

Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting

Thursday, July 25, 2024, 2:30 pm
via Microsoft Teams

— Meeting Summary —

- 1. Introductions** – Emily Dozier (DCTC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and led introductions (see list below).
- 2. Presentation:** *City of Ithaca’s Sidewalk Improvement District Program* – Emily Dozier, DCTC (see slides and link to recording on the [BPAC webpage](#)).

Emily explained that the City of Ithaca’s Sidewalk Improvement District Program Manager, Peggy Tully, gave this presentation to DCTC and its sister agencies and agreed to let Emily share it with this group.

Before 2014, Ithaca required residents to repair the sidewalks adjacent to their property, like most municipalities in New York State. As a result, many sidewalks were in poor condition or missing. In 2014, the City took over responsibility for repairing and replacing sidewalks. There is one sidewalk program manager. The City is split into 5 districts; all properties within each district are assessed a fee, which goes towards sidewalk improvements in that district. The fee is \$80/year for a single family home (22 cents/day); for other properties it is \$150/year plus an amount based on the square footage and street frontage. For a single family home, the fee over the life of a 30-year mortgage is smaller than what a typical sidewalk repair would cost. The City collects about \$1 million per year; about \$940,000 of that goes to sidewalk repairs. This program ensures that sidewalks are repaired consistently and to City standards. To determine priorities, the City considers the sidewalk’s condition (including accessibility), as well as its location and what it provides access to, resident complaints, and equity.

Emily showed the 2024 budget for the program overall and for each sidewalk district, as well as maps of sidewalk repairs funded through the program over the past ten years. The program also funds design for more complex projects, which the City can seek outside funding for. The [City’s website](#) has more details on the program.

George asked how the fees were determined. [Emily later confirmed that the City based the fees on what it would cost to fix 1 mile of sidewalks, which is about what they can do in a year]. Carl asked if college property was exempt from the fees. Emily will follow up with Peggy, but noted that the program applies to public sidewalks, not sidewalks on private property. Gerry said this kind of program is needed in Dutchess County, as there are many locations without sidewalks. George asked how sidewalks are funded in Dutchess. Emily explained that new sidewalks can be paid for by developers as part of the site plan approval process, or through State or other grants, but for

maintenance, municipalities require the adjacent property owner to maintain sidewalks. Emily also stated that DCTC has been working with County Public Works to improve sidewalks on County roads in denser areas (such as Innis Ave in the Town of Poughkeepsie). Tara shared a 2-page [summary of this issue](#) from DCTC's long-range plan, Moving Dutchess Forward.

Tara noted that for the Spackenkill Sidewalk study for the Town of Poughkeepsie, most residents were excited about a sidewalk, but some were concerned about the maintenance responsibility. DCTC suggested that the Town consider a sidewalk improvement district to alleviate the burden on individual property owners. Emily offered to pass along any other questions to the Ithaca's Sidewalk Improvement Program manager.

3. Roundtable updates

- a. George Ouimet asked about 'share the road' signs. He explained the need for education about safe driving in the Town of Washington and Village of Millbrook. Bill suggested grassroots-level outreach, such as providing lawn signs to residents. The Town may be reluctant to put up signs due to the expense and maintenance responsibility, and proliferation of signs. Bill noted that signs often lose their effectiveness over time; portable signs may be more effective. Emily stated that share the road signs are most effective where there is consistent, daily bicycling, such as near a school. A community-based campaign could be a good way to spread the word and garner support.
- b. Carl noted that the Town approved a site plan for a new restaurant and required a bike parking rack to be installed.
- c. Bill Johnson offered bicycle safety materials for municipal camp programs and events, including helmets, a bike safety trailer, and educational materials.
- d. Colleen stated that Dutchess Tourism is working with an accessibility company, [Wheel the World](#), to evaluate hotels, restaurants, and other venues in Dutchess that are accessible to wheelchair users. Dutchess is one of 18 destinations that have gone through this process. Colleen also noted that more visitors are coming to Dutchess County without a car, but they find that they can't walk to destinations due to the lack of sidewalks or poor condition sidewalks. Emily noted that this points to the economic impact of sidewalks and other walking/bicycling infrastructure, and the economic loss due to excluding potential visitors.
- e. County DPW Projects: Emily noted that the sidewalk improvements on Innis Avenue (CR 75) in the Town of Poughkeepsie are done; this includes new pedestrian signals at the Emmott/DeLaval intersection. DPW is also working on plans to improve sidewalks on Maple Ave (CR 62) in Millerton, including access improvements at the intersection with Main St/Route 44. Finally, DCTC is working with DPW and Bard College on a redesign of Annandale Rd (CR 103) through the Bard campus to make it a more complete street.
- f. Emily added that the Watch Out For Me [campaign website](#) includes a series of videos on topics including crossing the street safely, distraction, sharing the road, and being visible.
- g. NYSDOT: Emily shared an update on the Route 82 bridge in Hopewell Junction. They are still working on a design alternative that has the least impact to the rail trail. Construction will likely be moved to 2026. Construction is underway on the Hooker Ave/Raymond Ave roundabout. See the NYSDOT [local projects page](#) for information about projects in Dutchess County.

4. DCTC [Local Projects](#)

- a. [Beacon-Hopewell Rail Trail Feasibility Study](#): Tara explained that this study is evaluating the feasibility of developing a rail trail from the City of Beacon waterfront to Hopewell Junction on the former Beacon rail line. An online survey garnered more than 1,500 responses, the vast majority of which were very supportive of the concept. DCTC also held two pop-up events in May. The consultant team is working on an analysis of existing conditions, including wetlands, bridges, and road crossings.
Gerry noted the benefit of connecting to the Beacon train station; Tara noted that the trail would also connect to the Dutchess Rail Trail and Maybrook Trailway in Hopewell Junction. Tara encouraged everyone to check out the website, which includes a link to sign up for email updates.
George asked if there were reports documenting the economic benefits of trails and other walking and bicycling infrastructure. Emily suggested [Parks & Trails NY \(PTNY\)](#), which has done economic impact studies of the Erie Canal Trail. [Several municipalities and states across the country have also done studies](#). PTNY also has a [‘Trail Towns’ program](#) for communities along trails to benefit from bicycle tourism.
- b. [Resilient Ways Forward](#): Tara shared that DCTC’s Transportation Vulnerability Study is almost complete. The study looks at climate impacts to sidewalks, rail trails, and transit, as well as roads, bridges, and culverts. The website has a new [fact sheet](#) and [interactive adaptation toolbox](#) which outline potential strategies to reduce climate impacts.
- c. City of Poughkeepsie speed limit reduction study: Emily said that this study is evaluating whether the City could lower its city-wide speed limit to 25 mph. This is based on a recent [change in State law](#) that allows area-wide speed limits of 25 mph (instead of 30 mph). The villages of Tivoli and Red Hook have done similar studies, as have several municipalities around the state. Bill noted that Kingston is looking at this as well.
- d. Countywide Safety Action Plan: Emily explained that the Safety Action Plan is just starting. It will study crash trends and issues around the county, including for people walking and bicycling. The intent is to make every municipality in the county eligible for Safe Streets For All implementation funding to help address traffic safety issues. The Advisory Committee will meet in late August; outreach to municipalities and other groups will follow once the study gets further underway.

5. Events, Funding & Announcements

Emily outlined the following events:

- a) City of Poughkeepsie National Night Out – August 6th, 5-8 pm
- b) [Cycle the Hudson Valley](#) – August 4-11
- c) [Walk Bike & Roll NY Symposium](#) – September 16-18, Binghamton
- d) [New York Bicycling Coalition Summit](#) – October 17-18, Albany
- e) [Winnakee Land Trust Trails Roundtable](#)

Emily highlighted the following funding opportunities:

- a) [Hudson Valley Greenway: Community and Trail Grants](#): due September 6th
- b) Federal infrastructure funding: [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs](#)
- c) [T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#): up to \$50,000 for community spaces

- d) [Extreme Terrain Clean Trail Grant Program](#): \$250 grants for trail improvements
- e) [League of American Bicyclists'](#) recognition programs: Bicycle Friendly University (Aug. 8)

- Other announcements: Tara reminded the group that DCTC's [Traffic Data app](#) includes data from pedestrian and bicycle counts, and now also includes turning movement counts (intersection vehicle counts).

6. Follow-up Items

- a. [Bike Dutchess](#) app: send Emily bike rack and fix-it station locations (photo and description) and any suggestions for improvements.
- b. See our [BPAC webpage](#) for meeting summaries, recordings, and presentations, as well as a link to sign up for our email list.
- c. Let Emily know if you have a presentation idea!

7. Next Meeting: October 31st, 2:30 pm

- a. Meeting schedule: January, April, July, October; last Thursday, 2:30 - 4:00pm

July 2024 BPAC Meeting Participants:

Name	Organization	Email
Emily Dozier	DCTC	edozier@dutchessny.gov
Altia Robinson	Senator Gillibrand's office	Altia_Robinson@gillibrand.senate.gov
Tara Grogan	DCTC	tgrogan@dutchessny.gov
Colleen Dorney	Dutchess Tourism	colleen@dutchesstourism.com
George Ouimet	Resident, Town of Washington	
Gerry Matusiewicz	Resident, City of Poughkeepsie & Shorewalkers Board Member	
Carl Whitehead	Town of Poughkeepsie Planning Board	carl.h.whitehead@gmail.com
Bill Johnson	Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board	wjohnson@dutchessny.gov