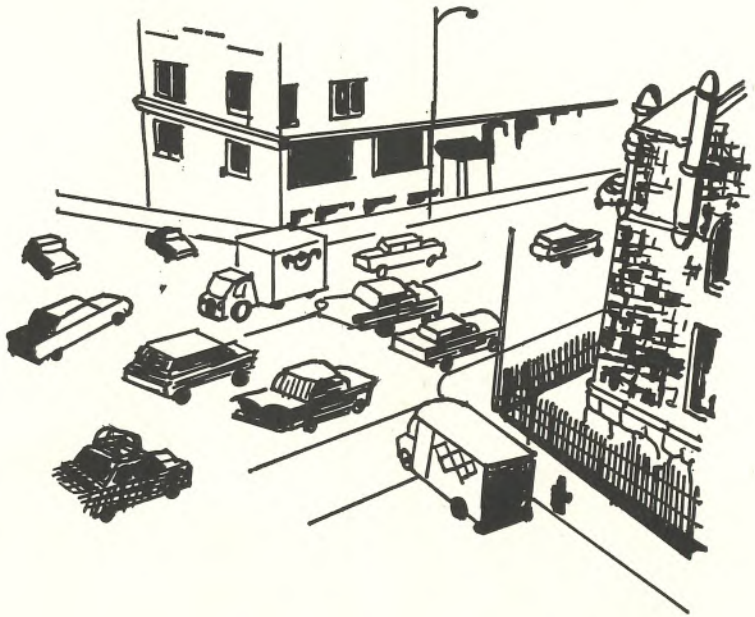
EAST-WEST ARTERIAL



Poughkeepsie, New York

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THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF
RICHARD W. MITCHELL
MAYOR

July, 1966

Dear Citizen:

One of the most serious problems facing the City of Poughkeepsie today is that of traffic movement and congestion. The daily chore of driving in our community is becoming more and more difficult.

Accordingly, the City and State of New York have cooperated in attempting to find solutions to our traffic problems. The outstanding result of our efforts is the construction of the North-South Arterial, to be opened late this summer. A second proposal is now before us for an East-West surface loop to run from Routes 44 and 55 to the Mid-Hudson Bridge.

This highway would be constructed and entirely paid for by New York State and the Federal Government.

Before any road may be built within the City however, the Common Council must give its consent. We shall shortly be asked to do this.

In order that the entire community will know all that is involved in such a decision, I would urge you to read and consider this Brochure carefully. The entire Common Council sincerely seeks your opinion in this matter and hopes that you will make your feelings known to us.

Yours truly,

Richard W. Mitchell
Mayor

Summary

1. The population of Dutchess County increased by 71% in the last 25 years. During the same period the number of automobiles trebled causing severe congestion in the City's streets.

2. Since 1947 the City & New York State have been cooperating in a Regional Transportation Study in hopes of solving Poughkeepsie's traffic problems.

3. From the very beginning it was seen that an East-West Arterial would be an integral part of the City's solution to its traffic problem for it was found that very heavy volumes of traffic wished to move between Routes 44 & 55 and the Mid-Hudson Bridge.

4. To find the best possible manner in which to move East-West traffic, several alternatives were proposed. Generally speaking except for the one-way split loop arterial, all were found to be either too disruptive to the community or not fully in accord with the City's needs.

5. The proposed East-West Loop Arterial best meets the primary requirements of moving traffic both *to* and *through* the center of the City. Because it frequently travels over existing street rights-of-way, it is the least damaging road that could be constructed in this urban area.

Introduction - Regional Setting

During the past twenty-five years, the greater Poughkeepsie Area has experienced an era of unprecedented industrial expansion and population growth. Within this period the population of Dutchess County increased by 86,000—a gain of 71%. Acres of formerly vacant land are now occupied by a myriad of uses, and small enterprises have grown into international corporations. However, no matter in what manner this growth is described or examined, it has not been achieved without cost.

A most evident result of this growth is the inadequate circulation system and consequent traffic congestion which has plagued Poughkeepsie for many years. During the same twenty-five year period according to the New York State Department of Motor vehicles, spurred primarily by post-war prosperity and increasing suburban development, the number of motor vehicles registered for use in the area trebled, and is now in excess of 100,000 vehicles.

Poughkeepsie as the Central City to this rapidly expanding County and the entire Mid-Hudson Area, now finds itself with roads designed for the vehicles and needs of another era. Over this admittedly inadequate transportation network, thousands of persons travel daily on their way to work, home, shopping or play.

These problems of obsolescence and congestion were recognized at an early point. As long ago as 1947, the City of Poughkeepsie requested the State Department of Public Works to join with it to attempt to find a solution to the problems created by the massive increase of automobiles and automobile oriented activities.

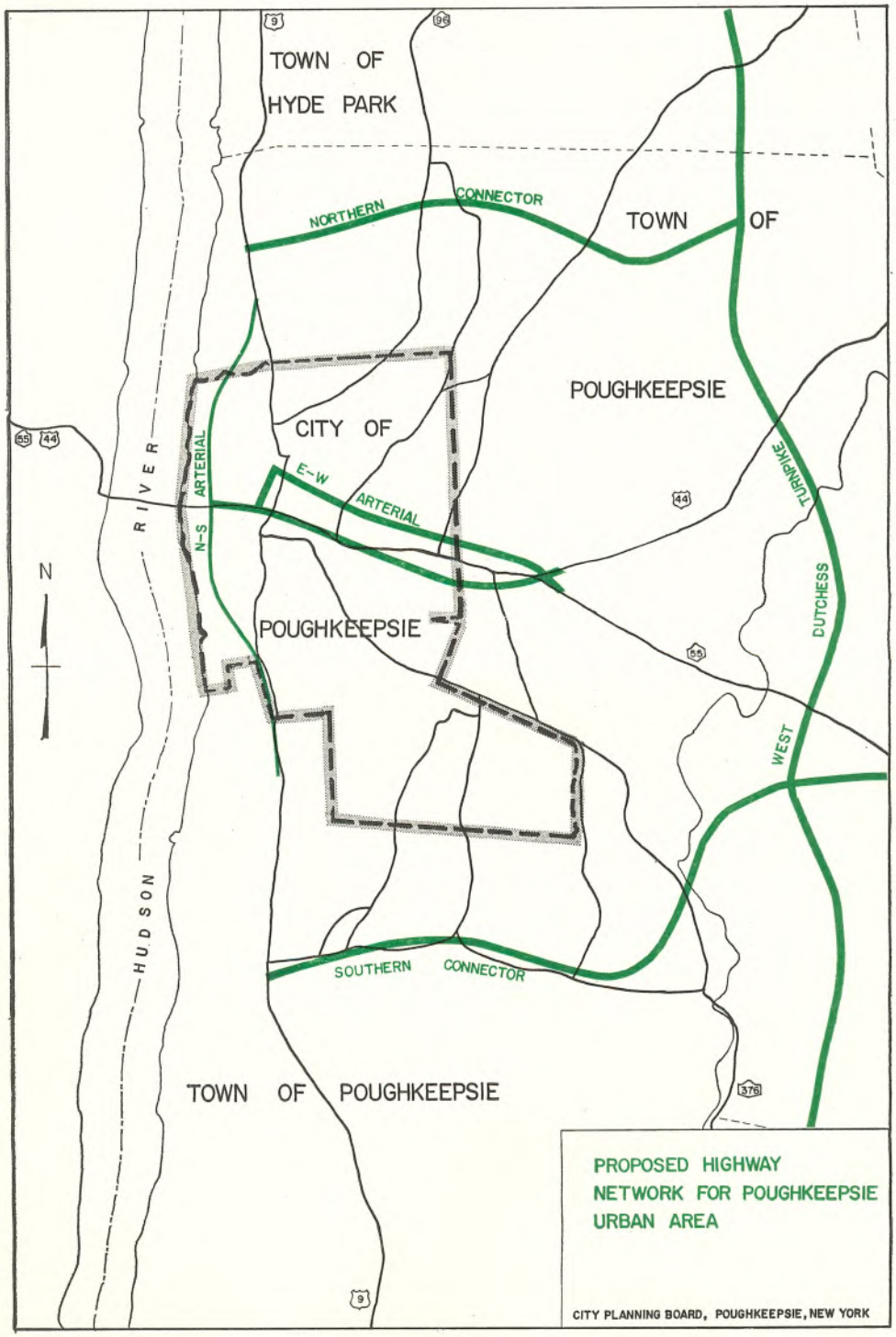
Accordingly, the State of New York and the City initiated procedures and formulated plans for a Transportation Study for the Poughkeepsie Area. By 1953 the first portion of designs for the North-South Arterial were completed; however,

due to delays encountered with Rights-Of-Way arrangements, the construction was not begun until 1963. This road is designed as a by-pass for those persons who have no need to go to the center of the City. This highway will be open for public use by fall of 1966.

Further results of their Transportation Study for the Poughkeepsie Area are shown on MAP 1. Another major North-South road, the West Dutchess Turnpike, is proposed, located about half-way between the Hudson River and the Taconic State Parkway. As shown, it would run from Interstate 84 near Fishkill to Route 9G in Wurtemburg and would be primarily designed to connect residential suburbs with employment centers. This limited access divided highway has a proposed travel speed of 60 MPH and would provide major interchanges with the roads that lead into the more urbanized parts of the area. Primary interchanges are at the Northern and Southern Connectors, as shown, Routes 44-55—376—82 and 52.

These two North-South highways, West Dutchess Turnpike and the North-South Arterial in the City along with two East-West connecting roads, one in the vicinity of Spackenkill and the other North of the City near the Hudson River State Hospital will form a circle of regional roads around the City. This circumferential loop will provide a means of fast, efficient movement for those persons not desiring or needing to go into the City and thus relieve local streets from carrying "through" traffic.

It was seen early in the planning stage, however, that the circumferential loop by itself did not serve the City or completely solve its traffic problems. In addition to relieving the extreme traffic congestion, there was needed a convenient and efficient way to bring City and area residents from their homes to Downtown. A road connecting the juncture of Routes 44 and 55 and the Mid-Hudson Bridge was the obvious manner in which to best do this. In relation to the proposed network encircling the City, an East-West Arterial would also serve as the necessary spoke, connecting and holding together the hub and the surrounding wheel.


TOWN OF
HYDE PARK
NORTHERN CONNECTOR
TOWN OF
POUGHKEEPSIE
CITY OF
POUGHKEEPSIE
E-W ARTERIAL
N-S ARTERIAL
HUDSON RIVER
TURNPIKE
DUTCHESS
WEST
SOUTHERN CONNECTOR
TOWN OF POUGHKEEPSIE
N
PROPOSED HIGHWAY
NETWORK FOR POUGHKEEPSIE
URBAN AREA
CITY PLANNING BOARD, POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

MAP 1

Traffic Volumes on Existing Roads

It has been shown how an East-West Arterial is justified in terms of the regional traffic network. The previous section demonstrated the relationship of the East-West Arterial with the Regional Traffic Network. Anyone driving within the City during rush periods can attest to the fact that the City streets are overcrowded.

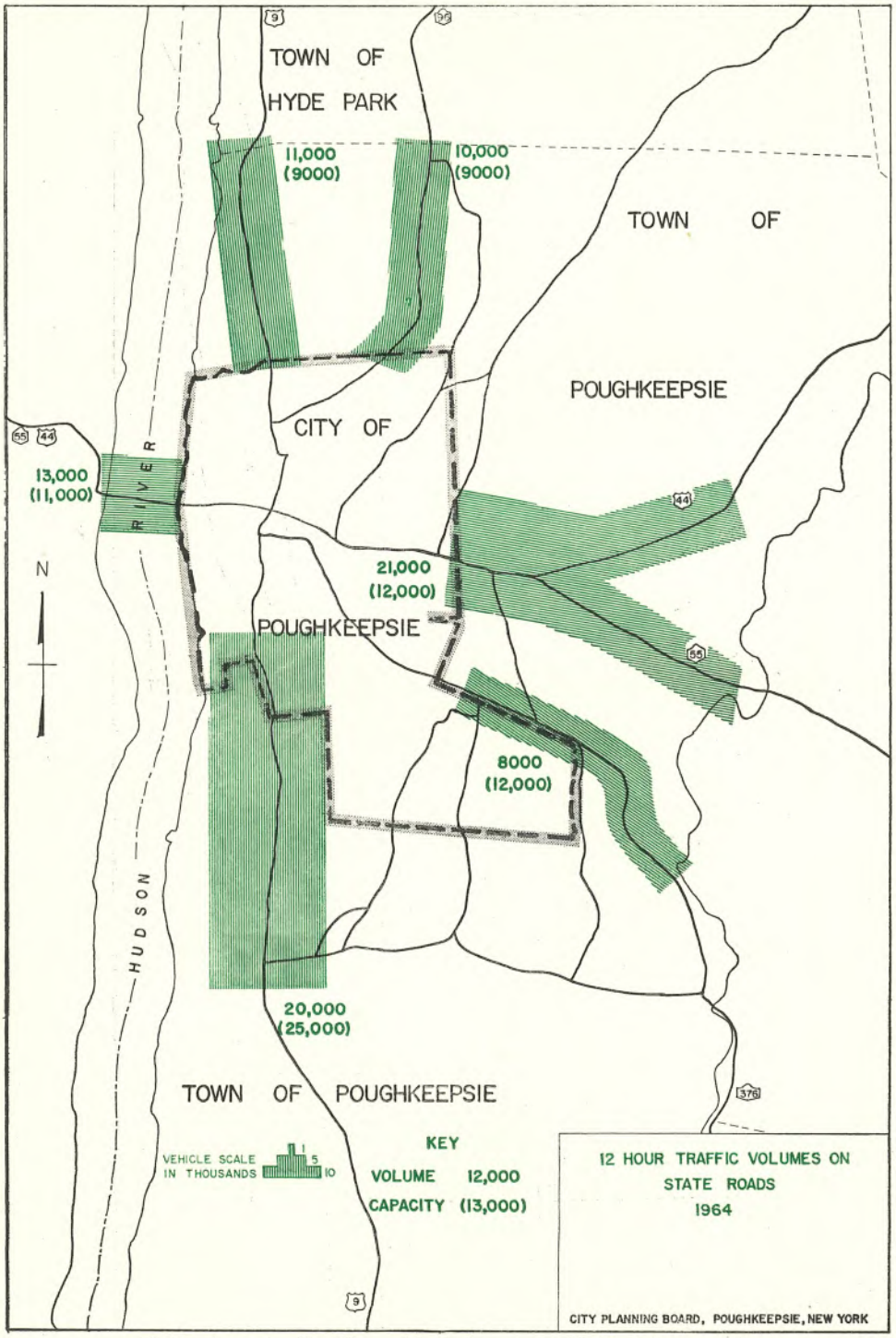
In order to substantiate what appeared to be obvious traffic conditions, detailed studies were made of traffic volumes on existing roads within the City.

In February of 1960, Candeub and Fleissig, consultants for the City's Master Plan made the following statement:

> Main Street shows the most severe congestion: peak hour traffic volumes exceed the street capacity by about 42% . . . With the exception of Market Street all the capacity deficiencies are observed on the east-west roads. This illustrates a fundamental problem in the existing street system, namely, that radial streets leading to the Central Business District are not sufficiently wide to carry the growing traffic volumes from the ever-expanding residential and industrial areas in the Town of Poughkeepsie and the region beyond.

It was also pointed out in that same report that peak hour traffic volumes also exceed street capacity on Hooker Avenue, Church and Mill Streets.

Since 1960 traffic volumes on all major streets have increased to the point where nearly all are in excess of their designed safe capacity, as shown on MAP 2.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HYDE PARK
11,000
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POUGHKEEPSIE
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TOWN OF POUGHKEEPSIE
VEHICLE SCALE
IN THOUSANDS
1
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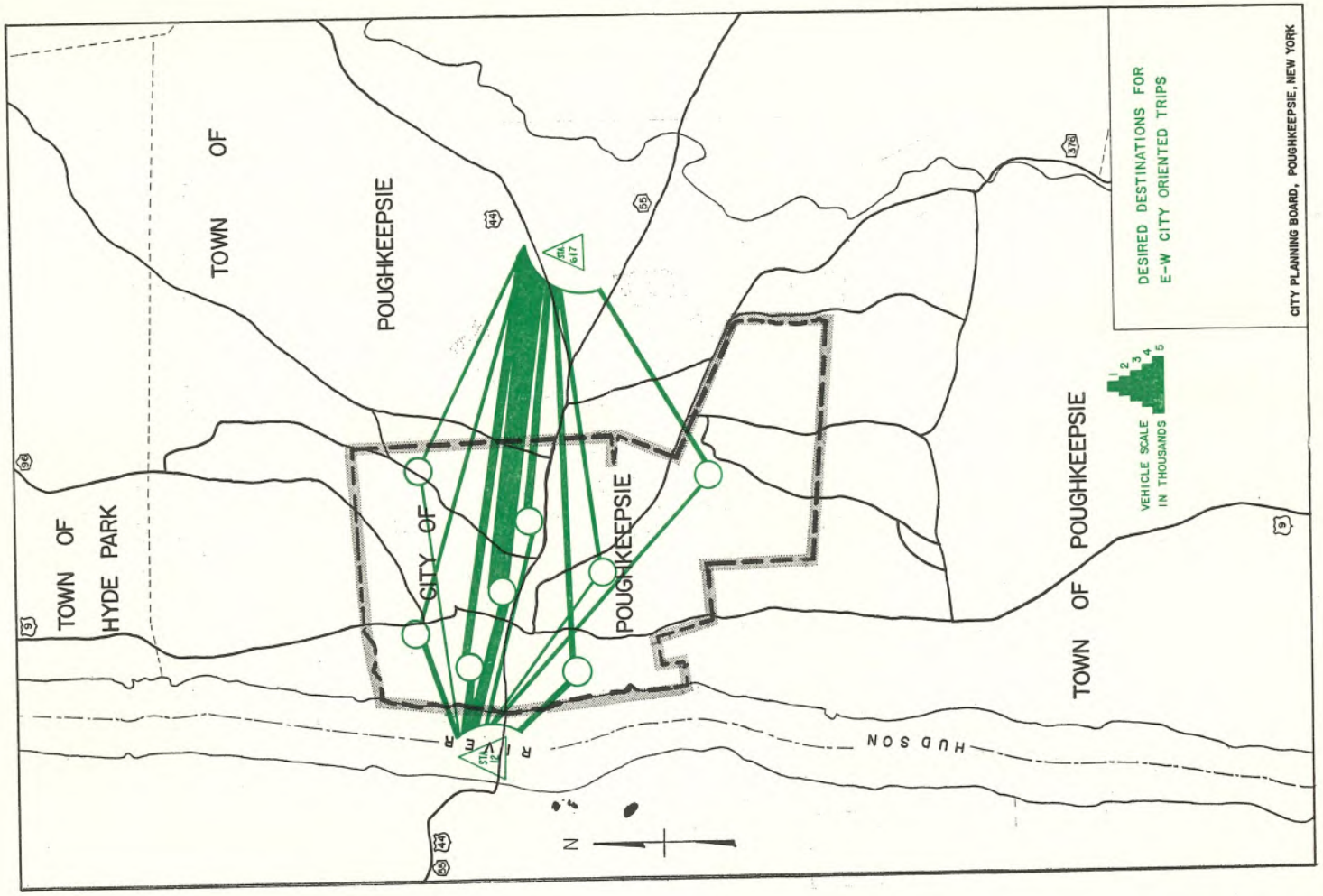
10
KEY
VOLUME 12,000
CAPACITY (13,000)
12 HOUR TRAFFIC VOLUMES ON
STATE ROADS
1964
CITY PLANNING BOARD, POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

MAP 2

MAP 3



In addition to determining how much traffic is entering the City, it is important to establish where this traffic is headed. This information is essential in order to determine the type and location of road needed to handle this traffic.

The above Map shows East-West desire lines or in essence how people would like to travel if they made their own roads as they went. Each circle represents the beginning or end of a trip.

The majority of East-West traffic is headed for the Central Business District with the remainder divided between other areas of the City, residential neighborhoods and through traffic.

The fact that almost all trips either begin or end in the City or both begin and end in the City indicates that the road system chosen must have many City access points, i.e. intersections.

Since much of the traffic is headed for the Central Business District, it is important to locate the road as close to downtown as possible.

Upon determining how much traffic is entering the City as well as where it desires to go, it becomes possible to determine what type of road is needed to accommodate this traffic.

The East-West Arterial (Loop System)

The East-West Arterial as shown on MAP NO. 4 would be a loop consisting of two one-way legs connecting the Mid-Hudson Bridge with the juncture of Routes 44 and 55. The East-bound leg would proceed along Church Street to the vicinity of Smith School where it proceeds south aligning itself with and then running along Baker Street into the Town and joining Haight Avenue. The Westbound leg would proceed from the juncture of Routes 44 and 55 through the Town, lining up with and proceeding along Maple Street, then meeting with and following Winnikee Avenue to an improved Clinton Square, then continuing along Mill Street. To complete the loop, the Arterial would then go South over the proposed New Washington Street until intersecting Church Street. From this point to the Bridge the Arterial would be two-way.

The proposed Arterial will look like any other City Street—being neither depressed nor elevated, but at surface level its entire length. There would be three twelve foot lanes of moving traffic with no parking at the curbs. Where the road uses existing street rights-of-way an additional five or ten feet of property would be required. In addition to the pavement it would have a planting strip for grass, new sidewalks, trees and street lights. All of this would be within a maximum right-of-way width of approximately 60-feet.

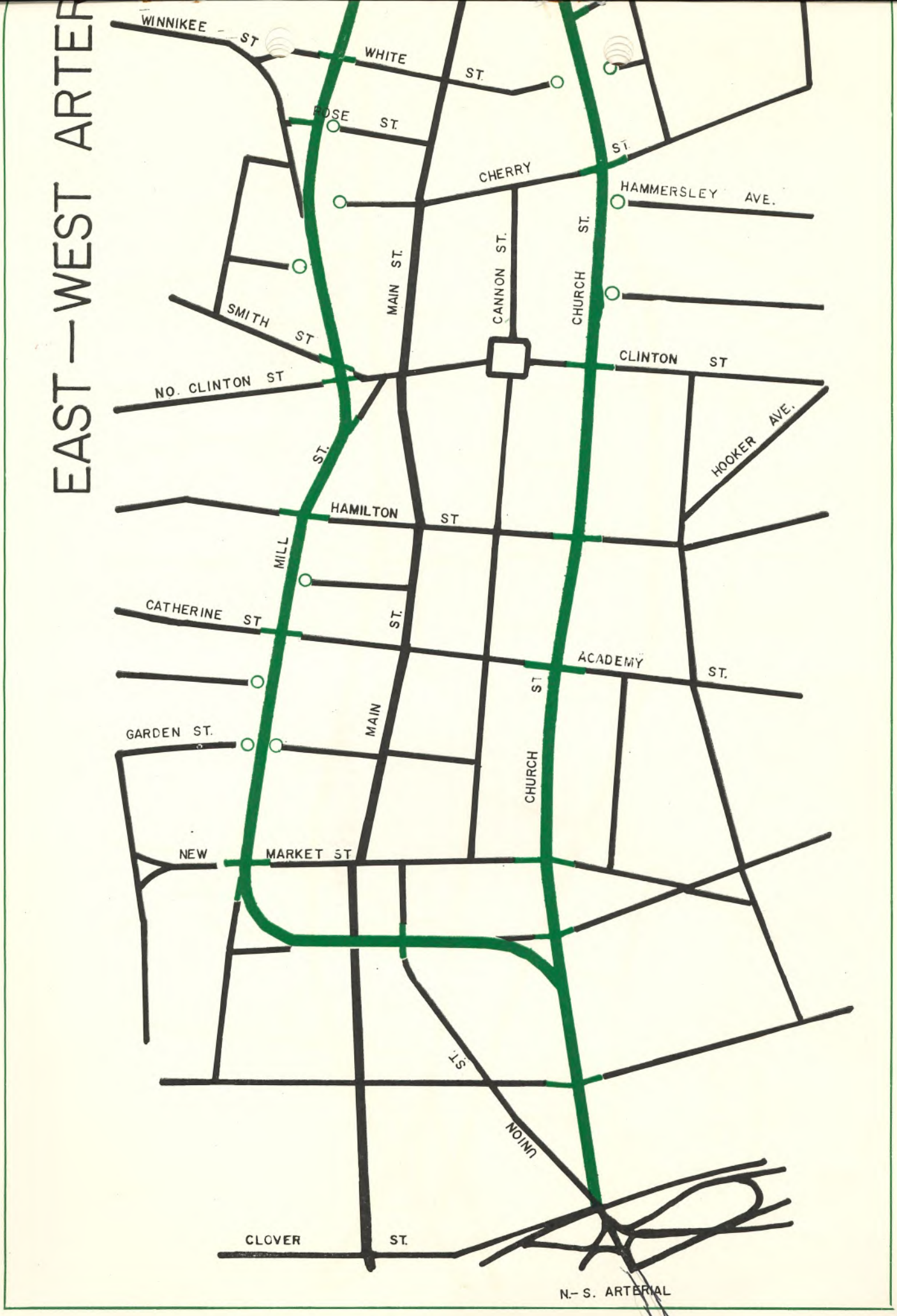
Finally, the intersections would still be controlled by traffic lights to allow free movement of both cross traffic and pedestrians. All major through streets and some residential streets would intersect with the Arterial. Minor residential streets would be dead-ended to eliminate some of the cross-traffic that causes much of today's congestion.

Justification

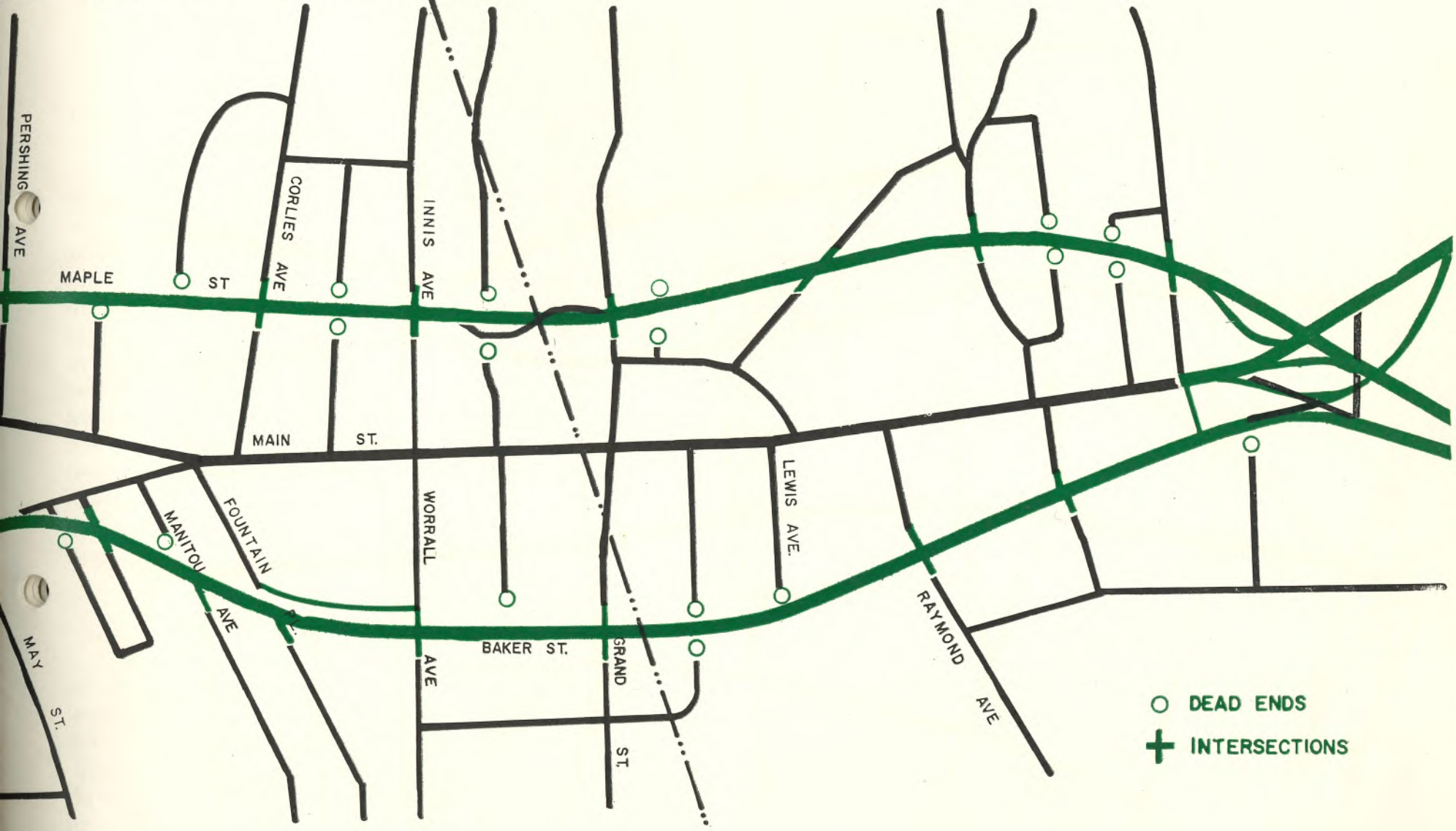
In all the many recent discussions about the proposed East-West Arterial, there appears to be a general agreement on the need for an East-West Road. So overwhelming have the problems of traffic movement congestion been within the City that even many of its critics grant the need for the highway, but argue only that the proposed route is improper. It is most important therefore, to provide a clear and complete discussion of the reasons why the route was proposed where it was.

DISRUPTION

The one-way surface loop arterial shown has been proposed as the least disruptive or damaging road that could be built and still meet the City's requirements. Unfortunately, roads through urban areas are disruptive by their very definition. No matter where they are placed, they always mean the moving of people and homes and a change from existing conditions. The proposed route does only one-half to one-quarter the damage to existing neighborhoods in the City as the other stated reasonable alternatives. The reason being that it utilizes


EAST—WEST ARTER
WINNIKEE ST
WHITE ST.
ROSE ST.
CHERRY ST.
HAMMERSLEY AVE.
MAIN ST.
CANNON ST.
CHURCH ST.
SMITH ST
CLINTON ST
NO. CLINTON ST
HOOKER AVE.
HAMILTON ST
MILL ST.
CATHERINE ST
ACADEMY ST.
GARDEN ST.
NEW MARKET ST
UNION ST.
CLOVER ST.
N.-S. ARTERIAL

AL (LOOP SYSTEM)



existing streets to the greatest possible extent thereby minimizing property damage and dislocation of families and businesses.

SERVICE

The two primary criteria which an arterial in Poughkeepsie must meet are to move traffic both *to* and *through* the downtown area. It is believed that the road as proposed is the most workable solution in view of present needs and future requirements. The road encircles the heart of our City and thus provides easy access to it for every resident from all parts of the community. It also provides the quick and easy means for those who wish to go through the City rather than stop in it. Only a road near the center of the community can meet both these requirements.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District of Poughkeepsie presents the largest and most diverse shopping facilities between White Plains and Albany. "Sales Management Magazine" recently designated the Poughkeepsie area as the tenth most powerful buying area in the nation. It is difficult at best with present traffic conditions in Poughkeepsie to capitalize on this massive latent buying power of the Mid-Hudson Valley. The all too obvious congestion is a testimony to the attraction of Poughkeepsie as a vital regional City, but if allowed to continue indefinitely, threatens to become a severe liability. The fact that City wide sales rose from 65 to 88 million, a 23% increase in the 1948 to 1954 period, but then leveled off to 91 million dollars in 1958, is ominous testiment that downtown is in need of help.

The proposed East-West Arterial of all the possible alternatives best meets the needs of the Central Business District. If it is just to maintain itself in a growing area or aspire to greater heights against increasing external competition, then the City and area residents must be provided a means of reaching downtown without experiencing hardship and frustration.

The economic health and vitality of Poughkeepsie's Central Business District is of importance to every resident of the City. The physical condition of the buildings and their actual presence provide only the intangible benefits of aesthetics and convenience. There are some extremely practical considerations, however, to their continued success. This area, according to the assessment rolls is currently valued at 14-1/2 million dollars - - - over 21% of the City's total. Sales taxes levied and to be returned to the City are anticipated to be in excess of 1.2 million dollars. Combining these two sources of revenue which are directly attributable to the CBD produces 24% of the total annual City revenue. Because municipal expenditures are usually constant or increasing, it is not hard to see that a decrease in either sales or real estate tax revenue from this one major sector, would mean an increased tax burden on every City resident. In these terms, then, downtown's business is everyone's business, and a road helping to serve downtown, helps to serve everyone.

CITY FUNCTIONS

The proposed arterial would provide a safe and efficient means of reaching the center of the Community for the thousands of persons who drive to work in Poughkeepsie daily. Poughkeepsie is fortunate in also being the center of financial, legal, cultural, governmental, transportation and administrative activities for the entire county of Dutchess. If City and area residents are to continue these necessary activities, they must of course be able to get to them.

A last function occurring within the City which the road must serve are the many industries in the City. The River and Railroad are no longer significant modes of moving commerce, and if our local industries are to compete effectively, then they must have access to roads for both reception and distribution.

Need for East-West Road System

Because of the tremendous volumes of traffic entering the City, it is obvious that existing roads can no longer handle the tremendous demands of the present, let alone those of the future. Therefore it is obvious that something must be done. Upon completion of the North-South Arterial, the present problem with the North-South traffic will be alleviated. Upon completion of the proposed county network, those people who wish to by-pass the City will be able to do so very easily. What is therefore needed to serve the needs of the City is a new major facility to handle the East-West Traffic which can no longer be adequately done by existing roads.

The surveys on where the traffic is going can be valuable in determining what type of facility is needed. MAP 3 indicates that what is needed is a major East-West facility to handle the traffic destined for the downtown area, other residential areas within the City, as well as the 13% which desires to go straight through the City.

In the process of determining exactly what type of facility would best serve these needs, several alternatives were considered which are discussed in the following section.

Alternates

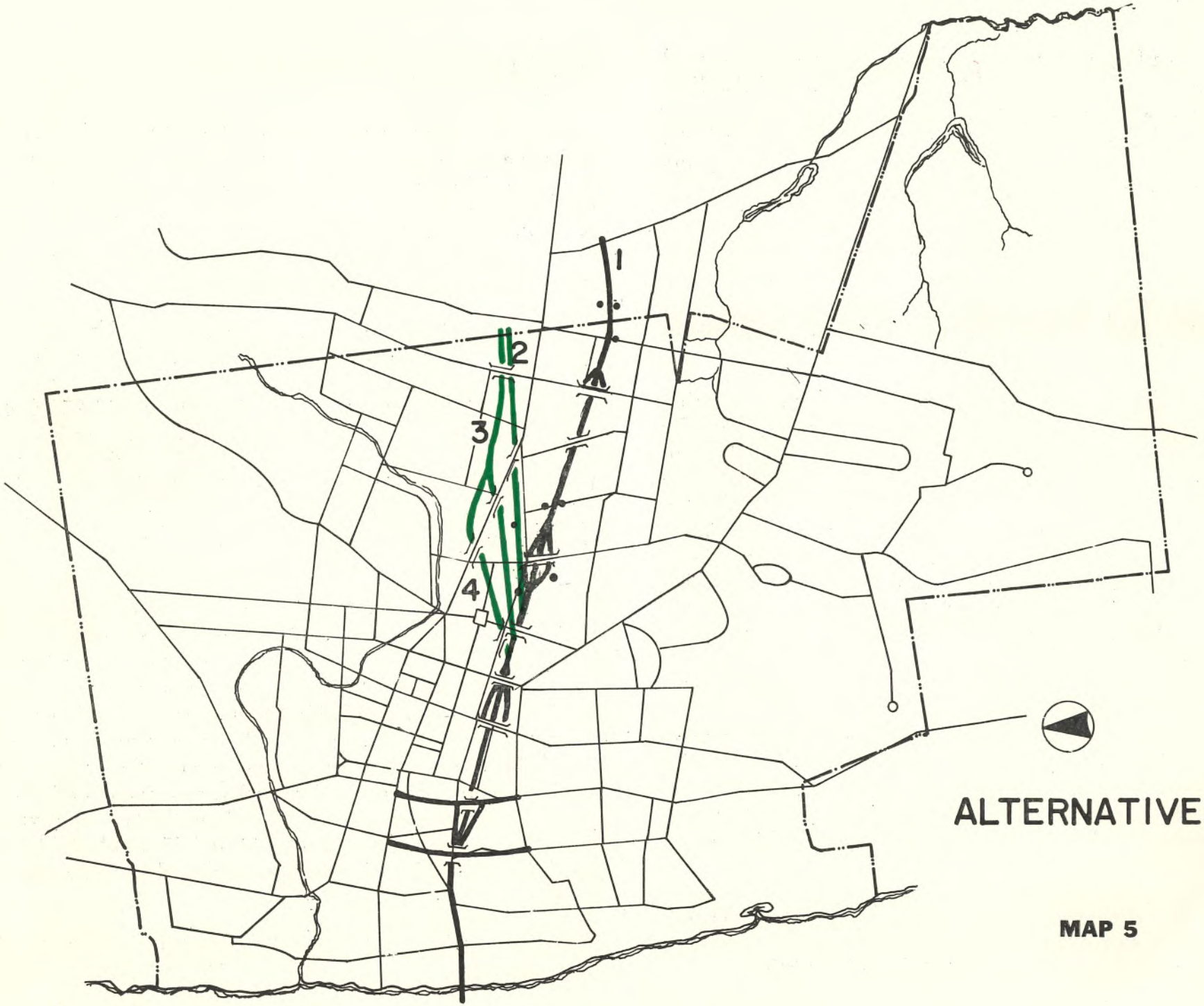
As previously stated, an East-West Arterial has been under consideration since 1947 with several alternate routes being carefully studied. It is important to examine each of these closely in order to understand the evolution of the presently-proposed East-West Loop System.

ALTERNATE #1

This is a high-speed, limited access, depressed highway—more commonly known as an "expressway," shown on MAP No. 5. It would have four lanes carrying traffic at an estimated speed of 50 MPH with a right-of-way width of 200-250 feet. There would be limited access, meaning that there could only be a minimum number of intersections, which in this case was limited to three (3), for the entire City. Because it was designed to be a depressed highway, it would go *under* the major through streets and all minor residential streets would be dead-ended.

There are several *advantages* to this type of road system in that cars can move along rapidly because of the high speeds permitted; there would be no parking or stopping problems because of the wide shoulders on both sides; there would be no driveways to contend with because access would not be permitted in this manner; and finally, there would be no problem with cross-traffic or congestion because the expressway would go *under* all major N-S through Streets thereby eliminating the need for traffic lights. Therefore, the task of moving traffic from the juncture of Routes 44 and 55 to the Mid-Hudson Bridge would be effectively accomplished by this expressway.

The *disadvantages* to this type of system are centered primarily around the effects it would have on the City itself.



ALTERNATIVES

MAP 5

Although the expressway would effectively handle *through* traffic, this represents only 13% of the total traffic involved. What is most important to the City is providing convenient access and egress to the Central Business District plus all other areas of the City, as well as taking care of the through traffic. In addition, the fact that the expressway is depressed means that a physical barrier would be created which would divide the City in half. Another important consideration is the extensive property loss involved as the road does not follow existing streets. In essence, it would mean total clearance for a 250-ft. wide strip running from one end of the City to the other.

This would not only remove a great number of properties from the tax rolls, but would also require the relocation of at least four (4) times as many families as the loop system proposed and would therefore cause a great deal of disruption within the City.

ALTERNATE #2

This is the same type of road, utilizing the depressed expressway concept described in ALTERNATE NO. 1. However, it turns northward in the vicinity of Virginia Avenue, crosses Church Street, goes under Cherry Street, then through the middle of the blocks bounded by Church and Main Street, passes under Main Street and continues across Corlies, Roosevelt and Innis Avenues into the town of Poughkeepsie.

The *advantages* and *disadvantages* recited in ALTERNATE NO. 1 above, again apply here, because the location is not along existing streets, but through the center of blocks, causing considerable property damage and relocation.

ALTERNATE #3

This is another variation of the expressway concept. It branches northward in the vicinity of Clinton Street, crosses Church Street, passes under Main Street in the vicinity of Pershing Avenue and continues mid-block parallel to Maple Street into the Town.

Again the same *advantages* and *disadvantages* apply, because of the similar concept.

ALTERNATE #4

This is the last variation of the expressway concept. It crosses Church Street, passing south of Reservoir Square and crossing Main Street in the vicinity of North Cherry Street. It then heads eastward across Rose and North White Streets and follows the general alignment of ALTERNATE NO. 3 thereafter.

This alternate also has the same *advantages* and *disadvantages*. However, it appears that there may be additional business dislocation due to its proximity to Main Street for a greater distance.

ALTERNATE #5

Consists of several suggested changes in the proposed Loop System. All of these would tend to locate the legs of the Loop farther from Main Street even into the Town. These either did not follow existing streets or went through major public facilities such as schools, housing projects, churches, parks, etc. Most important of all is the fact that the farther away from Main Street the Arterial is placed, the less it serves the needs of both City residents and visitors who want to get into the City.

The suggestion to place the loop outside of the City is impractical for two reasons: first, it would in no way serve the needs of the City residents due to its location in the Town and: second, the County and State have already made proposals to accomplish the same objectives as shown on MAP NO. 1.

ALTERNATE #6

The last alternative is to do nothing and make the best use of existing streets. This would create major problems in view of the major population increases expected. This means that more cars would have to use streets whose capacities are already greatly over-taxed as shown on MAP NO. 2.

IN SUMMATION, there have been many alternatives considered since 1947. Most of these unfortunately either caused too much property damage and disruption in the City or did not effectively serve those needs most critical to the welfare of the City. The one exception to date is the East-West Loop System.

A Partial List of Objections to Proposed East-West Arterial Highways and Their Rebuttals

The objections were supplied by opponents of the East-West Arterial.

- The answers by the Staffs of the various City Agencies.

1. Provides a truck route through heart of City.

- Trucks are presently utilizing all City streets.

2. Eliminates all parking on proposed arterial highway.

- Parking will be restricted, however not at all times nor in all places.

3. Removes real property from City tax rolls.

- Less disruption and removal of property would occur with this proposal than any other of the alternatives.

4. Increased tax burdens on every City resident.

- Providing better access to the community's most highly taxed area will enhance rather than detract from the City's financial position.

General Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Will there be any public hearings on this proposal?

ANSWER: The State Highway Department will hold at least one official public hearing. Additional informational meetings may be held by the City. You are encouraged to attend and bring this brochure with you.

QUESTION: Who will maintain the road?

ANSWER: The State Highway will have responsibility for maintenance. They may discharge this responsibility through a contract with the City or directly with their own forces.

QUESTION: How long will it take to build the proposed East-West Highway?

ANSWER: Although there are some intangibles, it is fair to estimate that the first car could travel the complete loop by 1970.

QUESTION: Who will police the road?

ANSWER: The City of Poughkeepsie will have jurisdiction within the City boundaries just as it has on all other streets.

QUESTION: What will the Loop System cost?

ANSWER: In terms of dollars, the proposed loop system would cost approximately $12 million, paid entirely by the State and Federal Governments. The main expressway system that was considered (MAP NO. 5) would cost approximately 3 times as much, and each of the variations of this expressway would cost approximately 2 to 2-1/2 times as much as the loop system.

Actual cost, however, cannot be determined strictly by dollar figures for acquisition and construction. In terms of removing properties from the tax rolls, it is important to note that the approximate assessed value of those properties that would be removed by the loop system represents only one-half-of-one percent of the City's total assessed valuation or less than one million dollars.

Any of the expressway alternates would remove at least double this amount from the tax rolls. It should be noted that current building activity within the City will add an additional 5 million dollars to the tax rolls. With the construction of an East-West road the City tax rolls should get an additional boost from new commercial enterprises within the urban renewal areas in the Central Business District. This will be due to the increased accessibility of these developing areas.

As for how the arterial will affect the property values along the road, it must be granted that there will be some that will decrease in value. However, it has been proven in other cities that the majority of properties will remain constant or increase in value because of the decreased congestion in front of the adjacent properties as well as the provision of convenient access into the City and around it as well.

QUESTION: Will the proposed Arterial create a safety hazard for the property owners and schools located on it?

ANSWER: There has been much rightful concern about the

safety of such a highway especially in the area of the two schools located near the East-bound extension. This is a very valid question and one which was given highest consideration in the planning of the Arterial.

In terms of pedestrian and especially child safety, it is believed that the moderate speed limit guaranteed by synchronized traffic lights will go far to insure the safety of abutting property owners. Synchronized lights are timed to turn green as a car travelling at the posted speed approaches. Cars travelling faster than the posted limit would encounter all red lights. The fact that the Arterial is a one-way system rather than a facility on which traffic converges from two directions should make it easier for both adults and children to cope with the problems of crossing. In the School Zones additional speed restrictions may be imposed during specific hours to further moderate speed and the present school crossing guards would of course continue to perform their duties. Curb parking would be prohibited and thus also eliminate the danger of children darting out unseen from between parked cars.

There is an additional safety factor inherent in any arterial system. The proposed highway would remove those many automobiles from the secondary residential streets where they have been forced to go to avoid the congestion on the major roads. These residential roads, totally inadequate for the volume of traffic on them now present a severe safety hazard. It can be expected that an East-West Arterial will remove such traffic now using streets such as Mansion, Forbus and Montgomery which are also near schools.

QUESTION: What is the relationship of this proposed Arterial to Poughkeepsie's Urban Renewal Plans?

ANSWER: Prior to the Federal Government approving the expenditure of any money for urban renewal purposes, they must know the approximate route of any proposed major roads which would affect the projects into which they will be investing huge sums of money. While the actual route is entirely a local decision, a commitment to some route, or no route at all, is necessary if the Federal Government is to participate in present renewal activities without substantial delays.

As to future Urban Renewal Projects, there is considerable agreement amongst both local and national officials that an East-West Arterial is necessary if the new neighborhoods and downtown to be created are to be adequately and properly served. Without new and better roads to serve the parts of the community to be reconstructed and revitalized, any effort for urban renewal will be severely hampered.

QUESTION: Would service delivery parking, such as oil or laundry deliveries be permitted?

ANSWER: Yes, such deliveries would be permitted, but not within the peak rush hour periods.

QUESTION: Would the City have a voice in the speeds established, or in the changing of established speeds?

ANSWER: Yes, the City would be consulted and would have a voice in any established speed or changes therein.

QUESTION: Would present driveways to private houses be eliminated?

ANSWER: No. Anyone who has a right of access to any existing street now would retain that right.

CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
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Poughkeepsie, N. Y. 12601

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or

City Planning Board
51 Cannon Street
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
Phone: 471-1066

Urban Renewal Agency
53 Front Street
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
Phone: 471-7010