

### **5.1 Introduction and Overall Strategy**

At the heart of the Tonbridge *Central Area Action Plan* are improvements to the places where pedestrian comfort and priority is considered vital to the improvement of the Town Centre.

### **5.2 Pedestrian Crossings**

Suggested improvements include:

- *Pedestrian crossing facilities at the High Street/ Vale Road/ Avebury Avenue junction;*
- *Pedestrian crossing facilities on the High Street between New Wharf and Bradford Street junctions;*
- *Raised tables at some or all existing pedestrians crossings, using quality materials;*
- *Investigate the potential to convert some pelican crossings to zebra crossings to give more priority to pedestrians. London Road in Sevenoaks town centre is a good example. Clearly a balance needs to be struck, since zebra crossings at the busiest points will pose incessant delays to traffic and exacerbate air pollution;*
- *De-clutter some of the signage and barriers around pedestrian crossings where these are unnecessary.*

Some pedestrian crossings could be better located to match changing pedestrian desire lines, e.g. adjacent to the Botany rather than Woolworth's, however the advantages of this need to be balanced against the cost issues of relocating traffic signal controlled crossings, even a short distance.

### **5.3 Footpaths**

In terms of the appearance of the area the following improvements could be made:

- *Improved quality materials similar to the northern part of the High Street;*
- *Improved cleaning of the pavements*
- *De-clutter of unnecessary signage and barriers to walking.*

There is potential to provide a wider footway on the western side of the High Street at a number of points by an average of 1 metre. Site observations suggested that pedestrians have less space on this side of the road. The footpaths could be widened and still provide enough room for two buses to pass one another safely. Sections to be widened include:

- *Avebury Avenue to Angel Centre Crossing;*
- *Angel Centre to Angel Walk Crossing;*
- *Angel Walk Crossing to New Wharf;*
- *Botany Crossing to Medway Wharf Road.*

### **5.4 Loading bays**

The northern part of the High Street has a number of loading bays to stop vehicles blocking the flow of traffic. These are marked out using different paving materials to the footway.

The widened footway proposals will cause more congestion if there are not suitable places for vehicles to unload goods adjacent to street frontages. Hence the need to provide dedicated loading bays.

Currently, loading problems in the southern part of the High Street are found near to cash points, takeaway restaurants, as well as being caused by general delivery of goods to on street premises.

**Figure 5-1: High Street South – loading and unloading problems**



The assumption would be that the western footway would be generally widened with several loading bay sections where the footway would not be widened. These bays would be marked out with different paving materials. To help provide the road space for these facilities it would be necessary to remove some right turn lanes into side roads, such as Bradford Street and Medway Wharf Road.

These proposals could also allow some limited disabled parking to be provided to improve this group's access to the town centre.

## 5.5 Bus stops

Waiting facilities in the Lower High Street (the Pavilion) are mixed, with shelters provided only in the southbound direction. No shelter was provided in the northbound direction, partly because of the width of the road. As **Figure 3-2** shows, the appearance of the passenger information is poor.

*Figure 5-2: Bus stop facilities at The Pavilion, High Street*



Widened footways in this area would enable high quality bus shelters to be provided. The provision of real-time bus information should be investigated for bus stops in the central area.

## 5.6 Cyclists

The narrowing of the High Street through the provision of wider footways and dedicated loading bays should not have a detrimental impact on cyclist safety. Currently there is enough space for cyclists to be overtaken by other traffic forcing them into the kerbside, which is not always a safe place for them. With the reduced road width, and the traffic calming effect of other improvements, cyclists should be more confident to be in the middle of the traffic stream, where they can be more easily seen by other road users.

To help encourage cycling more storage facilities are required in the central area. These should be provided at new developments and on the High Street itself.

**A detailed scheme (or a range of options) needs to be developed to allow public consultation on improvements to Tonbridge High Street.**