



CITY OF SACO, MAINE

Administration
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Dear Business owner, property owner, and/or downtown resident,

To those of you who took the time to attend the Traffic Safety Committee Meeting on September 22nd, thank you. We value participation and feedback from the community and are hoping to continue our conversation about ways to improve the intersection of Pepperrell Square and Main Street. For those of you who could not attend yesterday's meeting, I had requested that the Traffic Safety Committee consider the following:

Pepperrell Square Pop Up Plaza: Traffic studies done over the summer to look at the amount of traffic using Pepperrell Square, have prompted the idea of a trial period for a pop-up plaza for a week in October (the week before the Harvest Festival). This will involve closing down the square to vehicle traffic, except deliveries, during certain early hours. (Joe Laverriere/ Kevin Sutherland)

This item was tabled during the meeting, and no action will be taken until we have had a chance to explore all potential options for improvement in this area. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a few points from our discussion yesterday. My intentions for this meeting were to raise this and other ideas for consideration and discuss how we might simultaneously enhance economic activity for the businesses located in the city; and at the same time see how we might explore options to improve the movement of traffic throughout the city. Several traffic studies have been conducted and as I am sure you're all aware, the Pepperrell Square and Main Street intersection is not optimally moving traffic. Further studies need to be conducted to determine the best way to handle this failed intersection, which is why this item was discussed at the Traffic Safety Committee Meeting.

One of the potential solutions identified by the traffic engineer who the city engaged to analyze the movement of traffic was temporarily implementing a full or partial closure of Pepperrell Square to test the hypothesis that the elimination of traffic moving out of Pepperrell Square onto Main Street, would help reduce congestion and improve traffic flow. The traffic would be encouraged to move down Beach Street, extending the cycle for that light, and facilitating a protected turn onto Main Street at that intersection. The discussion of a pop-up plaza was incorporated to utilize the space during the temporary closure of that intersection, and draw people to this area to participate in events during the test week. By doing this, we had hoped to attract customers for the businesses already operating in this area, see if we can facilitate the incorporation of outdoor seating for your businesses, and add an attraction for citizens to enjoy.

After our discussion yesterday, it is clear that better communication about this proposal and the suggestions and reasoning would have been helpful prior to the meeting, for any shortcomings on that front; I apologize and ask for your understanding. However, we can use this opportunity to collaborate and determine the optimal solution for everyone impacted. Changes to the flow of traffic in the City of Saco requires a multistep process, the first step is presenting the suggested modification to the Traffic Safety Committee. As the second step, we would like to host a neighborhood/community meeting to get feedback and input. No final decisions were made, nor would they be, without consulting and engaging the property and business owners who live, work, or own property in and around Pepperrell Square. Once we have identified a possible solution, then this will be discussed with the Planning Board, Comprehensive Planning Committee, and the City Council to make sure these changes align with our vision for Saco moving forward.

I hope you all will join me in the City Hall Auditorium on Thursday, October 13th from 3:00 PM-5:00 PM to discuss your concerns in Pepperrell Square and begin to determine potential solutions. Using the information gathered during this meeting, I will plan to be in Pepperrell Square to meet with businesses and property owners on October 20th at either 9:00 AM, 2:00 PM, or 5:00 PM to discuss ways to alleviate the concerns identified. I hope that at these meetings, we can collaboratively find a way to make our downtown more vibrant and active, and I ask that we consider all of the innovative solutions proposed.

Please take a moment to complete the survey at the bottom of this letter, either online at tinyurl.com/PepperrellSQ, drop it off here at City Hall (300 Main Street), or email your response to ERoy@SacoMaine.org. We will use this information to create a contact list for future meetings and information regarding Pepperrell Square and other Downtown Saco initiatives. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (207)282-4191. Thank you for your engagement and passion for Saco!

Sincerely,



Kevin L. Sutherland
City Administrator

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Contact list for Downtown and Pepperrell Square meetings and discussions:

Name:

Business Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone Number:

Are you interested in attending a meeting in the City Hall Auditorium on October 13th from 3:00-5:00 PM?

Are you available to meet with City Administrator on October 20th at 9:00 AM, 2:00 PM, or 5:00 PM to discuss ways to mitigate the issues presented at the October 13th meeting? Please circle the option that works best for your schedule. Once a time has been selected, we will notify all parties using the contact information included above.

9:00 AM

2:00 PM

5:00 PM

What are some of your primary concerns with the partial or full closure of the Pepperrell Square and Main Street intersection? Do you have any alternative solutions to mitigate the traffic concerns in this area?

Thank you for your participation and feedback!