

EVENT SUMMARY

Athol Walk Audit April 10, 2014



Organized by:

**Athol Planning & Development
Athol Board of Health
Montachusett Opportunity Council**

Attended by:

**Carol Ambrozy
Andrea Buglione
Bob Curley
Joann Deacon
Glenn Eaton
Deb Karan
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Jeanette Robichaud
Ayn Yeagle (MOC)**

A handful of Athol residents, town staff, and outdoor enthusiasts took to the streets on a sunny afternoon for a “walk audit.” With cameras and clipboards in hand, we made note of all the different aspects of the walking (and biking) environment in and around downtown Athol. Our observations ranged from aesthetics to safety concerns. We were fortunate to be joined by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Ayn Yeagle of the Montachusett Opportunity Council.

What is a walk audit?

Communities use walk audits to promote the connections between walkability, design, traffic safety, and health. Observations about the physical environment — from misalignments in sidewalks, number of safe places to cross the street, areas of excessive debris, and adequacy of bike lanes, to name a few — can help guide the town’s future planning and capital investment priorities.

Members of the Montachusett Public Health Network (MHPN) are required to conduct a walk audit as part of the long-term strategy of Active Streets and healthy living.

Athol Walk Audit Summary



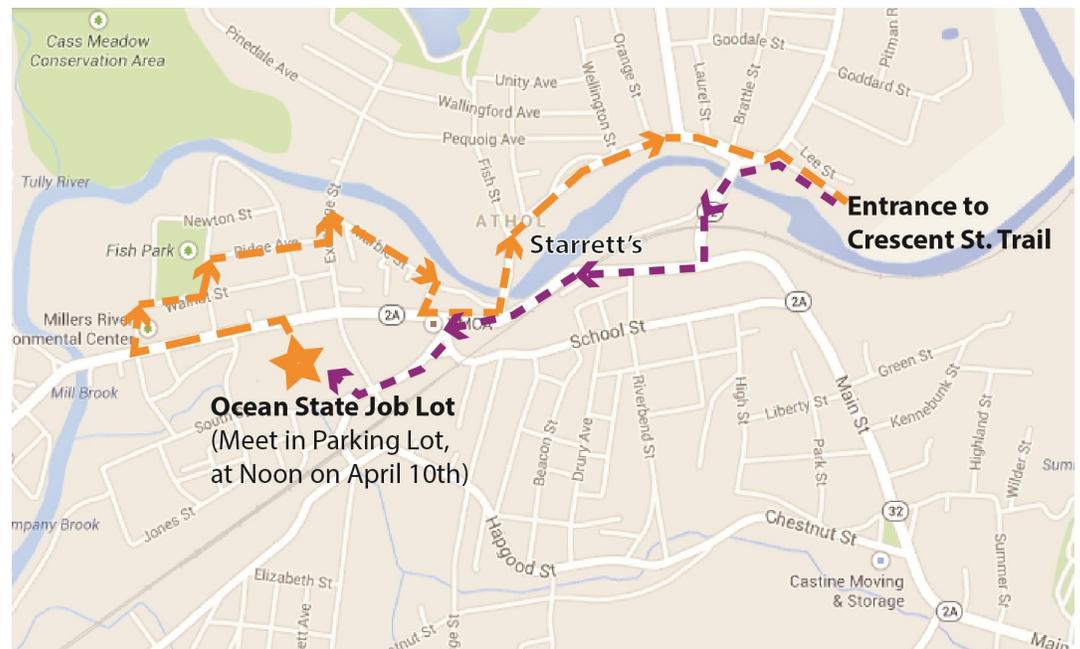
Shown left: the walk audit crew discussing the 210 Canal Street project, which entails the demolition of the home pictured on the right, to create a park/entryway to the Cass Meadow. This is one example of a project that will create better connections between downtown Athol and the natural environment for all to enjoy.

One observation: A new crosswalk could be added at this location to provide safe access from the Millers River Environmental Center to the new Meadow entrance.

THE ROUTE...

Although we planned to complete the entire route in under 2 hours, shown right, we were only able to complete half of the orange section. Ocean State parking lot to the New Library.

We just had too many good ideas, observations and conversations along the walk!



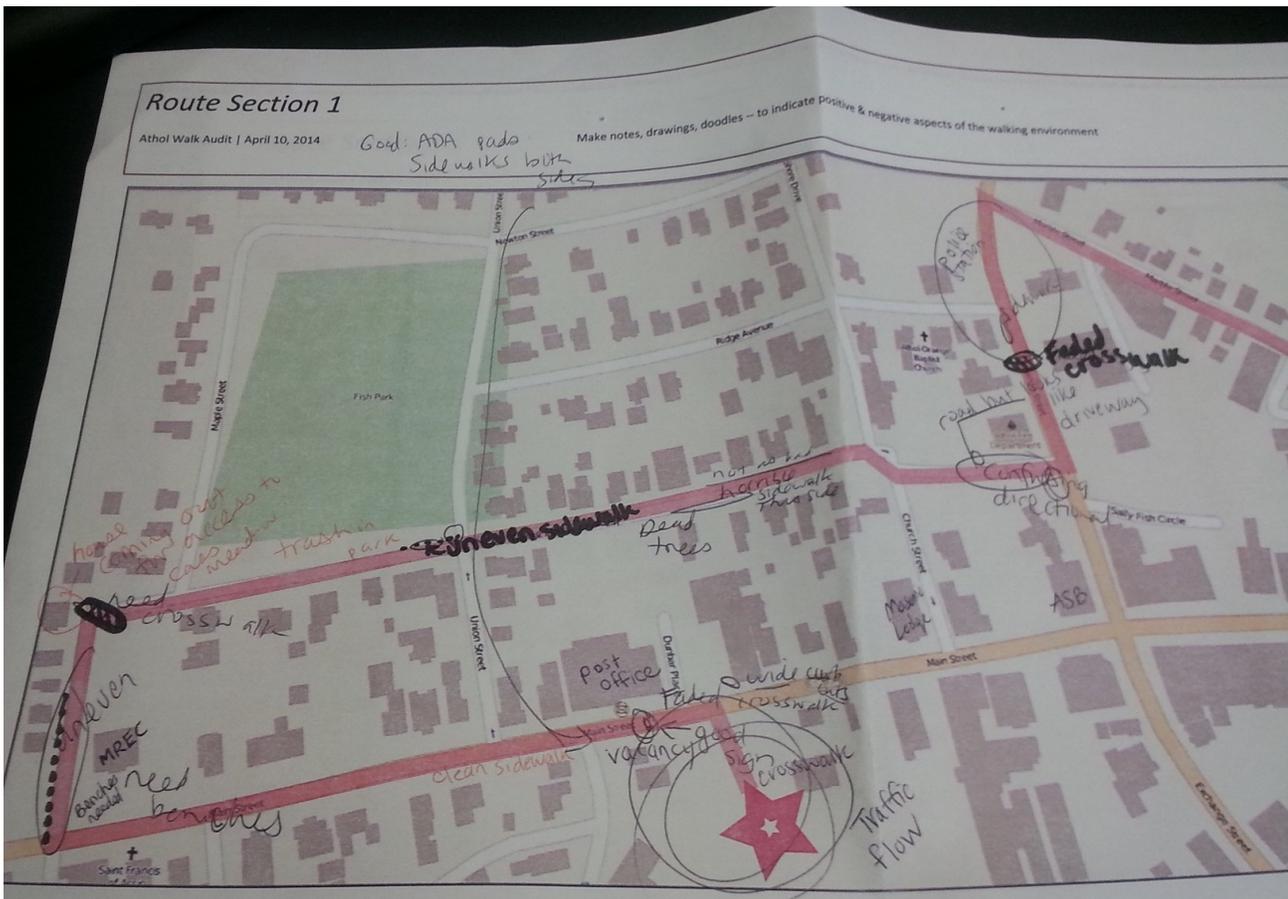
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IMPRESSIONS

Positive:

- The bright green “slow down” signs in crosswalks were seen along many Main Street crosswalks (ex. Across from Post Office).

Needs Improvement:



A compilation of some of our observations.

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PHOTOS



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NEXT STEPS

- Short Term – Recommends to DPW or other:
 - Traffic sign improvements at corner of Walnut and Church streets.
 - Re-paint crosswalk on Main and Exchange
 - Add new crosswalk on Exchange?
- Long(er) term considerations
 - Ocean State Job Lot parking lot re-engineering – safety and aesthetics
 - Exchange Street streetscaping and “road diet” preliminary design (Andrea Buglione)
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