



SCARSDALE STRATEGIC MOBILITY + PLACEMAKING PLAN

Key Findings from Data Analysis

June 2022



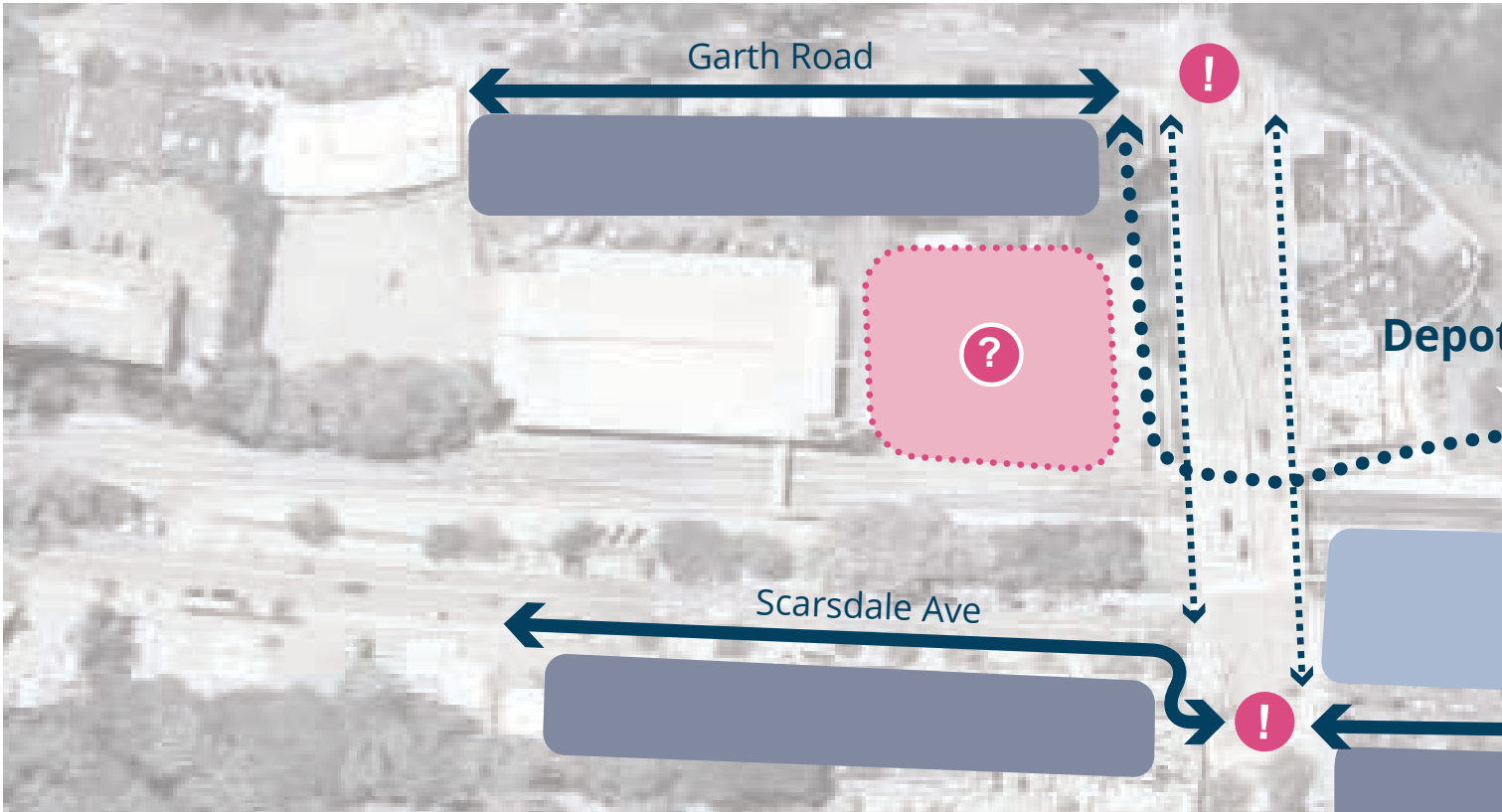
Prepared by FHI Studio for
the Village of Scarsdale

Overview

The Scarsdale Strategic Mobility + Placemaking Plan is a community-driven transportation planning effort to identify and address challenges and opportunities in the Village Center. The plan's goals are to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, provide access for all users, improve traffic flow and circulation, activate public spaces, and incorporate sustainability. This document presents the key findings from the Information Gathering and Data Analysis phases of the project. A more comprehensive overview is available in the appendix. This document includes a review of the following:

- Community and stakeholder feedback
- Relevant planning documents
- Traffic studies
- Drone data collection
- Crash data analysis

The results of this document will guide the project team and larger community as recommendations are developed. Based off the analysis of this memo, the three focus area roadways recommended for concept plans under the existing planning effort are Popham Road, Spencer Place, and Boniface Circle. Higher-level planning recommendations will be made for Fox Meadow Road, Crane Road, and Depot Place.



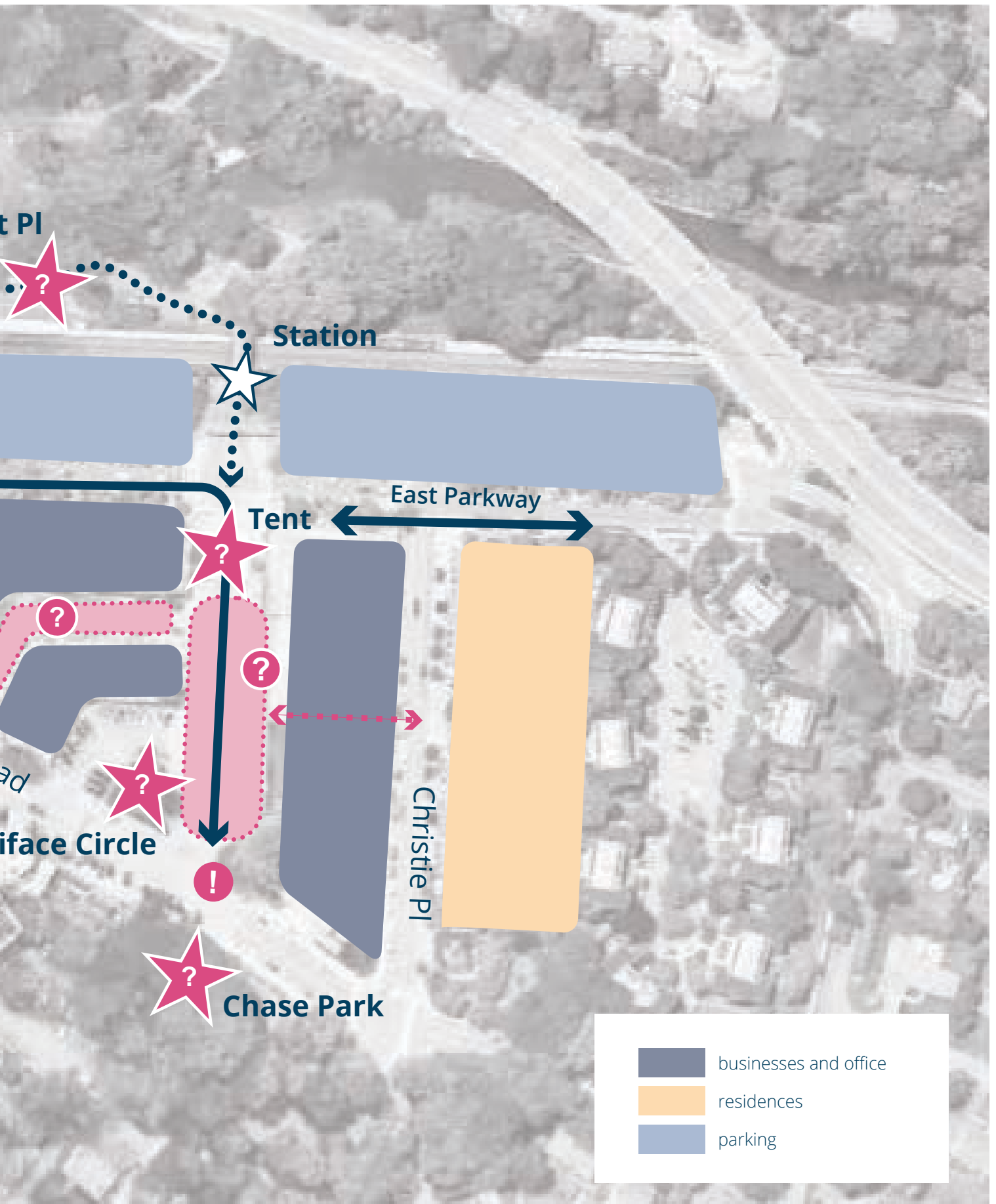
Conceptual Summary

The Village Center contains several key nodes (★) that stakeholders noted have great potential but often lack definition. These are potential activity centers within that could be the target of placemaking efforts to support gathering places for the community.

These nodes are connected through a relatively well-established pedestrian network. Drone data confirm that there is substantial through traffic (↔) along Christie Place, East Parkway, and Scarsdale Avenue. Stakeholders noted there is a great, but hidden, secondary connection from the Village Center core to the restaurants on Garth Road through the train station (◀••▶). After Metro North Railroad completes the construction of the elevator at the station, this connection will become handicap accessible. There are pedestrian connections (◀••▶) across the Popham Road Bridge. Although stakeholders acknowledged that the Popham Road bridge is not as comfortable for pedestrians as it could be, drone data confirmed that pedestrians are using this bridge to cross the tracks

There are four intersections (!) that create significant challenges for non-motorized road users and reduce access to key destinations. Three of these intersections are on Popham Road, which is recommended as a focus area for further analysis in this study.

Stakeholders also noted areas (⊙) that could be substantially re-imagined. The Freightway site has been the subject of recent planning efforts. Feedback from those efforts has been reviewed, however, the redevelopment of that site is not included in this planning effort. Stakeholders also identified Spencer Place and Harwood Court as opportunities where pedestrians could be prioritized over other road users. Additional locations, such as Crane Road, Christie Place, and Fox Meadow Road emerged as significant for access to the Village Center but less critical for placemaking initiatives.



Key Finding

Gathering spaces are a critical need to increasing vibrancy in the Village Center.

For at least the past decade, planning processes and surveys have documented resident and business support for increased gathering spaces in the Village Center. Outdoor dining, farmers markets, concert spaces, benches, and other types of people-oriented spaces have been supported by residents.

The success of the Dine in the 'Dale tent demonstrates that these requests were real and that there is a pressing need for more gathering spaces. As one walk audit participant noted, the demand for programming exceeds the capacity of the tent.

The process by which the Dine in the 'Dale tent was created also demonstrates how Scarsdale might move itself towards a more vibrant Village Center. The use of so-called tactical urbanism, or the use of temporary materials to test changes to the built environment, is a well-established mechanism for increasing vibrancy while testing ideas before full implementation.

Based on the success of the Dine in the 'Dale tent and feedback received during the engagement effort, there is a demonstrated need for a more permanent structure that offers weather protection but is made of

higher quality materials. However, some stakeholders shared concerns about parking impacts. A tactical urbanism approach, informed by the findings of this study, should identify a suitable location for a more permanent structure that has the lowest impact on the mobility network.

Going forward, the Village should consider purchasing additional tactical urbanism tools (movable planters, benches, lighting, barriers, and the like) that will allow it to explore:

- how different areas could be transformed,
- the impacts of those transformations on the mobility network and nearby businesses, and
- which transformations are appropriate long-term investment.

Additional spaces for programming on surrounding streets or in Village Center parks (i.e., Chase Park, Boniface Circle) may offer additional gathering spaces.



During the walk audit, the project team stops in the Dine in the 'Dale tent to discuss what has worked and what improvements are needed.

Key Finding

Spencer Place, Boniface Circle, and Harwood Court offer opportunity for placemaking initiatives.

The drone data demonstrated how vehicles and pedestrians are using Spencer Place, Boniface Circle, and Harwood Court during afternoon peak traffic hours. These streets primarily serve vehicles seeking parking or picking up/dropping off passengers. Of the estimated 115 vehicles entering Spencer Place or Boniface Circle, only 29% of vehicles continue to East Parkway. This indicates that these roads serve local traffic circulation and, to a smaller degree, cut-through traffic destined to other places.

The streets in the Village core function as parking lots. The drone video shows an estimated parking turnover rate of 61 vehicles in the afternoon peak hour in the on-street spaces. With 84 total parking spaces on these roads (including the 12 that are removed when the tent is present), the turnover is about 73% during the afternoon peak hour, indicating that short duration parking is in high demand.

Table 1. On-street Parking Spaces in Village Center Core

| Street | Number of On-Street Spaces |
|--|----------------------------|
| Boniface Circle | 22 |
| Spencer Place (with tent/without tent) | 31/43 |
| Harwood Court | 19 |

Streets that do not have a significant role in through travel are often ideal for open streets events where streets are closed to vehicles. These events can offer opportunities for expanded outdoor dining, concerts, farmers markets, community meetings, art, or other programming. Elements such as bollards or moveable planters can prevent vehicles from entering. More permanent solutions, such as curb-less streets or shared streets can preserve the parking while placing a stronger emphasis on pedestrian and cyclist level of comfort and ADA accessibility. These ideas should be explored further in the study.

Movements by Type along Spencer Place, Boniface Circle, and Harwood



— pedestrians
— vehicles

Case Study

Suburban Square

Suburban Square in Ardmore, PA provides an example of how an internal street can be designed to prioritize pedestrians while also serving local traffic. Like Spencer Place, St James Street only serves local traffic for commercial land uses. A portion of the street was designed with pavers, ballards, curbs, and planters to ensure that pedestrians are prioritized. Further down the street, parking provides access to local businesses.

Shared St James Street in Suburban Square (Ardmore, PA)



Sources: Google Maps (left); Google Street View (top right); Suburban Square (bottom right)

Key Finding

Popham Road should be redesigned to establish better multimodal connectivity.

Popham Road presents challenging safety and connectivity issues in the Village Center. Popham Road is a two-lane, 26-foot-wide roadway approaching the Village Center from the east. The roadway expands to five lanes (about 60 feet) in the Village Center where the highest volume of pedestrian activity occurs. This implies that the current design aims to emphasize efficient vehicle throughput, which has implications for non-motorized access, safety and comfort. As walk audit participants noted, Popham Road's current design:

- Has long crossing distances and times for pedestrians
- Creates a perceived barrier between the Village Center core and adjacent destinations such as Scarsdale Avenue, Garth Road, Depot Place, and the neighborhoods to the south and west

Popham Road is also a challenging environment for vehicles. Between 2016 and 2019, the Popham Road intersections in the study area accounted for 128 documented crashes. The Popham Road/East Parkway intersection alone had 60 documented crashes, the highest crash location in the study area.

Table 2. Popham Road Crashes in the Study Area, 2016-2019

| Intersections | No. of Crashes, 2016-2019 |
|---|---------------------------|
| Popham Road/East Parkway/Scarsdale Avenue | 60 |
| Popham Road/Garth Road/Depot Place | 40 |
| Popham Road/Chase Road/Overhill Road | 28 |
| Total | 128 |

Source: Scarsdale Police Department

Previous traffic studies, planning documents, and feedback from the walk audit¹ have noted the following challenges.

- Narrow lane widths (less than nine feet) in the eastbound direction between East Parkway and Chase Road
- Eastbound through lane at East Parkway becomes a turn lane by

¹ More detail about these data sources is available in the appendix.

Chase Road, forcing many eastbound drivers to change lanes

- Skewed intersection at Chase Road resulting in difficult turning movements
- Significant sun glare

Based off the existing resources, there are a few potential improvement opportunities to consider:

- **Lane reduction may be feasible.** Popham Road between Garth Road and Chase Road has an estimated 12,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (2019).² Four lane roads with turn lanes that have traffic counts under 15,000 are often considered good candidates for lane reductions.³
- **Westbound right-turn lanes at Chase Road, East Parkway, and Depot Place are lightly used.** Each of these movements serves less than 40 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak hour as observed during drone data collection. This suggests the space can potentially be reallocated for pedestrian, bicycle, or landscaping use.
- **Pedestrian signal upgrades may yield significant benefit to pedestrians.** Leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), which give pedestrians a lead time to cross the road before the vehicles are permitted to go, can increase pedestrian visibility and safety. Audible pedestrian signals and increasing pedestrian crossing time may provide additional benefit to people with limited vision and/or mobility.

² New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Traffic Data Viewer, 2019. <https://www.dot.ny.gov/tdv>

³ Federal Highway Administration. Road Diet FAQ. https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/pdf/fhwasa17021.pdf

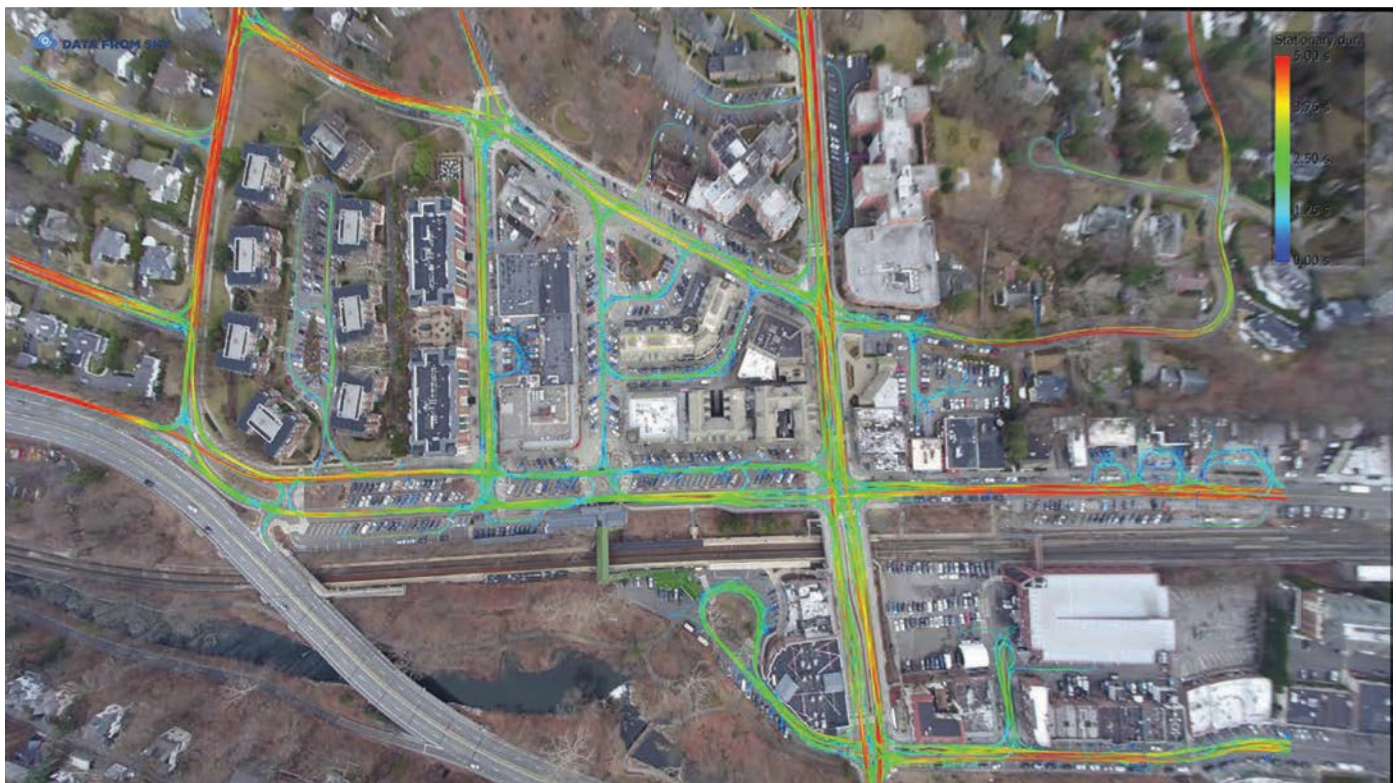
Key Finding

Improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the Village Center is an important goal of the Village.

Walk audit participants and previous planning documents note the need to increase activity in the Village Center by improving bicycle and pedestrian access. The drone data collection found that the highest vehicle speeds (speeds exceeding 30 mph) are located on roads that are critical access points for cyclists and pedestrians, including Crane Road, Fox Meadow Road, Popham Road, Chase Road, and Scarsdale Avenue. Infrastructure that reduces vehicle speeds on these roads should be explored. In most cases, the current lane configuration and roadway width

does not allow space for on-street bike infrastructure. Further consideration of potential lane changes, such as lane width reductions, road diets, or one-way streets may offer opportunities for bike or sidewalk infrastructure. Additionally, property line data indicates that Village-owned property is wider than the existing paved road surface in many cases, so sidewalks or bike infrastructure may be added in certain locations without any changes to the existing roadway.

Movements by Speed through Village Center



Drone data showing vehicle tracks by speed through the study area. Tracks in blue and green represent speeds lower than 30 mph, while tracks in yellow and red represent vehicle speeds up to 40 mph or higher.

Additional considerations include:

- Installing more bike parking, potentially including secure bike storage for commuters.
- Improving ADA access using smooth surfaces (not cobblestones, or slate sidewalks), pedestrian signals, and curb ramps with ADA warning pads (raised, truncated domes).
- Incorporating sustainable landscaping to help with stormwater management and to improve aesthetics of the pedestrian environment
- Providing improved access across the rail tracks is needed to improve connectivity between the Village Center core and Depot Place/Garth Road

Conclusions and Next Steps

This Data Analysis Memo outlines the primary opportunities and challenges in the Village Center pertaining to placemaking and mobility. The information collected in this phase of the study will be used to formulate different concepts that will be shared for additional community input. The scope for the next phase of this study includes three focus areas for concept plans and sketch level renderings. Based off the analysis done in this report, the project team recommends the following three locations:

- **Popham Road between Chase Road and Depot Place** needs a redesign based off the currently underutilized westbound right turn lanes. Moreover, this segment contains three of the highest crash locations in the study area and is a perceived barrier to connecting the various parts of the Village Center.
- **Spencer Place** has received considerable attention from stakeholders in previous planning efforts. Given the recent success of the Dine in the 'Dale tent, now is the time to continue to build momentum and find how the space can be transitioned to a more permanent solution.
- **Boniface Circle** is a small street that can have a big impact on the community. As the "heart center" of the Village, it is a prime location for expanding the programming the community has requested.

Other corridors will not be excluded from further analysis. Higher-level planning recommendations could be made on other roadways, including Fox Meadow Road, Crane Road, and Depot Place. The intersection of East Parkway and the Bronx River Parkway exit requires further study in coordination with Westchester County, but feedback and observations at this location can still be documented as part of this study