

## **Summarizing the Wellsboro Community Survey**

### ***Background/Overview***

In engaging transportation stakeholders throughout Wellsboro, the study team mailed a community survey to every property owner within the borough. The survey was also designed to inform borough property owners of a public open house to be held on the evening of Thursday, September 25, at the Wellsboro High School auditorium.

### **Survey Design**

The team designed the survey to be completed in a minimal amount of time. The survey instrument itself featured two demographic-related questions, along with a series of 25 additional questions to gauge community preferences on a range of issues. The issues surveyed were based on project data collection efforts to date. An open-ended question collected perspectives on issues not specifically addressed in the survey. A self-addressed envelope (without postage) was included as part of the survey mailing.

### **Survey Mailing**

Using records from the tax assessment office, the team identified all property owners within the borough. After eliminating duplicates from the database, the team mailed 1,070 surveys on Tuesday, September 16, 2008.

### **Response Rate**

In all, the team received 276 surveys for a response rate of nearly 26 percent, which is excellent for this type of mailing. Nearly two-thirds of all surveys were completed and returned within the first week of mailing. Survey respondents had the option of mailing the survey to the planning team, dropping off a copy at the borough office, or bringing a copy to the open house.<sup>1</sup>

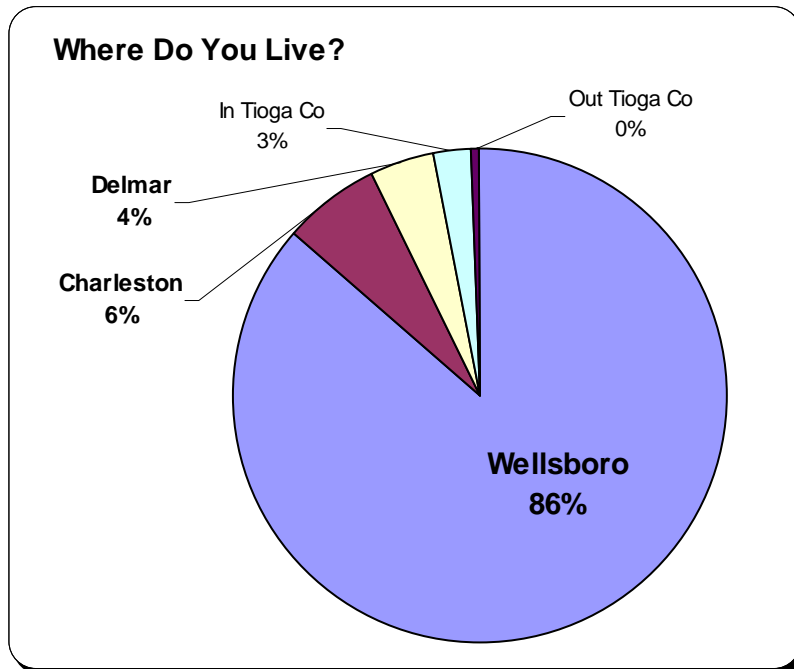
### **Summary of Results**

This section briefly summarizes a few highlights of the survey results.

---

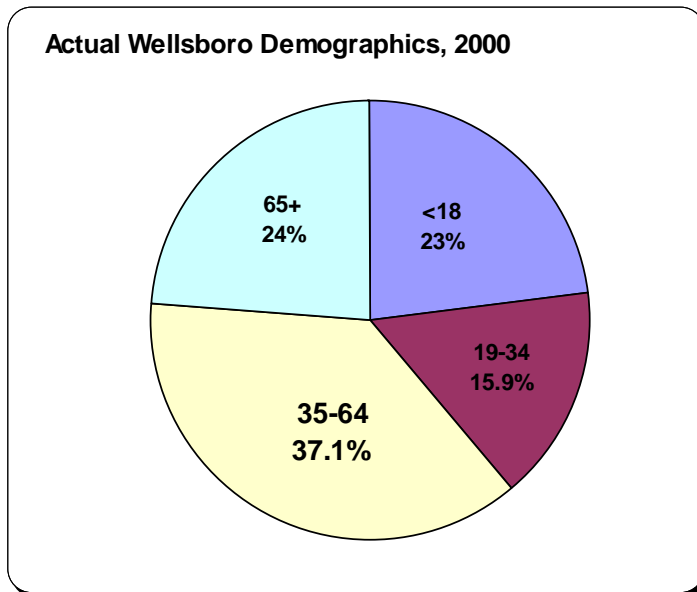
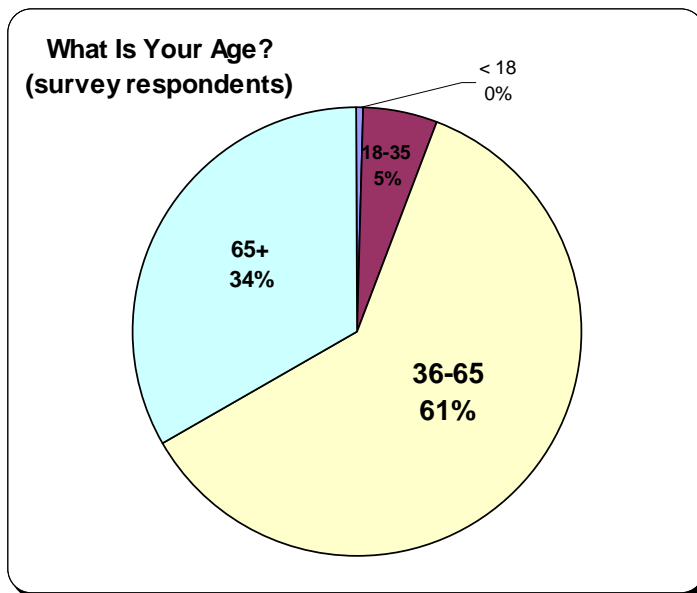
<sup>1</sup> The response rate for the sample size gives the study team 95 percent confidence that the survey results accurately reflect community preferences to within 5 percentage points.

**Figure 1 – Where Do You Live?**



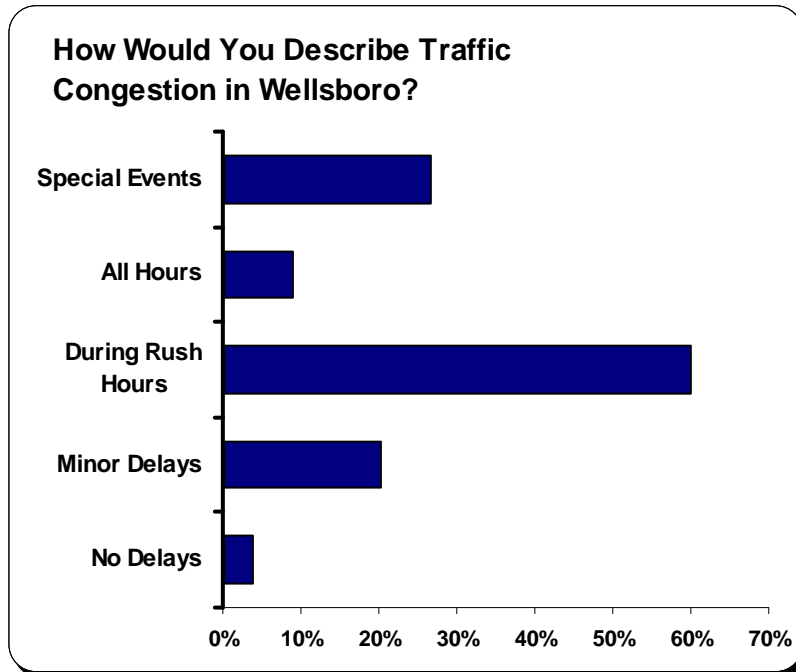
THE TEAM MAILED SURVEYS to all property owners within Wellsboro Borough. As might be expected, a majority of survey respondents (86 percent) reside within the borough. Another 11 percent were from neighboring Charleston and Delmar Townships, while the rest resided somewhere else within Tioga County.

**Figure 2 – What Is Your Age?**



A MAJORITY OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (61 percent) were people between the ages of 36 and 65. While the Census Bureau records indicate that only 24 percent of the borough's population is over the age of 65, over one third of survey respondents indicated they were in that particular age group. This means that survey results are oriented more toward the perspectives of those over the age of 35.

**Figure 3 - How Would You Describe Congestion in Wellsboro?**



SURVEY RESPONDENTS indicated experiencing congestion within the borough primarily during peak periods (60 percent), while 9 percent said they experience congestion at “all hours of the day.” Roughly 1 in 5 described typical congestion as “minor delays” while 4 percent indicated experiencing “no delays.”

There were 52 respondents who provided more than one answer to this survey question...mainly some combination of “Special Event Congestion” (27 percent) and other forms of recurring and non-recurring congestion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Totals for this question will thus add to more than 100 percent

**Table 1 – Highest Rated Issues...by Percent Reporting “Very Important”**

Issue	Percent Saying “Very Important”
Improving the intersection of Main, Tioga and Charleston	81.7
Ensuring pedestrian safety	76.5
Ensuring safe walking routes to area schools	62.4
Improving roadway conditions	62.3
Sidewalk maintenance	61.2
Maintaining the borough’s historic character	59.8
Availability of sidewalks and crosswalks	56.8
Better enforcement of traffic laws (speeding, etc.)	55.0

OF THE 25 ISSUES on the survey, only the ones that appear in Table 1 above scored higher than 50 percent of all respondents indicating various issues as “Very Important.”

The intersection of Main, Tioga, and Charleston—a primary impetus for this enhancement strategy and mobility plan—easily ranks as the community’s top transportation concern. Only 5 percent of survey respondents indicated it was “Less Important” as a transportation issue—the lowest such percentage rate for any of the transportation issues on the survey.

Pedestrian safety and accommodation also ranked highly in the community survey of transportation issues.

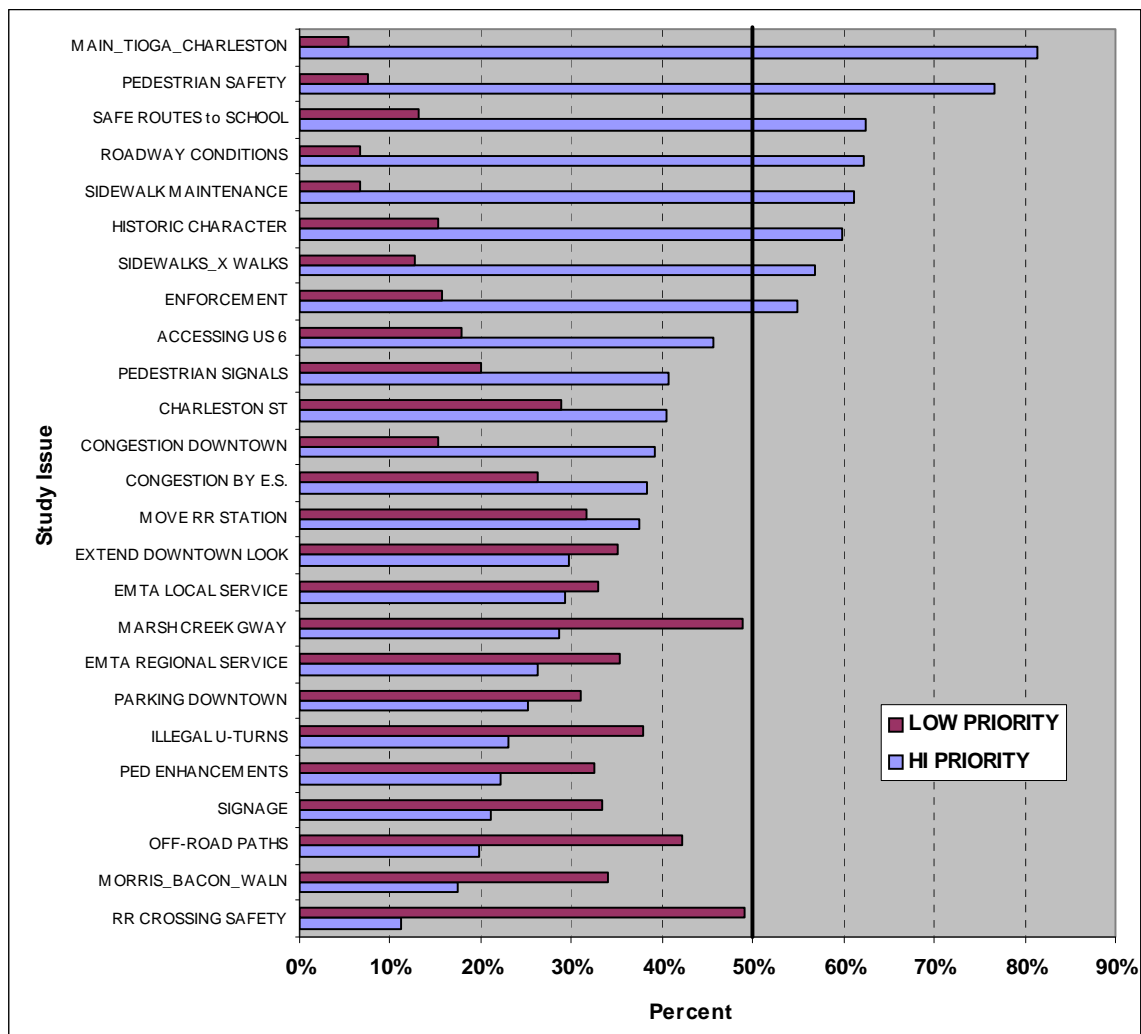
**Table 2 – Lowest Rated Issues...by Percent Reporting “Less Important”**

Issue	Percent Saying “Less Important”
At-grade railroad crossing safety	44.1
The Marsh Creek Greenway	42.8
Off-road paths to parks and other recreational areas	38.9
Illegal U-turns	35.8
Extending look of downtown to Lower Main Street	32.3
Signage	31.9
EMTA service to destinations outside Wellsboro	31.9
Intersection of Morris Lane, Bacon, and Waln	31.0

ONLY EIGHT OF THE 25 TRANSPORTATION ISSUES were deemed “Less Important” by a relatively high percentage of survey respondents. The results to some extent corroborate the views of the project advisory committee, particularly on railroad crossing safety. Of the multiway intersection of Morris, Bacon, and Waln, one respondent noted that the area had “already been improved” with new sidewalks and directional signing.

Two recreation-oriented transportation issues, the Marsh Creek Greenway and off-road paths to parks and other recreational areas, were among the highest-scoring “Low Priority” ratings among the survey’s transportation issues. In the case of the Marsh Creek Greenway, only 24 percent cited it as something “Very Important” to the borough’s transportation future. More than 30 people left the Marsh Creek line item blank on their survey...the highest such number for any transportation issue. This may indicate indecision or unfamiliarity with the project.

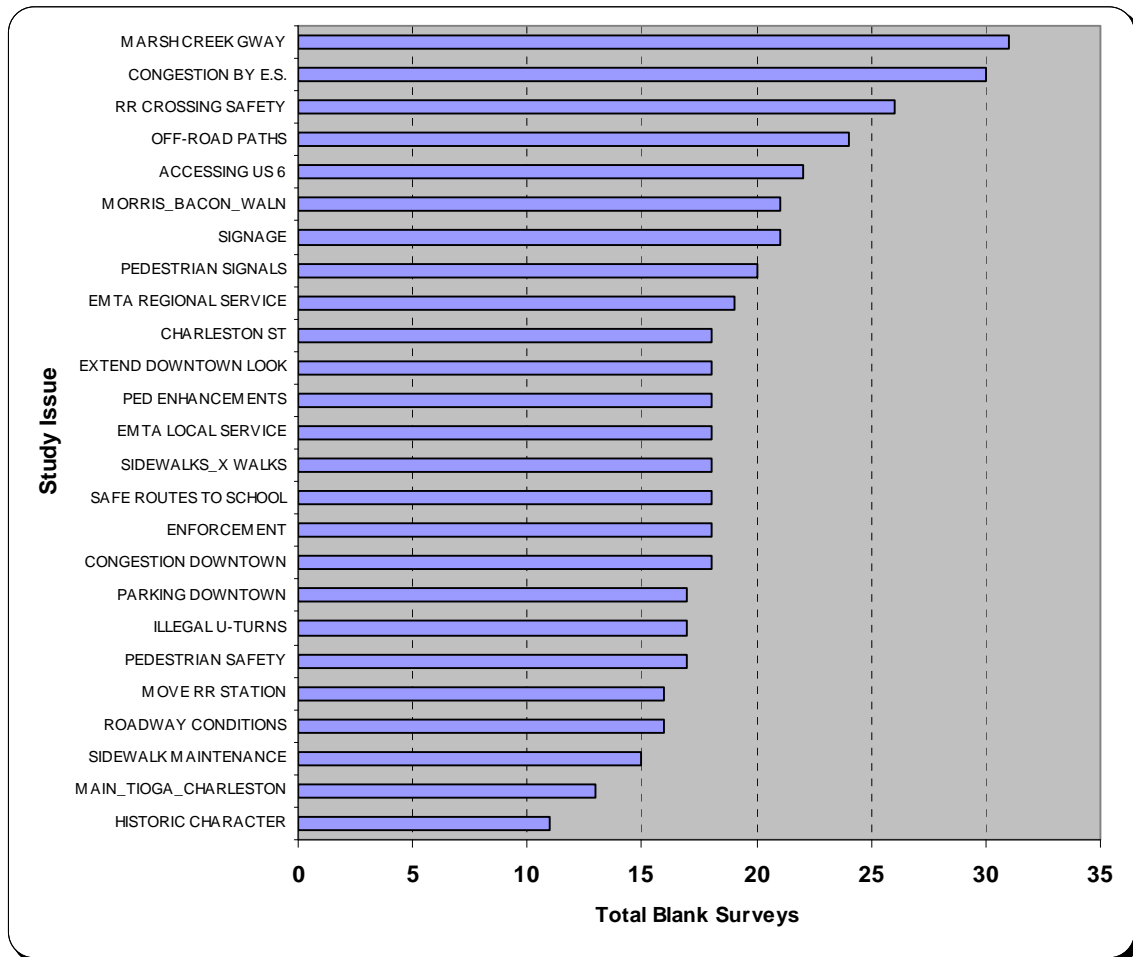
**Figure 4: Issues Ranked from "High Priority" to "Low Priority"**



SHOWN ANOTHER WAY, Figure 4 above shows how the area's transportation issues are arrayed in terms of their importance to the community. Again, only eight items garnered more than 50 percent citing it as a "Very Important" or high priority study issue, led by the need for improvement at the intersection of Main, Tioga, and Charleston Street.

No study issue attracted a similarly high level of disagreement as an issue to be addressed, although the Marsh Creek Greenway and Railroad Crossing Safety led the list.

**Figure 5: Transportation Issues Registering No Response**



A FINAL PLANNING INDICATOR includes the number of survey issues that were submitted with no response. One of the top issues of “Low Importance”—the Marsh Creek Greenway—also had the greatest number of blank surveys. This possibly indicates a greater need for community education and awareness of the project.

Other issues, such as “Congestion by the Elementary Schools,” may reflect the higher share of seniors completing the survey and thus an aspect of community living they are either unaware of or not confronted with.

Of all study issues, “Preserving Wellsboro’s Historic Character” had the fewest number of blank surveys, demonstrating the community’s great awareness of the character of its built environment.



### **Anecdotal Comments**

The survey instrument provided opportunity for open-ended comments. A description of these is summarized below. A total of 184 survey respondents provided comments over and above what was shown on the survey instrument. Comments are shown on the following pages in no priority order and organized by topic area. They offer a community's commentary on its transportation issues.

#### **Intersection of US 6/Queen & Main Street**

- Light at Queen and Main is no way long enough for older people or any age to cross. Special attention should be given to that major intersection.
- Intersection of Queen and Main – need to remove parking meters and make a left turn lane.
- Re-do signage at Main and East Ave. Trucks miss Route 6 West turn. A lot of your questions are not about transportation!
- People press button then cross the street not waiting for signal.
- The intersection of Queen and Main needs a directional light for left turns.
- We need a left turn lane from Queen onto Main Street (eliminate parking by the Methodist Church).
- Congestion from the left turn from Queen Street onto Main Street.
- At Queen and Main, we need a (L) turn lane onto Queen. The parking spaces along the Methodist church could be converted into a lane for drivers going straight or turning (R). Should have a (L) turn signal as there is for those turning left from Main onto East Ave.
- Coming into the main traffic light on Queen Street and need to turn left onto Main, there are times when you are held up for 3 light changes because there is no left turning lane or light on that side.

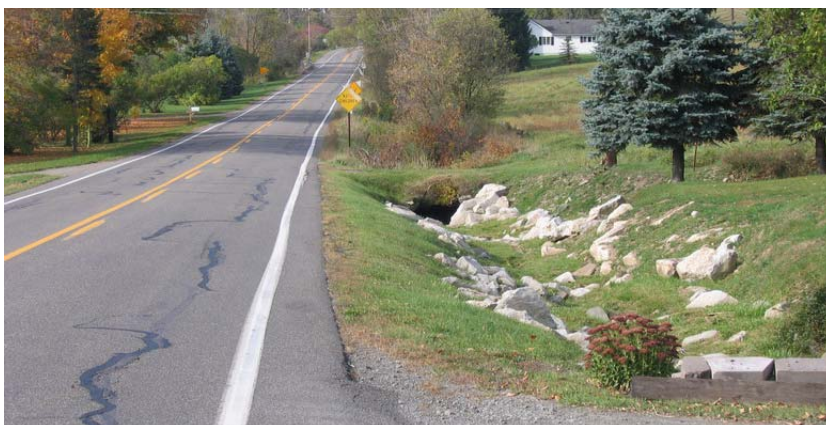
#### **Intersection of US 6/Main, Tioga & Charleston Street**

- Get Mobil sign out of the clear sight triangle
- Get parked vehicles (John Mosso's truck) out of the right of way.
- The "Y" at Sherwood Motel/Terry's Hoagies – Main, Tioga and Charleston Street. People take risks to get out, traffic often congested and no way for pedestrians to cross in a safe manner. Let's get back to giving pedestrians the right of way.
- I've seen many near accidents and long lines waiting to turn off of Charleston.
- The Y-intersection at Rt. 6 and then east end of Main Street high risk for accident and hazard to pedestrians. Needs a light or a roundabout.

- Crossing John's service station to Sherwood Motel intersection. This is a very dangerous intersection for pedestrians...a light is needed.
- Charleston Street intersection with Route 6 – especially with train and greenway improvements.
- Same old problem for many, many years...Tioga, Main and Charleston Street. Some things *never* change.
- The intersection by McDonald's is pretty busy, and, at times, confusing.

## Street Conditions

- Buena Vista Street needs some serious work!
- Buck Road is in terrible condition, and a lot of kids walk and bike to the softball fields. It should be paved to the softball fields, and chipped the rest of the way to Dean Hill.
- McInroy Street is in terrible condition.
- King Street between Water Street and Fischler/Highland needs repairs! It gets a lot of use by local traffic
- Nichols Street storm drain grates need raised.
- Traffic on Bacon Street – especially school buses! Narrow one-way street – large holes!
- Buena Vista Street is very bad. Could be an accident. Hope no one gets hurt or killed. [This] has been bad all summer [and] reported several times.
- Main Street in front of Dunham's [is] very bumpy.
- Bodine Street is in bad condition.
- We are really concerned about the Charleston Road. We travel this road a lot, and last winter we slid out coming down the last hill, coming into Wellsboro. Praise God we went to the left and went into someone's lawn and not hurt. If we had went to the right, we would have went into a steep ditch with large rocks lining it. I think you need a guard rail along that side of the road.



- Also, there is a very deep ditch coming out of the Catlin Hollow Road, turning toward Wellsboro, on to the Charleston Road. We have almost went into this deep hole, and seen others who have.
- There is a drainage grate on Grant Street near Park Hill Manor that needs to be fixed or replaced.
- Three bridges on Water Street, Queen Street, and Riberville Street over the Kelsey Creek are several inches above the adjacent sidewalk.



### Signing

- The sign at Nichols & Water has been down since spring.
- [Signs for ] Morris Lane and Bacon Street and Waln...are not visible or clear – do not enter – yield – stop – one way.
- No need for stop sign on Morris Lane at Wilson's Lane.
- Should be able to turn "right on red" at intersection of Central and Walnut.
- Better signs (or lights) to find Cornell, Princeton, Yale and Harvard Street.
- The corner of Charleston and Cone Street needs to be changed to all stop signs. Cars whiz through there, it is hard to see them coming and people unfamiliar with it do not know the stop sign does not apply to right turns.
- The intersection at Bacon/Waln/Morris Lane: the recent signage for not turning onto Morris Lane from Waln is ridiculous! What difference does it make for a few residence at the home? They can get hit from anyone coming down or up Morris Lane. Isn't that why sidewalks were put in? The new sign is no more than a ticket trap and why?
- The corner of Pearl Street and Crafton: no stop sign east and west.
- Signage needed to direct motorists to the recreational parks.
- There is too much state signage throughout the borough. It is trashy looking!
- There are too many signs.

### Sidewalks/Crosswalks

- Sidewalks are needed on both sides on East Avenue – I think they should go to Weis. A lot of people walk to Weis and to Dollar General. There are a number of other places without sidewalks – along Pearl Street – for one.
- Define and post crossings.
- Sidewalks are needed at least as far [east] as Wellsboro Plaza.
- Meade Street from Sherman to Grant Street – sidewalks on right side in some places are unsafe.

- Many sidewalks in town or near town aren't there (!) or are in terrible shape. Codes must be enforced. We avoid certain routes that would be easier to walk due to poor or lacking sidewalks. They make strollers very difficult to use.
- If bicyclists can't use sidewalks they must drive in the road. The roads are too narrow, and that's dangerous. So what to do?
- Tactile strips at intersections where there are cutback sidewalks – guide dogs are trained to curbs!
- Some sidewalks on Nichols need repair and they should be on both sides [of the street] for school children.
- Crossing Central Avenue at Grant Street or Main Street light(s) is okay – any other street is problematic when parking along Central Avenue is heavy.
- Time limit for pedestrian crossing at East Avenue and Main (at the Diner) is insufficient, especially for the older population which is increasing here.
- Any marked crosswalks! I actually had a driver stop to let me cross Central at Walnut. The driver behind him pulled around the stopped vehicle and through the crosswalk nearly running over me! Post signs and enforce the law!
- Sidewalks all the way out to the borough lines; people love to walk and gaze, but they cannot go far. I would walk to Ames shopping center if there were sidewalks.
- Crossing the street from the BiLo parking lot to the post office.
- Add a safety island for pedestrians to help with crossing of intersection.
- The corner of Central Avenue and Main Street is dangerous for pedestrians.
- Pedestrian safety on West Avenue is a concern. There are no crosswalks and the speed limit is 35 mph. sooner or later, someone will be seriously injured.
- The Morris Street and Grant Street bridges over the Morris Creek are several inches above the adjacent sidewalk, making it difficult for those with walkers or wheelchairs.
- There are no sidewalks on the northwest side of Grant near Waln Street.
- There are not many marked crosswalks – state law to yield to pedestrians in crosswalk not enforced. Mansfield and Lawrenceville have signs in the middle of some major streets/roads reminding drivers of state law to yield!

### Sight Distance

- Cannot see in pulling out of BiLo parking lot with cars parked along Main Street
- Main and King is a lethal intersection when illegal parking impedes vision.
- Queen Street is always a treat. We're lucky no one has been injured by the park area. There is zero visibility coming out of the parking lot between AAA and the Community Building. The entire area from Queen/Main to Nichol's always has traffic.

- Low trees along East and Main...you can't see through them...they all need to be trimmed.
- Highland Street is at risk due to lack of sidewalk and bends in the road where visibility is affected. It is frequently used by walkers including kids to and from school.
- Corner of Pearl Street and Central Avenue – many parked vehicles there block the view – suggest four-way versus two-way stop signs if you don't want to disallow parking on Central Avenue.

### Parking

- There is insufficient parking at the post office and difficult parking on street in front, or, worse yet, crossing the street to get there from the BiLo parking lot.
- The borough needs a parking garage.
- Parking problems such as side streets like Crafton. Parking on both sides makes the street too narrow. Two pickup trucks have difficulty passing in opposite directions.
- On-street parking taken by store owners and employees.

### Trinity Lutheran School

- West Avenue has a Lutheran school and a speed limit of 35 mph and lower during school arrival and dismissal hours and everyone ignores this, especially 18-wheeler and construction trucks which just go barreling up and down this residential street. We live in an older home and our house shakes with those trucks that barrel up and down through here. Speeding and very loud backfiring cars and motorcycles are a daily problem in what should be a fairly quiet residential street.
- Install blinker yellow light, on timer, in school zone on West Avenue for Lutheran school area.
- School children crossing to Trinity Lutheran School from 7:45 to 8:30 AM and 2:45 to 3:15 PM.
- Pedestrian safety is definitely an issue during pre-school hours and immediately after school at Trinity Lutheran School on West Avenue. Cars speed and do not obey 15 mph during posted times.

### Traffic Congestion

- Congestion backups at Main Street and East Ave
- Perhaps it is time to request a feasibility study for a Wellsboro bypass
- An occasional three-minute wait at a traffic light is NOT congestion. Traffic flow in our area is fantastic compared to almost anywhere else. Don't mess with it!
- I CAN'T GO ANYPLACE IN THIS TOWN WITHOUT BECOMING ANGRY OR FRUSTRATED BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC.

- Meade Street: at the start and the end of the school day.

### Access onto US 6 and Main Street

- It is hard to [turn left] ...out of the BiLo parking lot onto Main Street due to traffic and poor visibility...with cars parked on that side of the road.
- Try to make a left-hand turn at either red light on Main Street between 3:00 and 5:30 on a weekday...good luck!
- Turning left off Bacon Street onto East Ave.
- Tioga Street is so busy with traffic and when I visit the shops on that street getting back into the street is almost impossible. Crossing by foot is dangerous. The speed limit is 25 mph but not heeded!
- Difficult to cross and back out into heavy, speedy traffic on West Avenue.
- Making left turns from Central Avenue onto Main Street is difficult when school buses come down from the middle school.
- The residential area east of the Wellsboro Plaza needs at least one light to get onto Route 6.
- Try getting onto East Ave from Bryden Street.
- Try getting on Main Street from any of the side streets. One has to get way beyond [the] stop sign to see (look for) oncoming traffic.
- I find it difficult to get on business blocks on Main Street from a side street (e.g., Waln) where a pickup truck or SUV is parked in the last space. I have to creep out into the street to see what is coming from the left. But how to patrol “no parking” or put up signs saying “no large vehicles.”
- Wellsboro Plaza entry onto US 6 westbound.
- Coming out of Bacon Street.

### Traffic & Codes Enforcement

- Uniform borough enforcement of its own codes, esp. in regard to sidewalks [maintenance] and sidewalks across driveways.
- Enforcement of traffic stopping for pedestrians at crosswalks. It’s a state law, but only tourists do it (and truckers).
- Illegal U-turns downtown are not enforced.
- Terrible noise of about 2% of cars and motorcycles [is] sometimes unbearable.
- We need to enforce the “jake brake” ordinance.
- Please enforce crosswalk law for pedestrians. Put up crosswalk markers, as is often done elsewhere, notably recently in Mansfield, for cars to yield to pedestrians.
- Pedestrians jay walking all streets.
- Drivers not stopping at side-street stop signs.



- Figure out a way to make people use their turn signals.
- Speeding on Pearl Street.
- People constantly go through the four-way stop at the corner of Waln and Walnut.
- Speeding up and down Morris Lane in conjunction with no sidewalks – especially cars shortcutting from East Avenue.
- All high-speed traffic along Main Street – West Ave. Speed limit signs?
- I live on Sherwood Street and cars drive too fast. Cars drive down my street so drivers can park in front of the post office. I've clocked some of these cars at 40mph! There are small children on my street. Speed enforcement would be good.
- High speed drivers on Grant Street in from of Park Hill Manor.
- [Motorists] go way too fast around the corner from Queen Street onto Nichols Street. I have seen cars in the wrong lane, because they were traveling too fast to make the curve.
- Pedestrian crosswalk laws should be enforced – signs would be a good idea.
- I've concluded I will meet my death as a pedestrian on Pearl Street...anywhere from the town border to Central Avenue. Drivers speed on that stretch – in town! If the police parked at Tussey's parking lot and caught all the speeders, the Department could generate all of their own budget funds.
- Drivers rarely yield at marked crosswalk!

## Aesthetics

- We have noticed an increase in advertising to promote Route 6 as a scenic travel area. However, when you enter Wellsboro on Route 6 from Mansfield, the town presents a very “run down” look, especially with the empty Hornets Nest building. Maybe the town should consider improving the appearance of East Avenue before spending any more money on Main Street.
- East Ave (US 6) – old “Coastal” station, empty bank lot Do-It Center parking lot all give Wellsboro a derelict appearance when approaching from the east.
- Do something to enhance the look of Route 6 coming in to Wellsboro from the east – the old Coastal station has been empty for years and looks terrible!



- Cut high grass along railroad station and property on Fellows Avenue.

### Intersections & Intersection Capacity

- Corner of Central Avenue and Main: I've long asked for a pedestrian signal. I've had turning cars come so close to me I've been able to touch the car. Pedestrians never have the right of way.
- Intersection of East Ave. and McInroy/Grant Street meet: If traveling towards town and needing to turn (L) onto Grant, you can wait through several cycles before being able to turn if there are cars also turning ahead of you. A (L) turn signal is needed.
- Anyone turning left from Queen Street onto Main often is forced to wait a long time due to a long line of traffic coming off of West Avenue.
- Pedestrian signals are needed at the intersection of Main and Central Ave.
- Intersection of US 6 with Shumway Hill Road.
- There are a lot of left turns at red lights in town.
- There's lots of confusion about the right of way at the intersection of Waln, Morris Lane and Bacon Street.
- Eliminate the red light at Grant Street. Fridays and most late afternoons traffic is backed up to Pudgies.
- Pedestrian [phases] at intersections is too long.
- East Avenue, Grant and McInroy Street need left turn signals for the left turn lanes that are already there.
- The corner of Cone and East Avenue.
- Weis Market needs a light.
- There are too many "No Turn on Red" signs.
- Main and King: Letters have been written and calls made by several households, including those with small children, [with] no response. The borough could ticket liberally, impose massive fines and be richer as well as safer.

### Miscellaneous

- We need better lighting along Main Street.
- ...it would be nice to have bike racks in the downtown area since many more people are riding bikes due to the cost of gas.
- Traffic from 3 pm to 5:30 pm is horrible!
- At this time of national economic stress and uncertainty, no new projects should be undertaken by any governmental entity except for infrastructure maintenance.
- Ability to get to/from the airport to town and back.



- HARB [Historic and Architectural Review Board] has had a negative impact on our economy by exceeding its role.
- The new high school at school dismissal. Cars back up.
- Pedestrian safety is always a problem.
- The moving of the railroad [station] to Charleston Street would open up a lot of possibilities also for commerce. Trend at such high gas prices is to use more public transportation. Link to Corning.
- Bicycle lanes on local roads would be great (such as US 6, PA 287 West Avenue).
- There should be limits on parents dropping kids off – ride the bus or walk.
- Route 6 East (Main Street to Round Top Hill Road) needs to be 3-lane.
- Summer weekend traffic is getting worse each year.
- Traffic is increasing on Water Street.
- Add some simple benches at Nesmuk Trail. It would be appreciated.
- We need a bypass to move traffic out of the downtown area with a cloverleaf (on/off) near the Weis Market area to eliminate the congestion of factories.
- We don't need outside consultants telling us what we need!! We have competent [sic] local people right here!
- The current historic district is enough – we don't need any more!
- Wellsboro area needs an industrial park!
- Any future hospital or medical clinic expansion should go “up” – not “out” – taking up less residential space.
- The day is coming when more street lighting will be required than gaslights can provide! Walk Main Street from court house to West Avenue after dark to see what I mean!
- There are no problems at all.
- Thank you for proactively addressing these issues.

