

# ARPA SUGGESTIONS UPDATE

## SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

To the citizens of Shaftsbury, there was an overwhelming response to the town survey regarding the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding that has become available to our town. The Shaftsbury ARPA Committee and the Shaftsbury Selectboard are compiling the data from your responses. We expect to hold several more open meetings before the committee officially presents findings to the selectboard at the November meeting.

We did notice that some of the suggestions from the surveys are already a work in progress and we wanted to quickly point those out. Other suggestions unfortunately, are not feasible for various reasons. We wanted to let everyone know these suggestions, which we list below, and their current status overall.

Meanwhile, we will continue to work on the remaining suggestions and keep everyone up to date on further progress.

**Suggestion:** Sewer System for center of town to encourage business growth

**Current Status:** Shaftsbury is preparing to conduct a Sewer Feasibility Study. As part of the application process Dufresne Engineering has been chosen to conduct the study. Together we have applied for a state funding grant that would cover all expenses involved in the study. The State is reviewing applications now and we expect a decision by the end of 2022.

**Suggestion:** Howard Park Improvements

- A. Handicap walkways from parking
- B. Gravel walking trail
- C. Dog Park
- D. Skate Park
- E. Rec Center

**Current Status:** In September the Town received permission to begin work after a wetlands study had been approved. That approval allowed us to apply for a \$25,000 grant from the State which will be decided by the end of October. Following the decision on the grant funding, the town will proceed on these and other improvements to the park.

**Suggestion:** Pickle Ball Courts

**Current Status:** Howard Park has two Pickleball Courts which are first come first served. Equipment can be borrowed from the McCullough Library in North Bennington.

**Suggestion:** Add signs to Howard Park, school and firehouse from main road

**Current Status:** Approval from the State was received. Location for the signs is being determined.

**Suggestion:** More Sidewalks

**Current Status:** Shaftsbury received a grant of \$32,000 to conduct a Sidewalk Scoping Study of the Grandview and Hawks Avenue area. The study has already begun, and the report expected in April 2023. The report will include design alternates and construction estimates.

**Suggestion:** Internet-Broadband-Cell Services

- A. More cell phone coverage
- B. improved cell phone service using already existing poles, not new tall, ugly towers
- C. Better internet connectivity
- D. Broadband
- E. Subsidize high-speed internet

**Current Status:** Shaftsbury belongs to a local Communications Union District (CUD). State ARPA funding has been directed to CUD's across the State to upgrade internet and cell coverage. Fidium Fiber is currently putting infrastructure in place to bring broadband to 80-90% of the town

**Suggestion:** Repair Cole Hall

**Current Status:** ADA improvements and certain other structural improvements are vital at Cole Hall but with recent input from these surveys, a broader development plan has to be considered before moving to architects and engineers.

**Suggestion:** Extend connection to water line

**Current Status:** By state water rules the Shaftsbury Water Department is allocated a certain amount of the water available in the North Bennington System. We have reached our maximum allocation.

**Suggestion:** Bi-annual large trash pickup for residents

**Current Status:** The Town has never contracted with TAM or Casella to perform a town wide pickup. A resident can plan with Casella or another local contractor to remove bulk items from their property.

**Suggestion:** Pay Town Garage debt

**Current Status:** Debt reduction is not permitted under ARPA Rules.

**Suggestion:** Hire more Listers, insure proper assessments

**Current Status:** By Town vote in March of 2022 the office of Lister was removed. The Town has contracted with a professional assessor and has employed an assessor's assistant to take over the Lister duties.

**Suggestion:** Bring back Transfer Station hazardous waste so don't have to drive around state to dispose of it

**Current Status:** Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) pickup is regulated by the State. Shaftsbury is a member of the Bennington County Solid Waste Committee and participates in two HHW days annually. A spring event at Mt. Anthony Middle School and in the fall at the Dorset School.

**Suggestion:** Right hand turn lane 7a to Hidden Valley

**Current Status:** The Town has no authority over the State highway. The town has participated with residents in speaking with State officials on this intersection several times. The State has rejected any of the citizen proposals as the intersection meets current engineering standards.

**Suggestion:** Add Traffic Light

**Current Status:** The Town has no authority over the State highway as mentioned above.

**Suggestion:** Avoid Culverts as they drain wetlands

**Current Status:** Road construction is governed by state road standards and the town's municipal road general permit issued by the state. Culverts are not used to drain wetlands.

**Suggestion:** Reroute trucks from Dailey to avoid 7a

**Current Status:** There is no available alternate route