit 22: View north towards Candlewood Hill Road. Note the wide shoulder in the oncoming (eastbound) direction of Route 154



4.4 Intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Route 81 (Killingworth Road) and Depot Road

- Sidewalk across bridge on north side of Route 154 terminates at the intersection, forcing pedestrians to cross, as shown in Exhibit 23.
- Pedestrian scale lighting and sidewalks are present on the south side of Route 154.

Exhibit 23: View looking east towards intersection of Route 154 and Route 81



Exhibit 24: View looking west on Route 154 from southern approach to intersection with Route 81



Exhibit 25: Vehicle making a left turn onto Route 154 from Route 81



4.5 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at entrance to Higganum Village Market

- Driveways to the business in this area are undefined and opportunities exist for access management.
- There is no sidewalk in this area or across the driveway as shown in Exhibit 26.

Exhibit 26: View south on Route 154



4.6 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between Higganum Creek Bridge and Walkley Hill Road

- A sidewalk exists on the south side of Route 154 as it crosses Higganum Creek. It does not have an ADA compliant curb ramp as displayed in Exhibit 27.
- The sidewalk ends at the entrance to 323 Saybrook Road (Hairpinz LLC). There is a narrow asphalt sidewalk on the north side of Route 154 that begins east of the intersection with Calliari Place. This

forces pedestrians to cross the roadway if they wish to stay on the sidewalk.

- Speeds are observed to be high in this location as drivers are either leaving the village heading south, or traveling downhill into the village, heading north.

Exhibit 27: Sidewalk over Higganum Creek Bridge. View looking east.



Exhibit 28: View south on Route 154 over the Higganum Creek bridge



5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed during the RSA, the RSA team compiled a set of recommendations for the study area. These recommendations are organized by study area location. The report includes two focus areas, the first being on Route 154 at the intersection with Thayer Road Extension, and the second focus area south of this location in the vicinity of the Route 154 intersection with Route 81 (Killingworth Road) and Depot Road. These locations were selected due to recommended roadway reconfiguration in these areas which were better depicted with conceptual graphics. Selection of these areas as focus area does not reduce the importance of other areas identified in this report, and does not indicate that these areas are of higher priority than other recommendations in this report. These areas are provided in further detail with conceptual drawings of potential recommendations in this area.

All recommendations for all locations are divided into short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations.

- **Short-term recommendations:** These are improvements that are simpler and could be completed on a quick timeline. These recommendations are low-cost alternatives such as striping and signage. These recommendations generally do not require extensive engineering or construction costs. More extensive recommendations which have funding previously committed may be included. These projects are defined as those that may be complete within two years.
- **Medium-term recommendations:** These are improvements that may require more substantial engineering than those generally included as short-term recommendations. These may require establishment of funding in capital improvement plans, or a dedicated funding item. However, these recommendations are generally simpler than long-

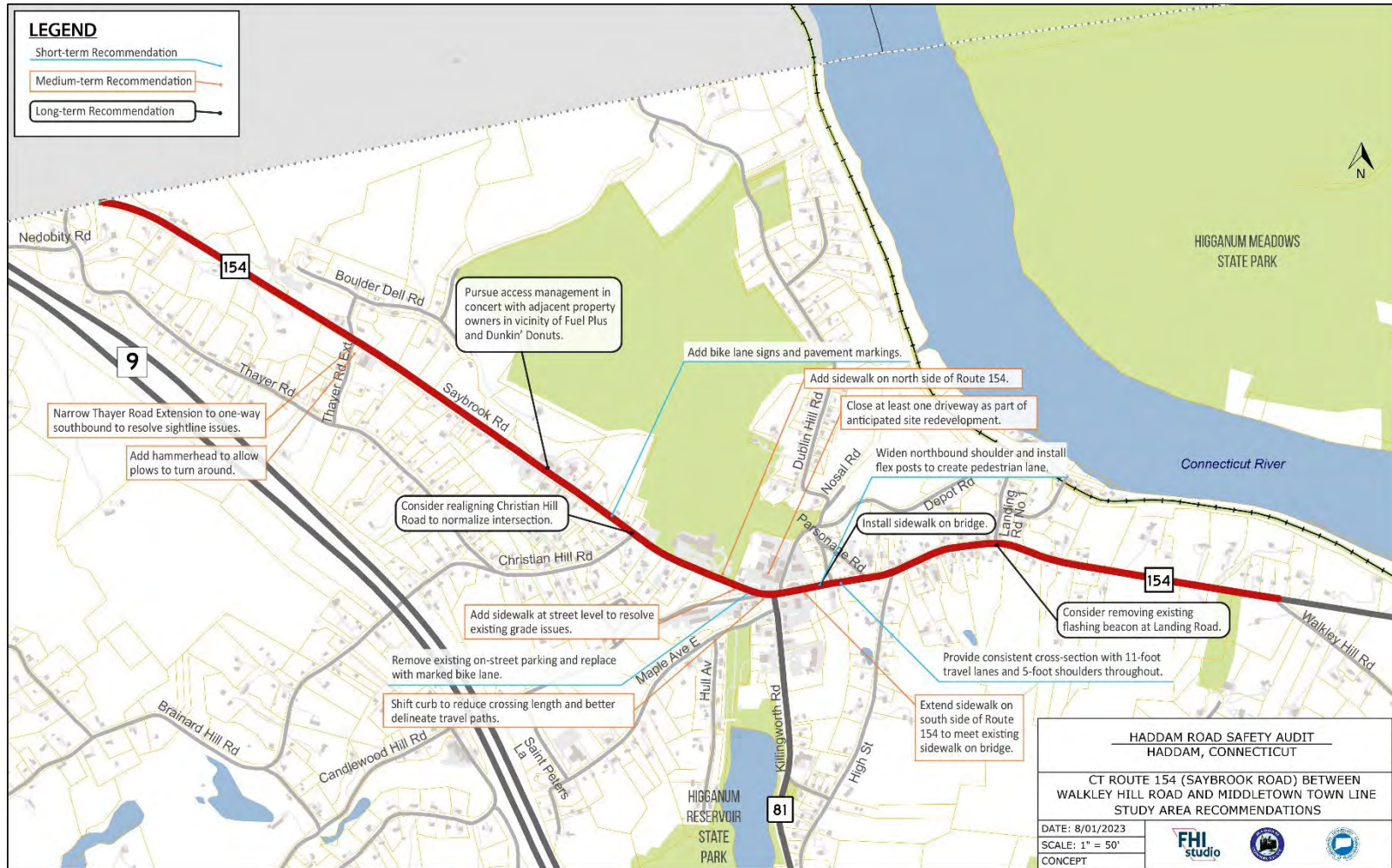
term recommendations and generally do not include ROW acquisition etc. These projects are defined as those that may be completed in two-to-five years.

- **Long-term recommendations:** These are improvements that require substantial study and engineering. These recommendations generally require significant funding for implementation and may require several years of planning to budget. These projects are defined as those recommendations that may take five years or longer to complete.

It should be noted that any work within the State ROW to be done by non-State forces will require an encroachment permit from the District 2 Permit Office and/or an official request from the Haddam Local Traffic Authority.

Exhibit 29 displays the recommendations of the overall study area on a map. Further detail is provided in the sections below, while Exhibit 30 and Exhibit 35 and provided conceptual graphics of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at Thayer Road Extension, and Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at the intersection with Route 81 (Killingworth Road) respectively.

Exhibit 29- Overall map



5.1 Intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at Thayer Road Extension

The recommendations at this intersection seek to provide multimodal connectivity to the area by providing marked bike lanes. Additionally, converting Thayer Road Extension could improve roadway visibility at this location. Exhibit 30 displays a conceptual plan for this location.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and 5-foot wide pavement markings to Route 154. (Example bike lane is shown in Exhibit 31.)

Medium-term

- 1) Convert Thayer Road Extension to one-way southbound at its intersection with Route 154. This would resolve the intersection sight distance deficiency without significantly hampering mobility. A paved turnaround area (e.g. hammerhead) at the end of Thayer Road Extension would be needed to allow town maintenance vehicles to turn around. As an alternative to construction of a turnaround, a full one-way Thayer Road Extension southbound between Route 154 and Thayer Road or a full closure of Thayer Road Extension between 6 Thayer Road and Route 154 with an emergency access gate can also be explored. Exhibit 32 displays an example of a road that was recently converted to one-way.

Long-term

- 1) Consider access management for adjacent properties in this area such as Fuel Stop and Dunkin Donuts.

5.2 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between Thayer Road Extension and Higganum Green

Recommendations within this segment have two priorities, first, to slow motorist speed, especially for southbound traffic entering Higganum Center, and second, to strengthen pedestrian connections both along and across Route 154. Access management strategies for the areas businesses could improve traffic patterns at this location.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and pavement markings. Remove existing on-street parking.

Medium-term

- 1) Construct a sidewalk on the north side of Route 154 east of the former elementary school.
- 2) Construct a sidewalk on the south side of Route 154 next to the roadway to resolve non-ADA-compliant grade issues in the Green.

Long-term

- 1) Pursue access management for adjacent properties such as Higgies and other business in the area.
- 2) Consider realigning Christian Hill Road as a T-intersection to reduce intersection skew and reduce conflicts. Consider directional signage in this area to define access points.

Exhibit 30- Northern map



Exhibit 31: Marked bike lane in West Hartford, CT (Source: FHI Studio)



Exhibit 32: Example of a residential street that was converted to one-way in West Hartford, CT. (Source: Google Maps Streetview)



5.3 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at Candlewood Hill Road

The recommendations in this area focus on improving pedestrian safety across Route 154 in this area. Furthermore, observations during the RSA showed drivers utilizing the shoulder in the southbound direction of Route 154 between Candlewood Hill and the intersection of Route 81 as a turning lane, which contributed to confusion at the intersection. The recommendations included in this section include a few access management restrictions or improvements to further delineate and enforce existing restrictions.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and 5-foot wide pavement markings to Route 154.

Medium-term

- 1) Close at least one driveway on the north side of Route 154 as part of the proposed lumberyard redevelopment. Suggested driveway to close is the southernmost driveway that is adjacent to Higganum Creek.
- 2) Consider reducing the width of Route 154 southbound between Candlewood Hill Road and Route 81. This could eliminate the use of the existing wide shoulder as a right turn lane. It would also reduce the pedestrian crossing distances, reduce the intersection skew at Candlewood Hill Road, and better distinguish the two adjacent intersections. Alternatively, this could also be done on a short-term basis through the use of painted roadway markings an/or flexible posts to “bump out” the intersection at this location, as shown in Exhibit 33.

- 3) Construct a sidewalk on the north side of Route 154 between the existing sidewalk that ends west of Depot Road up to the existing sidewalk from the former Elementary School.

Exhibit 33: An example of a painted bump out used to slow traffic and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians in Hartford (Source: FHI Studio)



5.4 Intersection of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) and Route 81 (Killingworth Road and Depot Road)

Recommendations in this area primarily focus on reducing vehicular speeds within Higganum Center and improving pedestrian circulation throughout the intersection.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and 5-foot wide pavement markings to Route 154.

Medium-term

- 1) Close at least one driveway on the north side of Route 154 as part of the proposed lumberyard redevelopment. Suggested driveway to close is the southernmost driveway that is adjacent to Higganum Creek.

5.5 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) at entrance to Higganum Village Market

The recommendations included in this area are focused on improving pedestrian safety and connectivity within the village by extending the sidewalk network and pursuing access management to further delineate the sidewalk from the driveway at Higganum Village Market. The addition of bike lane markings along Route 154 could also help to slow vehicular speeds throughout the Higganum Village in this location.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and 5-foot wide pavement markings to Route 154.

Medium-term

- 1) Extend the sidewalk on the south side of Route 154 to the bridge over Higganum Creek.

Long-term

- 1) Consider closing the east driveway to Higganum Village Market.

5.6 Route 154 (Saybrook Road) between Higganum Creek Bridge and Walkley Hill Road

The recommendations included here seek to provide both pedestrian and bicyclist amenities by expanding the sidewalk network and providing marked bike lanes along the roadway shoulder. These improvements could help to slow vehicular speeds, particularly northbound heading into Higganum Village.

Short-term

- 1) Add bike lane signs and 5-foot wide pavement markings to Route 154.
- 2) Re-stripe Route 154 to provide a consistent cross-section of 11-foot lanes and 5-foot shoulders. The additional width provided should be used for a pedestrian lane on the north side of the bridge, delineated by flex posts or another low-cost method.

Long-term

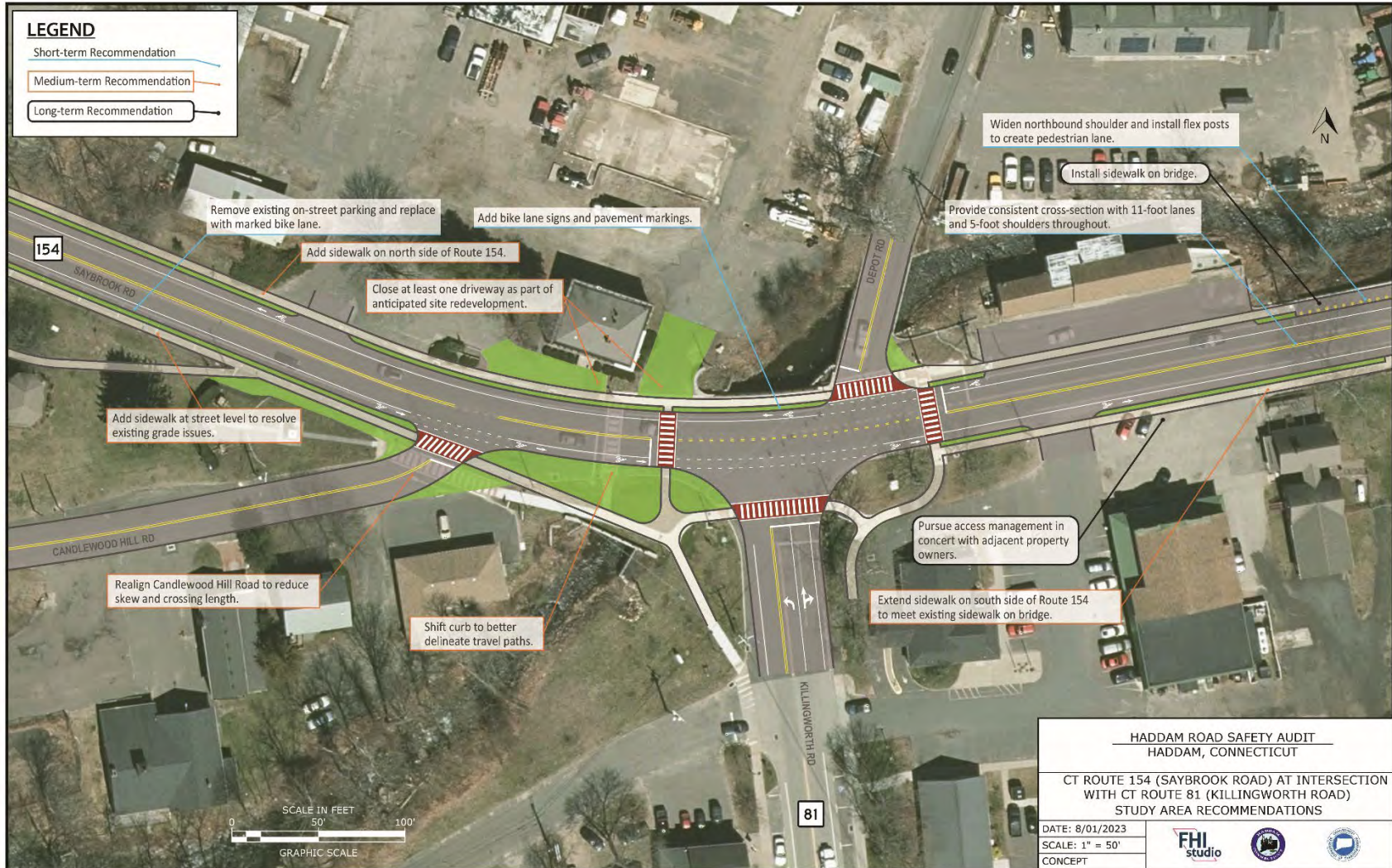
- 1) Install a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge.
- 2) Consider removing the existing flashing beacon at Landing Road.

Exhibit 34: Example of flex posts providing a buffer for pedestrians, Bolton, CT. (Source: Google Streetview Maps)



Exhibit 35 depicts these recommendations as a conceptual plan.

Exhibit 35 Southern map



6 SUMMARY

This report documents the observations, discussions, and recommendations developed during the completion of the Town of Haddam's RSA. It provides the Town with an outlined strategy to improve the transportation network for all users in the study area, particularly focusing on pedestrians and cyclists. Moving forward, the Town of Haddam and CTDOT may use this report to prepare strategies for funding and implementing the improvements. This report provides Haddam with a toolkit to plan for including these multi-modal recommendations into future development within the study area.

The aforementioned Community Connectivity Program: Road Safety Audit Report is an objective review intended for the municipality use to help assess the existing conditions within a predetermined area of town selected by the municipality. The conclusions of this report are advisory and intended for general planning purposes to help identify bicycle, pedestrian and non-motorized transportation needs that encourage walking and bicycling, as well as assists in developing recommendations to improve the existing conditions. The contents of this report are not intended to be legally binding, but rather offer recommendations to improve safety in the vicinity of the audit location and create a more appealing transportation alternative.

APPENDICES

A: Pre-Audit Presentation

B: Walk Audit Materials