

Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council
Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting

April 28, 2016, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Dutchess Community College, 115 Bowne Hall (1st Floor), 53 Pendell Road, Poughkeepsie

Meeting Summary

1) Introductions

Emily Dozier (PDCTC) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves (see attached list).

2) Discussion: Bridge Access for Bicycle Commuting: Chris Kelly, NYS Bridge Authority (NYSBA); Eric Hoppe, Walkway Over the Hudson Park Manager, NYS Parks; Zack Diaz, Walkway Over the Hudson State Park.

Chris Kelly explained that the [NYSBA](#) operates five bridges: Bear Mountain, Newburgh-Beacon, Mid-Hudson, Kingston-Rhinecliff, and Rip Van Winkle. He outlined the pedestrian and bicycle access on each:

- Bear Mountain: bicycles allowed on shoulders; separated walkway for pedestrian use. The bridge is part of the Appalachian Trail, so good lighting is provided.
- Newburgh-Beacon: shared path on south (eastbound) span for walking and bicycling. Has good lighting. Chris noted that the path typically closes after 9 pm.
- Mid-Hudson: narrow walkway (half as wide as the Newburgh-Beacon path) for walking only. Bicyclists may walk bicycles across the walkway. There are no shoulders on the bridge.
- Kingston-Rhinecliff: no pedestrian access, but wide shoulders for bicycling. This is the only NYSBA bridge that does not have pedestrian access.
- Rip Van Winkle: bicycles allowed on shoulders; separated walkway for pedestrian use. The walkway is currently being rehabbed.

Chris noted that all the NYSBA bridges are officially open for walking and bicycling (if allowed) from dawn to dusk. Posting specific hours would likely limit the hours of operation—as it is, some of the walkways/paths open before dawn and/or close after dusk.

Chris stated that the main issue for extending hours on the Mid-Hudson Bridge is inadequate lighting. There are federal regulations for lighting levels; having less lighting than required is a liability issue. Chris said he would confirm what the lighting requirements are. He estimated that the Mid-Hudson would need about 30 LED lights. Chris did not know how much that would cost, but could find out. He noted that the bridges are 100% funded by toll revenue, and the NYSBA is not interested in raising tolls. They have a five-year capital plan, which currently runs through 2021. In order to add a project (such as bridge lighting), they would need to move something else off of the 5-year plan. He said this is possible, but he would need to make a strong case for it.

Chris stated that the hours on the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge could probably be extended more easily.

Mark Roland (Bike Beacon) and David Gordon (Highland resident) noted that if the hours on the bridges were extended, more people would likely use them for commuting. Since the hours are currently limited (especially in the winter), many people may not see bicycle commuting as a viable option.

Betsy Brockway (Town of Pawling resident) asked if they ever count the number of people walking or bicycling across the bridge. Chris said they currently have no count data, but do have video (for security purposes). Chris said that there are various ways that counts could be done, and he could look into it.

BPAC members asked how decisions are made at the NYSBA. Chris explained that there is a monthly Commissioners meeting, which is open to the public. Betsy Brockway asked who would be the best person to send a letter to. Chris said people can contact him with questions, or write to the Executive Director and Chair of the Commissioners. Chris gave the group the phone number for the NYSBA Operations Center for assistance with closures or other issues: 845-691-1675. The Operations Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Chris explained that the NYSBA owns the superstructure for the Walkway Over the Hudson. The bridge is managed by State Parks, but NYSBA oversees construction and maintenance projects. A 'friends' group raises funds and runs events and other programs.

Eric Hoppe explained that the Walkway is also open from dawn to dusk. There is insufficient lighting for evening use (after dusk) and Parks would need additional staff (from Parks and police) to manage evening use. Chris estimated that adding lighting could cost \$500,000. Eric noted that there will be construction at night for the next 1-2 years to improve the bridge railing and deck, so night-time use would not be possible until that project is completed. They are also building a visitor center on the west (Highland) side.

Cynthia Ruiz noted that if the Mid-Hudson Bridge or Walkway Over the Hudson is closed, people can take the Ulster-Poughkeepsie LINK bus between Poughkeepsie and New Paltz. It runs Monday-Friday from before 6 am to after 9 pm, as well as a few times on Saturday and Sunday. All of the buses have bicycle racks. The schedule is available at <http://ulstercountyny.gov/ucat/bus-schedules>. Bill Johnson suggested that a link could be added to the Dutchess Rail Trail website.

Betsy suggested that an online survey could be used to gauge public interest/support in extending hours on the Walkway Over the Hudson and/or Mid-Hudson Bridge. It could help determine what bridge is preferred for evening use, and what hours are desired. Ross Ritter (Town of LaGrange resident) suggested that the BPAC could also talk to the 'friends' group ([Walkway Over the Hudson](#)) about fundraising strategies.

David Gordon suggested that we could coordinate with Ulster County groups on this issue. He and others noted that evening hours could be an economic development strategy and local Chambers of Commerce may be partners.

3) Implementation: Progress Reports

Mary Nisley (Town of Poughkeepsie resident) said that the sinkhole on Route 376 was finally repaired by NYSDOT. She asked about the NYSDOT project to repave Route 376. Emily stated that it is a 'mill and fill' project between Hackensack Heights Rd (by the County Airport) and Red Oaks Mill Rd (CR 44) (just southeast of the Wappinger Creek)-- about 2 miles total. It is planned to begin in Spring 2016 and be done in Summer of 2017. Bill Trifilo explained that 'mill and fill' means grinding down the existing asphalt, removing it, and installing new asphalt. The depth of the new asphalt varies depending on the project. Project information is available on the [NYSDOT website](#).

Cynthia Ruiz (Dutchess County Public Transit) said that several municipalities still need to pick up their bike racks from the Transit garage. Letters are going out to remind them. She is looking for grant funding to install real-time bus arrival/departure signs at key locations such as the transit hub on Market Street and Metro-North Stations. Regarding the Transit Development Plan, letters will go out in May to municipalities asking for nominees for an Advisory Committee. The Committee will review all the data gathered so far and meet in June to discuss it.

Karl Beard (National Park Service) announced that the next meeting of the [Winnakee-Dutchess Trails Roundtable](#) is June 23, from 4-5:30pm at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Farm & Home Center in Millbrook. He stated that a Greenway Trail Gap Analysis project is underway. It will identify missing links in the Greenway Trail along the Hudson River and prioritize trail connections to complete those links. Karl noted that the Parks Service is working with the Cats in the Cats mountain biking club on a mountain biking trail through the Hyde Park Trail system. It will likely open in 2017. Karl explained that the National Parks Service's [Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program](#) does not provide funding, but technical assistance on trail projects. Interested groups can talk to Karl directly. Karl announced that the Hudson Valley Trail Network (Walkway Over the Hudson, Dutchess Rail Trail, and Hudson Valley Rail Trail) is nominated for the [Rails to Trails Conservancy's RTC Hall of Fame](#). Voting starts in June.

Shelby Tompkins (PDCTC) announced that the PDCTC has begun a Pedestrian Plan for the Arlington Town Center in coordination with the Town of Poughkeepsie and Arlington Business Improvement District. The team is currently collecting GPS data of all the existing sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, and other features. They will identify ways to improve walking within and to the Town Center. Mary Nisley noted that when it snows, the storefronts on Raymond Avenue (between Davis and Collegetown) are hard to walk into—the snow piles up near the entrances, as well as on curb ramps (especially near Juliet Café).

Paul Hesse (City of Poughkeepsie Planning) said that the Kaal Rock Connector Project is moving forward. There was an engineering feasibility study and [public meeting](#), and the City will be looking for outside funds to build a suspended walkway around Kaal Rock. Paul also reported that the City has a Request for Proposals out for traffic engineering services to reconfigure Market Street into a two-way complete street. He is hoping that a demonstration project could be installed this summer.

Bill Johnson (Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board) said that the Traffic Safety Board (TSB) is no longer able to purchase bicycle helmets or car seats for their safety events through the State grant programs. They are looking for alternate funding sources or donations. If anyone has ideas, please reach out to Bill at 486-3603. Bill noted several upcoming bicycle rodeos: Hagan Elementary (Town of Poughkeepsie), May 4; Noxon Elementary (La Grange), May 13; North Park Elementary (Hyde Park), June 1; Red Hook High School (Red Hook), Saturday May 14. Emily added that the Poughkeepsie City School District is hosting a wellness fair on May 14 and will have a table for bicycle safety. Bill noted that volunteers are needed for the Noxon, North Park, and Red Hook events.

Bill Trifilo (Dutchess County DPW) announced that work continues on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail extension (from Millerton north).

Amy Kacala (Scenic Hudson) stated that a meeting was held in early April to discuss a possible 'rail with trail' on the Beacon line between Beacon and Putnam County (through Fishkill, East Fishkill, Beekman, and Pawling). Scenic Hudson is working with Winnakee Land Trust and County Planning to help the communities plan the trail. For the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, the Washburn parking lot construction is currently out to bid, and the first set of gateway signs are being installed soon.

Kevin Newman (City of Poughkeepsie resident) asked what the difference is between the Beacon line and the Fishkill Creek Greenway Trail. Jim Korn (Beacon Trails Committee) explained that the Beacon line trail would run along the railroad tracks, while the Fishkill Creek Greenway Trail will be mainly along the top of the creek bank. Kevin also mentioned that he would like to see more bike parking in Arlington.

Betsy Brockway (Town of Pawling) announced that Pawling is pursuing a path between Lakeside Park and Murrow Park (part of the Town's [Park Master Plan](#)), and was just awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to improve pedestrian and handicapped access to Lakeside Park.

Bruce Cuttler (Town of Red Hook) noted that the [Red Hook Trail Plan](#) is almost complete. It recommends seven new trails for bicycling and walking. Bruce added that in addition to the bicycle rodeo on May 14, the Town is hosting the Tour de Red Hook, an easy two-mile family ride.

Sharon Kroeger (Town of Amenia resident) noted that the Leedsville Rd-Amenia Union Rd intersection used to be a traffic circle, and was converted many years ago to a triangle. She asked if it could be converted back to a circle to reduce speeding. Bill Trifilo said that it is County Route 2. There may be right of way and ownership issues (particularly because it is partly in Connecticut), but it could be looked at.

Mark Roland (Bike Beacon) stated that he received a mini-grant from the New York Bicycling Coalition and is still planning to produce some educational materials about the sharrows on Main Street. He also noted that he is thinking of expanding 'Bike Beacon' to include other modes of transportation, such as walking and transit.

Ross Ritter (Town of LaGrange) asked about the status of the [Route 376 at Robinson Lane Intersection Improvement Project](#) in East Fishkill. Emily replied that NYSDOT selected turning lanes as the 'preferred alternative' mainly to minimize impacts on adjacent properties (they would have to acquire substantially more land to construct a roundabout). She added that she has strongly encouraged NYSDOT to incorporate sidewalks into the project. The final public meeting for the project will be before construction starts. Project construction will begin in summer/fall 2017 and continue through 2018.

4) Updates/Announcements

Emily made two announcements:

- [Bike Friendly Kingston](#) is holding an Adult Bicycle Education course on three evenings in May: May 4, 11, and 18, from 5:30-8:30pm at the Kingston YMCA. Emily distributed a handout with the instructor's contact information. He is willing to take Dutchess County residents if there is room. He is also willing to teach a class in Dutchess if we have enough interest (10 participants). Sharon Kroeger suggested that a course be held in the center of the county, such as Millbrook.
- May is National Bike Month. May 4 is Bike to School Day and May 20 is Bike to Work Day. Consider organizing or helping out with an event!
- The July meeting will include discussion of our annual ped/bike counts (to be done in September).

5) Follow up items

1. May is National Bike Month. Consider organizing or helping out with an event!
2. Review & send updates for the online [bicycle parking finder](#) to Emily.
3. Send Emily ideas for future presentations.

6) Next Meeting: July 28, 3-5pm, DCC, Bowne Hall



Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council

Date: April 28, 2016

Time: 3:00-5:00 pm

Location: DCC, 115 Bowne Hall

Name	Organization/Municipality	Email	Phone
Jim Korn	Beacon Trails	jkorn@jamesakorn.com	(212) 697-4811
Mark Roland	Wigwam Economy/Bike Beacon	freelance500@yahoo.com	(845) 590-4849
Betsy Brockway	Town of Pawling resident	betsy.brockway5@gmail.com	845-855-5395
Kevin Newman	City of Poughkeepsie Resident	slowrider@bicycle.bigk12603.com	845-559-7008
Shelby Tompkins	Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council	stompkins@dutchessny.gov	845-486-3600
William Trifilo	Dutchess County Department of Public Works	wtrifilo@dutchessny.gov	845-486-2936
Bill Johnson	Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board	wjohnson@dutchessny.gov	(845) 486-3603
Karen Flaherty	Mid-Hudson Bicycle Club	karty707@verizon.net	845-452-0707
Emily Dozier	Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council	edozier@dutchessny.gov	845-486-3600
Amy Kacala	Scenic Hudson	akacala@scenichudson.org	(845) 473-4440
John Galbraith	sPOKe	jmgbike@gmail.com	(845) 797-2508
Cynthia Ruiz	Dutchess County Public Transit	cruiz@dutchessny.gov	(845) 473-8521
Karl Beard	National Park Service	karl-beard@nps.gov	(845) 229-9115 x2034
Ross Ritter	Town of LaGrange Resident/Bikeway	r Ritter@homesteadfunding.com	914-456-6493



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Name	Organization/Municipality	Email	Phone
Mary Nisley	Town of Poughkeepsie resident	mary.nisley@pobox.com	845-471-8257
Bruce Cuttler	Town of Red Hook Trails & Greenways	bcuttler@frontiernet.net	(845) 758-0828
Chris Kelly	NYS Bridge Authority	ckelly@nysba.net	(845) 691-7245
Zach Diaz	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP)	Zack.Diaz@parks.ny.gov	917-686-7394
Eric Hoppe	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP)	Eric.Hoppe@parks.ny.gov	(845) 834-2867
Paul Hesse	City of Poughkeepsie Planning	PHesse@cityofpoughkeepsie.com	845-451-4106
Sharon Kroeger	Wassaic Historic Agricultural Crossroads	generalstoresk@optonline.net	(845) 373-7735
David Gordon	Mid-Hudson Bicycle Club	dgordonlaw@optonline.net	845 943-1142