

Redesign of baffling five-way intersection in Hamilton starts to take shape

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Hamilton leaders are hoping that **redesigning a confusing intersection** will spur economic development and vitality in the village's downtown district. The five-way intersection has stymied visitors and locals alike for decades, particularly as its purpose has shifted from simply moving traffic through the community to encouraging visitors to shop, eat and spend time in the village center.

Earlier this year, a task force including representatives from the village and town government, **Colgate University** and the Partnership for Community Development started talking about how to improve traffic conditions and make the intersection safer and more appealing for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The group hired experts from the Elan Planning and Design, who said redesigning the intersection could bring even more life to the space. The Saratoga Springs-based firm put together a strategic revitalization plan for the village of Canastota in 2004.

At a series of public meetings, the team gathered input on several design possibilities, including a roundabout, signal changes and making some streets one-way. A preliminary conceptual design plan presented to the village board earlier this month recommends shifting Payne Street to align with Lebanon Street, reducing the width of Payne Street, shortening crosswalks and making landscape and streetscape improvements.

The plan also calls for a new lighted walkway connecting pedestrians to a public parking area behind the municipal building. No cost estimates to implement the concept have been released and the document is still under review. The improvement would build on other investment in the college community.

Since 2000, Colgate and the Hamilton Initiative have worked to make the downtown district appealing to students, renovating eight downtown properties and operating four businesses.

Other economic development followed, including a variety of offerings from independent entrepreneurs. The village green is bustling most weekends with farmers markets, festivals and open-air concerts.