

**Community Meetings at Starr Library with CPC Subcommittees
October 2, 2022 1:00-3:00 pm**

**TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING WITH THREE BREAKOUT GROUPS**

(n=40 participants, plus 13 presenters and volunteers)

Presenters: Shea Dean and Joe Gottschalk

Facilitator: Michael Slaby

Recorder: Jennifer Breslin

Issues Most Frequently Identified

- Traffic Calming: Many people cited the need for traffic calming measures and reducing the dangerous speed of cars in various parts of the village.
- Crosswalks: There is a need for many more crosswalks and for cars to respect them and slow down for pedestrians.
- Inter-Municipal Cooperation: A number of challenges and opportunities exist outside the boundaries of the village (road to Rhinecliff, River Road, access to Tops, Red Hook, etc.) for recreational as well as other needs (commuting/access to services, etc.). Therefore, inter-municipal cooperation is essential. This also extends to the need to make changes to /county/state-controlled roads that are within the village.
- Public Transport: Access to public transport – at the village level but also at the Town and inter-town levels – is needed to meet the needs of the elderly, of teens that cannot drive, for people using the train and for many activities in inclement weather or at dark.
- Sidewalks: Need for improvements so people don't fall or have to walk in the street.

See details below of three breakout group discussions

Session I

Crosswalks:

- Irked that people don't use crosswalks and just walk out into the middle of the street and cross at any point in the village. People don't even realize that Garden St. is an actual street, and they just walk in the middle of it.
- Crosswalk signs get run-over twice a day and people almost get hit many times when using them - cars don't pay attention.

Cycling/Runners:

- There are "pinch points" in being able to cycle more regularly and for more purposes. For instance, it is hard to commute between towns due to safety issues; it is hard to cycle within the town due to risky sections like Mt Rutsen Road and River Road.
- Traffic calming would help make roads safer for cyclists, runners, and walkers.
- Lack of places to put bikes and lack of signage on places that do exist. This is important as more people cycle in Rhinebeck, and it becomes a place where out of towners start/end cycling excursions. This is up to landlords, not just the businesses themselves.

Sidewalks/Paths:

- The condition of the sidewalks and paths makes running difficult.

Traffic and Traffic Calming:

- Concern expressed about development planned by Astor Road for 80 units and the impact on traffic on outlet roads, the safety of the planned outlet on Rhinecliff road, and the impact of traffic on the village if people in this new development have to drive to town. There should be a walking path put in place as part of this development plan. The discussions with the Town have not been fruitful and the project has proceeded despite concerns and a “no” decision from Town Planning Board, and others and out of concern for the environment, water, and other issues.

Public Transport:

- Existing “mass” transit is infrequent and there is no clear place to get on and off and that is comfortable.
- Create an electric shuttle on-demand.
- Ensure that teens can use the on-demand
- Civic Engagement/Advocacy: Don’t despair!

Other:

- Gateway: consider using the property by the Fairgrounds as an additional gateway into Old Post Road. This would also mean that other development plans (Astor) could be scrapped and trees wouldn’t have to be felled.

Responses:

- Crosswalks: The Transport sub-committee has done an inventory of the town and noted that there were not enough crosswalks and they have identified places where new ones should be created.
- Inter-Municipal Cooperation: Cooperation between village and town and state is very important and needs further work in some cases, but we should be thinking long term and work to change any dynamics that are hindering efforts. Village is talking with town/county/state on various issues around traffic calming, crosswalks, etc.
- There is a program with the Empire State Connections that looks at last mile connections which would include things like Rhinebeck-Rhinecliff or the Village to Tops. The Village is looking into taking advantage of this.

Traffic and Traffic Calming: See above

- There is a balance between various needs that need to be remembered – e.g., housing needs versus traffic versus other needs.

Public Transport:

- Village in talks with county on C bus, including shelter.
- Advocacy: We need these issues to be raised more regularly, by many people and to push for action over time. There are many opinions, but this needs to be translated into more organized advocacy and action.

Session II

The Intersection:

- The crossing light in the village does not work sometimes (it skips the pedestrian cycle); people don't know they have to push it. Sometimes people have to give themselves an extra 5 minutes time for just crossing that intersection.
- Don't know they can walk diagonally. Is it possible to have diagonal crosswalks?
- Suggest looking at the City of Amsterdam as a good practice.
- Driving through the intersection is also a problem. Have to wait a long time and then hurry up when turning left.

Traffic and Traffic Calming:

- There is no enforcement of traffic speeds.
- Livingston and South Street are both used as cut throughs (avoiding the light/intersection) and cars and commercial vehicles come through fast and are dangerous to pedestrians, kids playing, animals, etc.
- Police are posted to Mill Street to stop cars to generate revenue (traffic trap).
- Dual issue of speed and enforcement.
- We need to remove the police from the traffic calming equation. They pull people over because cars aren't nice and target people. We need to replace this with speedbumps and other measures.
- Look at Amsterdam – Traffic Logix for example promotes solutions like cameras, speed bumps, planters, bump outs, etc.).
- River Road has speed bumps and this has worked to slow traffic.
- In St Louis there are speed bumps all over and they work.
- Could we have rotaries at 9/9G?

Walking / Cycling:

- Rhinebeck is very special. You can experience its historical nature on foot/bike in an intimate and personal way.
- River road should be a biker's paradise but there needs to be more dedicated space for this.
- The safety of sidewalks is an issue (bumpy, etc. and people fall) so people end up walking in the street.
- Concrete vs bluestone sidewalks is being discussed

Crosswalks:

- We need more of these, and we shouldn't even have to ask. But how do we convince cars to pay attention to them?

Public Transportation:

- Let's get a hydrogen bus (or van) and electric equalizers. We could use the property at the former EverReady Diner – next to the electric grid - for this. A group called Ballard makes fuel cells that go in buses. Electrolyzers need water and there are companies that can make this out of air (hydrolysis – rain making). We could use a solar grid for power for this process.
- Teenagers need a way to get to places on their own by van, bus or through safe spaces to walk.

Civic Engagement/Advocacy:

- We need people to stay engaged on these issues. We will hear “no” and you “can't, can't, can't”, but then there are things that can change, e.g., in Rhinebeck people were told ‘no’ multiple times about rent protection but with perseverance, Kingston recently passed some controls.

[Note, they are limited but a start.] The light at the intersection was changed at some point and can be again. We need voices and opinions to be translated into actual engagement and pushing.

Responses:

The Intersection

- Red Hook has pictures for crossing, flashing lights, left hand turn, etc.
- There are barriers to making changes as these are state/county roads.
- This has been a source of controversy for decades.
- The State will not allow for diagonal crosswalks.

Crosswalks:

- In MA there is a better culture of respecting pedestrian right of way in crosswalks. How do we build that same culture here? At one point, there were baskets with crossing flags by Terrapin to draw attention to pedestrians.

Traffic and Traffic Calming:

- Requires collaboration between village and town/state/county.
- Options are being looked into.

Walking/Cycling:

- Work is happening to connect to the Empire Trail for biking
- Safe Routes to School project is being pursued (state initiative).

Session III

Intersections:

- Need E Market left hand turn so people don't use side streets as cut throughs.

Traffic and Traffic Calming:

- Speedbumps on River Rd are gradual – good and effective.
- South Parsonage by Knollwood and mini park is dangerous. People drive very fast. There are two speed signs, but they are not obeyed.
- South Parsonage and South Street intersection is a “shit show.” Praise for the TU crosswalk “beautiful project.”
- South Street is a cut-through and cars speed and commercial vehicles come through so it becomes dangerous.
- There is speeding, not enough enforcement (police and troopers also go too fast) and lack of sidewalks = dangerous
- Need traffic calming like speed tables, bumps, etc.
- Are there challenges with traffic calming related to plowing or emergency vehicles?
- Need to revisit the actual speed limit and lower it in places.
- There needs to be a line down Astor Drive so people stay on the proper side when turning.
- Are roundabouts a no-go?

Sidewalks:

- Need sidewalk by Cramer neighborhood and laundry, UPS complex

Fairgrounds:

- Can we have an entrance for Fairgrounds at Mulberry (or other than Rt 9) to reduce car congestion and allow people to walk in?
- What do the Fairgrounds do to support the village?

Crosswalks:

- Change the culture so that cars respect these
- Would like a diagonal crosswalk at E. Market/Montgomery/Mill.
- Need crosswalk signs
- Need crosswalk by Cramer neighborhood to cross Rt 9
- Need crosswalk at Platt

Walking/Cycling:

- There is a Town feasibility study on affordability of a Rhinebeck to Rhinecliff path for cyclists and runners/walkers.

Public Transportation:

- We need public transport for elderly, youth and for walkers/bikers in inclement weather or at night.
- Village should have a role in providing for public transport so there are fewer cars.
- Let's get electric bikes.

Other Green Transportation:

- What about identifying and planning for future demand for e-vehicles and infrastructure?
- Can the committee also look into impacts from climate change – like increased flooding – and also the creation of green infrastructure like permeable pavements and so on.

Responses

Intersections:

- Red Hook has left hand turn, but it is harder to get through than Rhinebeck.
- Fairgrounds do a lot for the village, but they don't advertise it. They contribute funds, other resources, space, and so on.
- Sidewalks to fairgrounds are challenging because of limitations placed by the utility company

Traffic and Traffic Calming:

- Safe Walks to School is looking into speeding issues around school.
- Some of this (e.g., Astor Drive) is intermunicipal
- Suggested locations for roundabouts are complicated as they are state roads and therefore have to be big enough for very large trucks (legally). There is not the space for the size of roundabouts that would be required (and it would look terrible at that size even if we could). There are also financial issues.

Crosswalks:

- Mayor noted that there is no "jaywalking" as the law says that you can cross the street anywhere and that you have the right of way.
- Diagonal crosswalks can be created but they can't be marked on the road – this is a state DOT issue.
- Mayor noted that crosswalks have the same requirements as sidewalks (e.g., ADA applies, etc.)

- The need for a crosswalk at Platt was identified on the survey but that requires work with the state.

Public Transportation:

- Town used to have a Van and still does but it has been in disuse due to lack of drivers (and COVID). The Rotary has just agreed to provide drivers so the bus will be available again. It is on demand.
- Looking into an electric bike program in connection with Red Hook (creating a larger network). There was a demo of this during Climate Week.

Other:

- Dutchess County community transportation plan is coming out soon.
- We need to be creative about what we can do.