

<p><b>Municipal Improvement PLPZ 2022 00301</b></p> <p><b>And Final Site Plan PLPZ 2022 00302</b></p>	<p><b>Municipal Improvement and Final Site Plan</b></p> <p>To make improvements to two (2) intersections of Greenwich Avenue, at Arch Street / Havemeyer Place and Grigg Street / Fawcett Place.</p>
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<p><b>EXISTING ZONING:</b></p>	<p>CGBR</p>
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**UPDATE:**

The proposal was heard at the 7/7/22 meeting. The applicant reiterated the certain safety and design parameters which they must meet, including:

1. Turning movements must meet design standards for all vehicles including fire trucks and large truck traffic.
2. ADA accessible parking stalls with dedicated curb ramps and proper grading.
3. Add at least 10 total parking spaces.
4. Parking meters will remain, and any parking added will be metered parking.
5. Provide opportunities to continue outdoor dining is based on significant public comments.
6. Do not remove any trees.
7. Remain within Town ROW.
8. Provide additional amenities bike racks, benches, trash cans etc.

Understanding that, the Commission members requested the applicant consider the following:

Maintain all pedestrian (and vehicular) safety measures in principle throughout the proposed re-design of the two intersections, consolidate green space, simplify geometry, and be more subtle with changes to the intersection by respecting the existing historic fabric and asymmetry. To that end, consider the following:

- a) Integrate the new design within the context of the surrounding historic setting by highlighting, not hiding, existing monuments.
- b) Reduce the number of small, disparate patches of green space and try to create larger connected green areas.
- c) Plant more trees in these expanded green spaces wherever possible.
- d) Decrease dramatically all paved surfaces, particularly the pedestrian gathering areas at the tips of the intersection improvement.
- e) Eliminate the proposed “patios” in front of the multiple restaurants at both intersections and convert them to single broader strips of green space with new tree plantings.
- f) Traffic lights may be installed on Greenwich Ave at some point in the future. The improvements need to be designed such that they would not conflict in any way with future traffic lights.
- g) The proposed island at the top of Arch Street means pedestrians must cross Arch Street twice to pass from one side of that street to the other. Eliminating this island is a high priority. Additionally having traffic lights at this intersection would presumably eliminate the need for this island.
- h) Consider the input from the ADA representative. These improvements must significantly help the physically challenged and elderly.

- i) All war memorials should have unobstructed sight lines from the sidewalks and the streets and should not be hid behind shrubbery.

Pursuant to the Greenwich Town Charter and the relevant State Statute, the Commission is empowered to seek advisory opinions in its work. To the end, the Commission asked the applicant to meet with the Greenscape Committee for their recommendations on the above and specifically asked that staff to the Historic District Commission and the First Selectman's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities and the Commission on Aging also attend. This meeting is an open meeting set for Friday July 15 at 1:00 as was posted on the Town website and in the Town Clerks Office.

#### Background on Greenscape:

1. Greenscape was formed by the Planning and Zoning Commission after the approval of the 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development as a cross functional body to assist in implementation of certain POCD goals. The first among these has been the tree planting project for the Post Road.
2. Greenscape is advisory to the P&Z Commission. When P&Z refers a matter to Greenscape, it does not delegate its authority.
3. The membership of Greenscape is position based:
  - Chair of Architectural Review Committee (ARC)
  - Landscape Architect from the ARC (currently the Vice Chair of ARC)
  - Tree Warden
  - Greenwich Tree Conservancy
  - Conservation Dept
  - DPW
  - Town Planner
  - P&Z Staff Member with Landscaping background
  - Chair and Secretary of P&Z Commission
4. As an example of Greenscape member credentials:
  - Richard Hein, chair, Harvard University Graduate School of Design <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) Architectural Design, Landscape Design, Planning.
  - John Conte, vice chair, registered Landscape Architect in Connecticut and New York and a CT State licensed Arborist. John holds a degree in Horticulture from the State University of New York and has studied Architectural History at Columbia University and Horticulture at Harvard Graduate School of Design.
  - Greg Kramer, Town Tree Warden, has worked for The Wildlife Conservation Society, The New York City Parks Department, Tavern on the Green, New York Restoration Project, and Bok Tower Gardens. Bok Tower Gardens marks the fifth Frederick Law Olmsted-designed public space Greg has worked in. Greg holds a bachelor's in biology/botany from the University of Miami, master's in environmental horticulture from the University of Florida, and completed his doctorate in plant medicine from the University of Florida in December of 2016.
  - Anne Young staff of the HDC, Member and former Chair, Historic District Commission and Executive Board Director of Greenwich Preservation Trust, Young also served as Curator of Library and Archives for the Historical Society. She has worked in special collections at the Frick Art Reference Library, Knoedler Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other leading arts and cultural organizations.

5. All Greenscape Committee meetings are posted and open to the public.

**ORIGINAL REPORT:**

**APPLICATION SUMMARY:**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is requesting Municipal Improvement and Final Site Plan approval to make improvements to two (2) intersections of Greenwich Avenue, at Arch Street / Havemeyer Place and Grigg Street / Fawcett Place.

The offset approaches of Arch St & Havemeyer Place create an unsafe situation where vehicles must travel up the wrong direction of Greenwich Avenue to get from Arch Street to Havemeyer Place. The Fawcett Pl/Grigg Street location is identified as the 7th ranked location (of 59) in WestCOG's 2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN, Top Non-Motorized Crash Locations in the Western Connecticut Region, 2015-2018, CORRIDORS. The purpose of for these intersection improvements is to address roadway safety concerns, beautify the areas, and implement Complete Streets policies that improve safety and accessibility for all users. This project:

- 1) increases the amount of parking by 10-12 parking spaces,
- 2) shortens the crossing distance for pedestrians,
- 3) improves intersection visibility,
- 4) properly aligns Arch Street with Havemeyer Place and it significantly improves accessibility for persons with disabilities,
- 5) increase the amount of greenspace,
- 6) provide patio areas,
- 7) add benches, bike racks decorative crosswalks and street lights, and
- 8) improve the connection to the public gather spaces such as the greenspaces near the Greenwich Common, the Havemeyer Building and Restoration Hardware, and improves the sidewalk connect to the memorial on the Havemeyer property.

The proposed improvements will not remove or compromise any trees.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:**

**Conservation (6/27/22):**

1. The proposed Greenwich Avenue improvements will increase the area of green space by 7280 s.f., which will benefit the storm water management, offer cooling to the heat island created by the pavement, moderate the noise and air pollution, and if planted with native species, may provide some foraging opportunities for local pollinators. It is recommended a planting plan be provided so the above functions of this area could be fully evaluated.
2. Several sections of the proposed green space are vey narrow. Locked between tall curbs and a pavement planter, future maintenance may be challenging. The footings for cement curbing are likely to intrude below the planter area, leaving less space for the root system to expand. Pavement situated on both sides of the planter emanate heat during the

summer, making the condition harsh for plants to grow. It is important to choose the right plant material to decrease the cost of long-term maintenance and have the plan for irrigation developed in advance.

3. The design focuses heavily on pedestrian safety and experience, leaving considerations for cyclists lacking. The new improvements narrow the roads which decreases the separating distance between vehicles and cyclists. This risk is exacerbated by the tall stone curbs guard the sidewalks that make them impossible for bike refuge. Riding bikes on sidewalks anywhere along Greenwich Avenue is prohibited by Town ordinance. Therefore, cyclists are limited to the road and the bump outs will impact cyclist safety. Consequently, the proposed approach is not consistent with complete street principles that encourage new road designs to consider all modes of transportation.

#### Historic District Commission (6/28/22):

1. A motion was made on the intersection improvements for Greenwich Avenue and Arch Street / Havemeyer Place whereby the Historic District Commission strongly believed that the presented plan did not reflect the historic nature of the corner (Arch Street/Greenwich Avenue) as it pertained to the present triangular shape created by the two roadways and it did not identify a specific planting list; that the Historic District Commission did support the Department of Public Works reaching out to the various veterans' associations and incorporating their suggestions regarding approaches to the Bolling Memorial and care and promotion of the Civil War (G.A.R.) plaque and commemorative tree; and that the Historic District Commission expressed strong interest in reviewing a completed greenscape plan for the intersection corners that incorporates plantings, landscaping, seating, and any partitions separating greenspaces from walkways. This motion was approved unanimously.
2. A motion was made on the intersection improvements for Greenwich Avenue and Fawcett Place / Grigg Street whereby the Historic District Commission accepted the proposed design with the condition that the Fawcett Place crossing be straightened so as to run parallel to Greenwich Avenue; and as the design presented did not identify a specific planting list, the Historic District Commission expressed strong interest in reviewing a completed greenscape plan for the intersection corners that incorporates plantings, landscaping, seating, and any partitions separating greenspaces from walkway. This motion carried a majority vote approval with one dissent. The Historic District Commission recognized the historic importance of the Greenwich Avenue and Arch Street / Havemeyer Place intersection and hopes to be involved in assisting in the future design process.

#### Issues to Address:

1. The opposition to these intersection improvements claim the following:
  - a. Not to Standards, Less Safe, Cause Traffic, Hinder Turns
  - b. More costly to Maintain
  - c. Aesthetic Appeal Wears Quickly; Out of Character
  - d. No Current Safety Issue
  - e. Loss of on-Avenue Parking
  - f. Not Coordinated with Outdoor Dining

- g. Greenwich Ave is a shared resource, most shoppers/diners arrive by car, not on foot
2. Has any data been collected on accidents, pedestrian and vehicular, before and after those built at Elm Street?
3. The bump outs shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians but because these are busy uncontrolled intersections with pedestrians crossing at will there are complaints that drivers eventually become impatient, moving forward regardless of their sequence or the presence of pedestrians. Is there data to support controlling the intersection?
  - a. Note: BET approved \$75,000 in the 22/23 fiscal year for Planning and Zoning to work in coordination with other applicable Departments to undertake a comprehensive study of Greenwich Avenue traffic that take in to account bump outs, outdoor dining, double parking.
4. Arch Street would be a two-lane two-way street with diagonal parking on the east side. A car waiting for or backing from a space would delay incoming, northbound traffic. The plan shows an extension of the triangular plaza north of Restoration Hardware with a turn lane for drivers who want to go south on Greenwich Avenue. This turn lane has a pedestrian crosswalk that leaves space for one car on each side. If two cars want to use this turn lane, but are blocked by a pedestrian, could it back up inbound traffic on Arch Street or tempt the second driver to go up to Greenwich Avenue, where No Right Turn will be permitted?

### **APPLICATION DETAILS:**

While there is ongoing discussion regarding the removal of police officers from Greenwich Avenue at the Arch Street intersection, the focus of these intersection improvements is on improving pedestrian safety and experience. *This project would not preclude traffic signals if they were found to be warranted in the future, however the scope of this study did not include traffic signals* (emphasis added). The proposed improvements work with the existing all-way stop control or with an officer directing traffic and take into consideration existing trees and plantings, the decorative clock (to remain), existing amenities (newspaper rack, benches, trash receptacles) with the ability to replace as needed if new standards are developed for Greenwich Avenue or throughout Town.

### **Crash Data**

Greenwich Ave experiences +/- 90 crashes per year along its entire length. Between 1/1/17 and 4/1/20 there were +/- 15 crashes at Arch St/Havemeyer Pl and +/-10 crashes at Fawcett Pl/Grigg St. Angled parking, heavy traffic volumes, and poor sight distances contribute to the high rate of crashes along the corridor. A wide roadway cross-section, double parking, end-parking, and large sport utility vehicles contribute to poor sight lines for pedestrians crossing Greenwich Ave. The offset approaches of Arch St & Havemeyer Place create an unsafe situation where vehicles must travel up the wrong direction of Greenwich Avenue to get from Arch St to Havemeyer Pl. The Fawcett Pl/Grigg St location is identified as the 7th ranked location (of 59) in WestCOG's 2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN, Top Non-Motorized Crash Locations in the Western Connecticut Region, 2015-2018, CORRIDORS.

### **Proposed Improvements – Crossing Distance**

The bulb-out intersection design provides shortened crossing distances for pedestrians. For the six existing crossings in this project, the average crossing distance will reduce by 25-53% with the

proposed improvements. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) recommends utilizing an average pedestrian walking speed of 3.5 feet per second when designing intersections. The proposed improvement will shorten the crossing time by an average of 5 seconds. The ITE also recommends utilizing a pedestrian travel speed of 2.5 feet per second for elderly populations. Using this speed, the crossing time is reduced by an average of 7 seconds. Additionally, shortening the crosswalks brings pedestrians closer to the travel lane while waiting for an opportunity to cross. This makes waiting pedestrians more visible to drivers and improves the visual connection between driver and pedestrian.

## Pedestrian Traffic

Intersection Name on Greenwich Ave.	Weekday AM Peak Hour	Weekday PM Peak Hour	Sat. Mid-day Peak Hour
WEST PUTNAM AVE.	37	57	92
AMOGERONE CROSSWAY	68	152	355
LEWIS ST.	104	300	650
ELM ST.	174	323	804
ARCH ST. / HAVEMEYER PL.	259	342	755
FAWCETT PL. / GRIGG ST.	186	403	799
BRUCE PARK AVE. / STEAMBOAT RD.	243	305	239

Average daily vehicular traffic on Greenwich Avenue is 4,500 cars.

### Green Space and Maintenance

One objective of the proposed plan is to offer additional opportunity for planting and green space along Greenwich Avenue. Several new planting beds are incorporated into the plan. The Town of Greenwich Parks Department will be assisting in identifying plants that will be attractive, easily maintainable and low enough as to not obstruct sightlines for vehicles approaching the intersection.

The total green space in the proposed plan is approximately 7,280 SF. This is a net increase of 160% over the existing 4,570 SF of existing green space. This equates to approximately 2,710 SF of impervious surfaces being removed and replaced with green space.

### Bike Racks

Bike activity along Greenwich Avenue is considered low. This is likely due to the volume of vehicles, steep slopes and angled parking. However, there have been requests for bike racks to be installed along Greenwich Avenue to encourage multi-modal transportation. The proposed plan incorporates 5 bike rack locations. Each rack is located on a concrete pad, not within the pedestrian travel areas, and easily accessible from the sidewalk and adjacent roadway. The bike racks will be U-shape and have space for 2 bicycles at each bike rack.

### ADA Accessibility

The proposed plan includes improved access to, and slope of ADA accessible parking spaces. This includes a dedicated pedestrian ramp at each ADA accessible parking space to provide improved access to the sidewalk. Detectable warning panels will be located at each transition from sidewalk to roadway. The addition of stone curbing around the planting beds will better define these areas as well.

### Parking

The proposed plan will add 12 total spaces between the two proposed intersections involved in this project. At the Arch St/Havemeyer Pl intersection, the new layout results in a net gain of +9 standard spaces and +1 ADA space. By realigning Arch Street, we create room for a row of 13 spaces to be installed directly fronting the pocket park where the WW1 monument is located. Additionally, a new ADA parking space is proposed at the southeast corner of the intersection. These new parking changes will more than account for the parking lost due to the installation of the bulb-outs. At the Fawcett Pl/Grigg St intersection, the new layout results in a net gain of +2 standard spaces. By converting the parking stalls on Fawcett Pl from 45° angled parking to 60° angled parking and adding parking at the northeast corner directly in front of Richards, the spaces lost from the bulb-out installation are mitigated. Overall, these changes will result in a 15% increase in standard parking stalls and a 20% increase in ADA parking stalls.

### Trees

As part of the Greenwich Avenue Streetscape capital project, MMI and the Tree Warden have been evaluating the health and condition of the street trees along Greenwich Avenue. Three trees within the project limits of the proposed project were identified to be in decent health and will be maintained and protected in place during construction. The newly expanded planting areas will include these existing tree locations. One or more additional trees may be planted in the new planting beds.

### Lighting

With pedestrians being brought closer to the intersection, it will be important to bring the lighting closer to the crosswalks as well. The existing light poles closest to the intersections will be relocated closer to the crosswalks. This will help illuminate the new areas of sidewalk and make pedestrians more visible to drivers as they approach the intersection.

**Complete Streets:**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) released a report to Congress detailing the agency's commitment to advance widespread implementation of the Complete Streets design model to help improve safety and accessibility for all users. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law defines Complete Streets standards or policies as those which "ensure the safe and adequate accommodation of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles."

Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are traveling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders. The concept of Complete Streets encompasses many approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient. -- U.S Department of Transportation

Upgrades to the intersection of Greenwich Avenue with Elm Street (next intersection to the north) were completed in June 2021.

**POCD:**

This Municipal Improvement application was made pursuant to Section 99 of the Town Charter, which requires Municipal Improvement approval for major redesigns of Town roads. Guiding Principle 5 of the 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development states Maintain economic vitality and thriving commercial centers. Specifically 5.4(i.) noted Coordinate with the Department of Public Works to craft the work plan for downtown Greenwich. The plan could range from simple paving to a major public works project, involving a range of infrastructure replacement, such as underground utilities, lighting, stormwater handling/tree wells, etc., all in keeping with the historical character of the Town.

5.4(c). Develop a plan to strengthen the Town center, comprising the Public Safety Complex, the Senior Center and Greenwich Arts Council, the Board of Education in the Havemeyer building, Greenwich Common (park and playing field), and the Town Hall. The plan should look to build community pride through public activities in and around the buildings and parks of the Town center.

Per Sec. 6-13(a)(8) the applicant has filed a site plan application in conjunction with an application for Municipal Improvement.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There is considerable interest in these improvements. A sampling of public comments have been included in this report that encompass the majority of the sentiments expressed.