

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55

Advisory Committee Meeting #11

Date: Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 1:00 PM

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

	AFFILIATION
Mark Debald	Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
Emily Dozier	DCTC
Tara Grogan	DCTC
Mark Sargent	CME
Hannah Brockhaus	FHI Studio
Heather LaVarnway	Dutchess County Planning
Paul Hesse	City of Poughkeepsie Planning
Supervisor Jay Baisley	Town of Poughkeepsie
Michael Welti	Town of Poughkeepsie
Jeff Wright	NYS Bridge Authority
Sandra Jobson	NYS DOT
Lance MacMillan	NYS DOT
Lisa Mondello	NYS DOT

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a plan for implementation of the study recommendations and to update the Advisory Committee on the results of presentations to the City Common Council and Town Board.

OVERVIEW

Mark Debald welcomed attendees to the eleventh and final Advisory Committee meeting for the study, thanking advisory committee members for seeing the study through over two years and a pandemic. He noted that the final plan is posted on the project website, and the purpose of this meeting is to discuss next steps for implementation and review the comments from various presentations. He acknowledged that this was one of the most challenging and complicated studies that the MPO has undertaken. Mark Sargent of Creighton Manning Engineering led a presentation covering the following material:

- Presentations to Poughkeepsie City Council and Town Board
- Final Plan and Next Steps
 - Implementation Working Group
 - Interchange
 - Arterials
 - Independent Utility Projects
- Funding Opportunities

Reference the attached presentation for further details. Discussion among Committee members occurred throughout the meeting to provide input on various items. The following is a summary of that discussion, with action items in **bold**.

DISCUSSION

Presentations to Common Council and Town Board

- Mark Sargent provided an overview of feedback received during presentations to the Poughkeepsie Common Council and Town Board.
 - At the Common Council, there was some interest in a boulevard for Route 9 as part of the interchange improvement. This was reflected in Concept B. Mr. Sargent noted that the report states that further evaluation should include Concepts B and C as part of the selection of a preferred alternative, though it notes that Concept A appears to be preferred based on the analysis to date.
 - Common Council members were supportive of the Arterial road diet, and willing to accept some more congestion during peak hours in exchange for improved safety.
 - At the Town Board meeting, support for the Arterial road diet was more mixed, with some members expressing concern about reduced capacity on the Arterials, while others supportive of reducing capacity in exchange for safety and other benefits. There was strong support for improving the interchange.
 - It was noted that unified and consistent messaging is important for moving the recommendations forward.
- Mark Debald noted the need to manage expectations related to implementation timeframes and tried to be realistic in the presentations to the Common Council and Town Board.
- Michael Welti (Town of Poughkeepsie) noted that the more Board members had engaged with the study, the more they understood the trade-offs and concept recommendations. Regarding the interchange, he stated that there is strong consensus about the need for the interchange to be addressed in the shorter-term.
- Paul Hesse (City of Poughkeepsie) noted that the mayor and administration understand the trade-offs being proposed, particularly with the Arterials design, and that he personally is willing to accept them, including slight travel time increases. He also noted the broad consensus around the Interchange and praised the creative engineering solution. He also noted that Natalie Quinn expressed her desire to not lose momentum and encouraged the team to develop a clear action plan for next steps.
- Jay Baisley (Town of Poughkeepsie) noted that the tradeoffs, in terms of travel time delays, are only projected during peak commute hours, and it is important to reiterate that this is a small portion of the day. He noted that his recent travel on the Arterials has reflected this – there is no problem most of the day. He also noted that the Town Board had received notice of previous public outreach at multiple stages of the project.

Implementation Working Group

Mark Debald led a discussion on next steps, the first of which was transitioning the study advisory committee into an implementation working group or task force.

- The purpose of the group would be to keep the lines of communication open, monitor funding opportunities, and develop applications for grant opportunities.

- Paul Hesse agreed with this approach, suggesting that **DCTC should play the important role of being the glue that keeps the group together and ensuring that we do not lose momentum.**
- Jeff Wright stated that the NYS Bridge Authority is interested and has a vested interest here; he would like to be involved in the working group.
- Michael Welti suggested waiting to bring in additional public and stakeholder/community groups so as not to mislead the community regarding the implementation timeline.
- Paul Hesse agreed, suggesting that it would be prudent to invite elected officials such as a Common Council member and Town Board member to participate in the working group in their role as representatives of the community.
- It was also noted that the group may become unmanageable if it is too large.
- Lance MacMillan (NYSDOT) expressed support for keeping the group together and supported continued efforts to pursue the appropriate funding opportunities.
- **It was agreed that the timeline for meetings would depend on solicitation deadlines, but we should not wait more than three months before meeting again. Late spring may be appropriate for the next meeting.**

Interchange

- It was noted that there is strong consensus around the interchange redesign moving forward.
- Lance MacMillan noted that this project will not be in NYSDOT's Capital Program update, which is being released soon, as there are no funds identified to support it. He noted interest in continuing conversations about potential funding options.
 - Sandra Jobson (NYSDOT) noted that for federal funding programs, NYSDOT can only submit three projects, so it needs to rise to a statewide priority level, beyond a regional priority.
 - There was some discussion of cost estimates for the design (approximately \$25M for Concept A and up to \$75M for the other Interchange concepts).
 - Sandra Jobson noted that at least 20% of funding is sponsor contributed, with more competitive applications including higher sponsor contributions.
 - Sandra also noted that to be added on the TIP, there must be a commitment for all phases, including construction. In addition, many federal funding programs require preliminary engineering and environmental review to be completed.
 - Mark Sargent noted the potential for a PEL study to advance the environmental and preliminary design phases of interchange.
 - NYSDOT noted that they are keeping this project in mind for future conversations. **Mark Debold asked that the MPO and local stakeholders be included in those conversations as much as possible.**
- There was a discussion of the DCTC's pending STIP/TIP update. It was noted that \$12M is available over the next five years, though much of that is already spoken for with projects in process, including several bridge projects in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Arterials

- Mark Sargent noted that the cost estimate for the full length of both Arterials is \$23M, though this includes several elements that are beyond what is needed for functional design, such as adaptive signal control outside the corridor, moving curb, drainage, and full replacement of 17 signals.

- Sandra Jobson expressed that the group needs to manage expectations of the project's implementation and cost.
- It was noted that multiple grant opportunities could be combined to form a package to fund the project.
- There was discussion of what an appropriate pilot for the Arterials would look like.
 - At the Common Council and Town Board presentations, a six-month pilot was discussed. It is recognized however, that a pilot for this length of time would have costs. It could be possible to do a shorter timeframe pilot, or to do a longer pilot for a smaller segment of the Arterials.
 - Paul Hesse asked how long it would take to see the full effects of traffic diversion, changing travel patterns, and public reaction. Mark Sargent noted that research has suggested 3-6 months for this.
 - Mark Sargent noted that **a task for the working group could be to write up a plan for the pilot project for the group to discuss.** This would include the location, time frame, how to measure success, etc.
 - Mark Sargent cited a West Hartford example, where instead of traffic cones, the pilot included re-striping. Lance MacMillan expressed concern that people driving would still use the closed lane if there was no physical barrier.
 - Lance MacMillan suggested coordination with utility capital improvement projects to test capacity reductions if those projects need to temporarily use a travel lane.
 - Sandra Jobson asked about the cost of a road diet on a shorter section of the Arterials, and whether that could be accomplished with local or regional funding.
 - Mark Sargent stated that a pilot study could be combined with the recommended Clinton Street intersection project.
 - Mark Sargent noted that NYSDOT's comment letter from spring 2021 suggested that the 3 to 2 concept may be feasible in the eastern two-thirds of the Arterials, from approximately Clinton or Hamilton St to Taft Ave/Fairmont Ave. This extent could be appropriate for the pilot.
 - Lisa Mondello (NYSDOT) agreed that a preliminary NYSDOT review suggested that a road diet may be easier in the eastern portions of the Arterials, and that the Department was concerned about adequate separation of bikes in downtown Poughkeepsie with the road diet. She also noted that attention should also be paid to transitioning the alignment back to three lanes.
 - Lance MacMillan noted that based on a cursory review of the eastbound Arterial, the residential section east of May Street may be a good fit for a pilot, but this would need further evaluation. **He suggested that the specific parameters of the pilot project be a topic for the next working group meeting.**

Independent Utility projects

Several independent utility projects were discussed. The first of these was to extend the Jefferson Street westbound left turn lane. Mark Sargent confirmed that this would involve moving the curb of the median. It was noted that NYSDOT had agreed that this project would improve operations. Jeff Wright suggested some lane realignment may be needed depending on the length of the turn lane, because the median narrows further east.

Mark Debald noted that the next planned repaving of the Arterials could be an opportunity to implement changes, and that they were last paved in summer 2010. **He also noted that**

pursuing the Clinton/Smith St intersection recommendation as an independent project might be a good start. He noted that the team should make sure that the Arterials aren't repaved before the road diet is tested.

Lance MacMillan noted that it will be critical to work with local utility companies since the ride quality on the Arterials will not be improved unless the manhole issue is addressed.

Funding Opportunities

Mark Debald described various potential funding opportunities, including a recent call for Congressional Member Items from Senator Schumer's office. **NYSDOT agreed to review the Member Item call with Main Office and determine if it would make sense to pursue.**

NEXT STEPS

The meeting concluded with members of the Committee thanking the consultants and other members of the team for their commitment to the study and interest in moving it forward. **Mark Debald stated that the group will aim for a late spring meeting to discuss next steps, including funding opportunities and the parameters of a pilot study of the road diet.**