

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55

Advisory Committee Meeting #8

Date: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

NAME	AFFILIATION
Mark Debald	Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
Emily Dozier	DCTC
Tara Grogan	DCTC
Heather LaVarnway	Dutchess County Planning
Lee Zimmer	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Lisa Mondello	NYSDOT
Jeff Wright	New York State Bridge Authority (NYSBA)
Supervisor Jay Baisley	Town of Poughkeepsie
Michael Welti	Town of Poughkeepsie
Kristen Taylor	Town of Poughkeepsie
Natalie Quinn	City of Poughkeepsie Planning
Paul Hesse	City of Poughkeepsie Planning
Mayor Rob Rolison	City of Poughkeepsie
Marc Nelson	City of Poughkeepsie
Chris Kroner	MASS Design
Evelina Knodel	MASS Design
Mark Sargent	Creighton Manning Engineering (CME)
Mark Nadolny	CME
Ryan Walsh	FHI Studio

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to provide a progress update on the Arterials assessment and conduct a dry run of presentation materials that will be used in a virtual public meeting focused on the concept development process for the Arterials.

OVERVIEW

Mark Debald (DCTC) welcomed attendees to the meeting. He explained that the last several months have been spent on carrying out due diligence for this phase of the study. Mark Sargent (CME) then reviewed the meeting agenda.

Design Input and Team Responses

Mark Sargent (CME) reviewed the questions and comments previously proposed by MASS Design. He noted that all comments from MASS Design were considered as part of our due diligence work. Mark noted that certain items would require work outside of the right of way, which is not something that the study set out to do. Additional greenspace is one area where there is possibility for integration, so it has been incorporated into the concept analysis.

Five of the cross-section concepts proposed by MASS Design rely on expanding the roadway width, which is not considered practical. Concepts showing a 6-foot-wide two-way cycle track adjacent to parking are also not feasible based on accepted standards. It was again noted that a fundamental goal of the Arterials analysis is to identify concepts that make better use of the existing pavement (i.e. not require additional right of way).

Traffic volumes on the Arterials are twice that of FHWA's suggested guidance for mini roundabouts. For this reason, the team deemed all the mini roundabouts proposed by MASS Design not feasible. The team also analyzed standard sized single lane roundabouts at each location, and found that in most instances, these also did not work due to the high entering volumes. Roundabouts would require multiple lanes to accommodate traffic volumes, which would have property impacts.

The team also received comments from NYSDOT, including that a project may be possible east of Hamilton and Clinton Street, though west of Clinton Street there would be operational issues.

Presentation of Draft Public Meeting Material

Mark Sargent (CME) noted that the presentation of dry run material would serve as the basis for the public meeting. He then delivered a draft presentation. The presentation included:

- An overview of the study and study area
 - Review of previous planning studies
 - Key considerations including speeds, crash rates, demographic analysis, and the separating nature of the arterials
 - Summary of existing conditions
 - What we've heard from community engagement held throughout the study
- An overview of concept development:
 - Redesign parameters
 - Benefits of road diets
- An overview of the two basic concepts: 3 to 2, and two-way
 - Evaluation factors
 - Pros and cons

Discussion

Mayor Rob Rolison (City of Poughkeepsie) noted that it was a good presentation with good questions and statistics. The discussion of pros and cons is effective. We will learn a lot from the public and that will drive further discussion.

Marc Nelson (City of Poughkeepsie) explained that he is leaning towards the 3 to 2 concept, which he feels will make Poughkeepsie a more bikeable and walkable city. He thought the presentation was effective including the timing and level of detail, and the graphics were great.

Natalie Quinn (City of Poughkeepsie) stated that she appreciated the walk-through of the two concepts including the pros and cons. Some of the images towards the end, including the renderings, were small and difficult to see. People will be very excited about these and should be able to see them in detail. The presentation is a concise summary of what has been discussed over the last few months. Using the pictures of cross-sections is probably the most helpful for the public, rather than the aerial views.

Mark Debald (DCTC) asked whether we would show the microsimulations like we did for the last meeting. Mark Sargent (CME) responded that yes, we can include those.

Paul Hesse (City of Poughkeepsie) stated that he appreciated the concise delivery. He asked whether there is a way to show how the facility will operate during non-peak hours, noting that for 22 hours of the day, the facility will handle the traffic just fine. Mark Sargent displayed a bar chart from a working version of the draft report that communicates this message and could be included in the presentation. Paul Hesse added that on the list of pros and cons, the order should be reversed so that safety is listed first instead of travel time.

Jay Baisley (Town of Poughkeepsie) noted that he thought it was a great presentation. He suggested that it would be helpful to show more photos of the actual roads. He also noted that the presentation should address the rush hour issue openly.

Michael Welti (Town of Poughkeepsie) asked if this will be a live meeting where people can ask questions. Mark Sargent replied that it will be an on-demand virtual meeting and there will be an opportunity to leave open-ended comments at the end. Michael Welti noted that he too likes the 3 to 2 concept. Also, the presentation mentioned that the two-way concept would require an interchange re-design in Arlington. He suggested that this idea is worth exploring more, especially since the interchange is not necessarily desirable in its current state.

Lee Zimmer (NYSDOT) commented that it was a great presentation. He noted that with the 3 to 2 concept, the desired speed reductions may not occur during off-peak hours. He suggested that even after reducing the Arterials by a lane, drivers will continue to speed if there are no impediments, though speeds could be controlled with congestion. The same applies for pedestrian safety; if the speeds stay the same and the crossing distances are the same, safety benefits may not be seen. Mark Sargent (CME) replied that the speeds shown in the presentation came out of the model and are the average speeds but that during off peak hours, the speeds would not decline significantly without additional measures. Michael Welti (Town of Poughkeepsie) asked whether roundabouts would reduce speeds. Mark Sargent (CME) noted that the roundabouts will not work for other reasons, but that adjusting the signal timing and signs that say 'signals timed to 30 mph' could be effective. Natalie Quinn (City of Poughkeepsie) noted that reducing the lane widths could also reduce the speeds. Lee Zimmer replied that NYSDOT previously reduced the Arterial lanes from 12 feet to 11 feet and saw no speed reductions. He noted that adding street trees can help reduce speeds. Jeff Wright (NYSBA) suggested that changing the timing of the lights could further reduce the speeds.

Chris Kroner (MASS Design) noted his thanks for considering MASS Design's suggestions. He asked if there are any changes to crossings proposed or are if there are other dimensional

changes being considered. He noted the Taconic as an example of two lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction, and how fast those speeds can be. Mark Sargent responded that the team did not reject lanes as narrow as 10 feet. He continued that there could be a benefit to discussing a further lane width reduction to 10 or 10.5 feet. He added that this would enable a wider painted buffer. Lane widths will need to be confirmed during design. Lee Zimmer replied that the Arterials are listed as 'Qualifying and Access Highways' due to the connection to the bridge, so reductions under 11 feet are not likely to be approved.

Chris Kroner (MASS Design) offered to share some information on surface materials like cobblestones (as used in TriBeCa) or rumble strips. Mark Sargent (CME) and Mark Debald (DCTC) welcomed those materials, though it was noted that rumble strips have noise issues and are not ideal for residential settings. Similarly, Mark Sargent noted that the City of Albany is removing cobbles from intersections, because they are not friendly to bicycles and wheelchairs. Mark Debald noted that smart signals can be used to force a red phase if they measure faster vehicle speeds, though that technology has tradeoffs elsewhere in the system.

Jay Baisley (Town of Poughkeepsie) asked whether realigned intersections have been considered. Mark Sargent (CME) replied no, but that there may be a possibility for creating a curvilinear alignment or lane shifts to help manage speeds given the road diet.

Chris Kroner (MASS Design) asked how the engagement would work for this presentation, whether it is in-person or virtual. Ryan Walsh (FHI Studio) explained that the plan is for a virtual meeting that could be done at one's own pace. A presentation video will play and periodically stop to prompt participants with questions. Chris Kroner suggested that from an equity standpoint, the team should consider ways to engage those that do not have technology access. He noted that the first open house was a good event, and something like that would provide a more robust and open engagement process. He also noted that the presentation starts somewhat dry and would benefit from some introductory slides about the history of the Arterials. Mark Debald replied that the team will give some consideration to how equitable outreach could be facilitated.

Emily Dozier (DCTC) asked the group what has been seen in the first six months of the year in terms of traffic volumes and the pandemic. Jeff Wright replied that he has seen a reduction in the number of cars but an increase in commercial traffic. He noted that it is still easier to get over the bridge at rush hour.

Mark Debald (DCTC) noted that the analysis should look at where diverted traffic may go with either of the Arterial concepts.

Chris Kroner (MASS Design) asked if traffic volumes on the two one-way roads would be half in each direction, and if not, would the volumes be closer to a roundabout capacity. Mark Sargent (CME) explained that volumes are already halved, and the volumes include the total entering traffic on both the east-west and the north-south legs of each intersection. He added that peak hour volumes are well over mini roundabout capacity with existing conditions. He noted that the team did a more detailed analysis assuming standard sized single lane roundabouts, and only two roundabouts were potentially feasible from an operations perspective, though those two locations require property takings based on aerial imagery.

Chris Kroner (MASS Design) suggested that the two cities cited as examples, Santa Monica and San Francisco, may not be great examples because they are larger cities and likely offer

greater diversion opportunities. They may not be relatable to local community members. Natalie Quinn responded that she thinks the examples have value; though it would be preferable to have an apples-to-apples comparison, it is helpful to demonstrate that traffic diversions in other cities did not destroy communities. Michael Welti (Town of Poughkeepsie) noted that cities like Poughkeepsie do have resilient networks and people will change their travel patterns or adjust travel hours. Emily Dozier (DCTC) noted that in that slide, the Arterials are shown as a six to four lane road diet, which could be confusing when comparing it to the other examples. She suggested describing them in terms of two 3 to 2 road diets for each direction. She also noted that the Raymond Avenue road diet is a local example.

Mark Debald (DCTC) stated that the reversible lane idea for the eastbound Arterial was also reviewed. Equity concerns, operational constraints, and cost issues prevented the idea from being advanced. Lee Zimmer (NYSDOT) also noted that there would be a cost to switching that back and forth every day, and NYSDOT would not be able to do those traffic operations on a day-to-day basis. It would also require all new signal poles and heads. Mark Sargent (CME) noted that there are examples of places like Phoenix where this has worked, but a greater directional split is usually needed, which does not exist in Poughkeepsie. Additionally, left turns should be prohibited during the peak hours to allow the reversible lane to function well, which degrades access and does not address the study objective of improving access to neighborhoods. Chris Kroner (MASS Design) thanked the team for looking at it. He continued that this should be an exciting project for the city, and there is benefit in being able to say that the team looked at all these out-of-the-box ideas. He continued that people have had to live with these arterials for a long time and deserve the best possible outcome. Mark Debald suggested that the team consider adding a slide on other options explored.

Mark Debald (DCTC) asked NYSDOT about whether red light cameras and speed cameras are an option from the state DOT perspective. Lee Zimmer (NYSDOT) responded that there are only four cities outside of New York City that have approval to use cameras and Poughkeepsie is not one of them, so it would require a change to the legislation. He also noted that nothing slows drivers down like parked cars. Mark Sargent (CME) replied that the team looked at parking protected bike lanes but there are many driveways, visibility issues and conflicts at the traffic signals. Based on FHWA's Separated Bike Lane Guide, a dedicated signal phase would be needed for a two-way parking protected bike lane and the signals are at capacity and cannot accommodate an additional phase. Natalie Quinn (City of Poughkeepsie) expressed disappointment that a parking protected cycle track would not work and stated that the treatment would be a huge advantage of the '3 to 2' concept. She requested further discussion on the topic at another time. Mark Sargent (CME) replied that the team does not believe that a two-way parking protected facility is appropriate based on NACTO and FHWA guidance provided previously; however, he added that a one-way parking protected bike lane may be possible, but would have more maintenance issues, including specialized snow removal equipment.

Next Steps

Mark Debald (DCTC) reviewed next steps. The tentative schedule is to continue public engagement for the Arterials analysis with a Common Council meeting in July and virtual public presentation in August.