



SUMMARY
Broadway Public Design Workshop

Nov. 7, 2009

Newburgh Activity Center, 401 Washington Street, Newburgh, NY
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Event Description:

The first public design workshop to solicit input from the community regarding physical and service improvements related to transportation and transit services within the Town and City of Newburgh—specifically Broadway and Route 17K from within the City of Newburgh to the vicinity of Route 300 in the Town of Newburgh.

Attendees: More than 70 stakeholders attended

STUDY ADVISORY GROUP		
Church	David	OCDP
Budde	Fred	OCDP
Parrington	Rob	OCTC
McDougall	Ian	Newburgh
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Trelstad	Graham	AKRF
Klusek	Rich	AKRF
Eisenberger	Judita	AKRF
Almeida	Kathia	AKRF
Kooris	David	RPA
Ikezoe	Paolo	RPA
Lane	Rob	RPA
Jenkins	Janet	Eng-Wong Taub
Carmody	Matt	Eng-Wong Taub
Pawlick	Mark	Lochner Engineering
Snyder	Kyle	Lochner Engineering
Averill	Cyd	Arch Street Communications
Ginger	Mold	Arch Street Communications
Drapkin	Jonathan	Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress
Murphy	Charlie	Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress

Press at event:

- Joel Cook, Mid-Hudson News
- Courtney Bonfante, The Sentinel (New Windsor)
- Allen Gaul, Mid-Hudson Times

Handouts:

- One-page fact sheet (English/Spanish)
- Map of Broadway corridor with draft goals.

Welcome

Orange County Planning Commissioner, David Church, welcomed participants and provided context for the study—and the workshop—by describing the county’s efforts to create livable communities that achieve long-term value and high quality of life through coordinated land use and transportation planning.

He indicated there are still substantial federal and state funds available for appropriate transportation infrastructure and improvements and that the County is prepared to provide a match in funds. He also stated that Orange County continues to grow in population, unlike much of the rest of the state, which is either stagnant or losing population.

Mr. Church asked that participants consider:

- ways to connect to Stewart Airport;
- focus on the urban bus service;
- other transit improvements.

Presentation (PowerPoint format):

Graham Trelstad, of AKRF, provided an overview of the Study:

- Project Vision
 - Seek inter-municipal / inter-agency solutions to transportation and land use issues;
 - Identify opportunities for managing residential growth, economic development and environmental protection;
 - Recognize Orange County’s evolving role in the Hudson Valley
- Project Overview
 - Sustainable Development
 - Integrated Transportation and Land Use planning
 - Smart Growth

Mr. Trelstad noted that although the current planning process will not result in any immediate expenditure of local funds for implementation, having a plan in place enables the County to respond when funding is available.

David Kooris, of Regional Plan Association, introduced planning concepts for participants to consider and utilize as appropriate throughout the workshop:

- Context Sensitive Design:
 - Designing public works and transportation infrastructure projects that meet the mobility needs of businesses and residents, while preserving scenic, aesthetic, historical and environmental resources;
 - Reflects the desires of the involved community
- Complete Streets: a concept that addresses the needs of all users by including:
 - Ample sidewalks;
 - Bike lanes;
 - Transit lanes;
 - Ample landscaping;
 - Appropriate parking

Prior to breaking into work groups, several audience members offered comments and considerations for the group:

- **Broadway Connectivity**
 - Improve transit capacity and access throughout the corridor (bus or trolley)
 - To reduce vehicular traffic
 - To accommodate non-drivers
 - To provide for both commuters and users of cultural activities
 - Connect to the waterfront
 - One lane each way
 - More pedestrian and bike connection and less vehicular access
 - Better pedestrian access along the waterfront
- Address Utilities: possibly place them underground
- Increased residential and retail density
- Improved sidewalk along 17K
- Better access management throughout the corridor

Activity:

The group then self-selected around 5 tables of approximately 10 participants per table, Two Project Team members facilitated at each table. Each group reviewed the corridor goals, and identified concerns, additional goals and ideas for improvements.

Referencing aerial maps of Broadway in the city and the town, participants envisioned a roadway that meets the needs of walkers, buses and bicyclists in addition to automobiles—through the configuration of ample sidewalks, medians, landscaping, bike lanes, parking and bus stops.

Reporting:

To conclude the design workshop, representatives from each group reported their group's findings. Common themes emerged:

- Public transit is a critical piece of the economic redevelopment of the Broadway corridor.
- Connecting Broadway to Stewart Airport and to other communities vital
- Better pedestrian facilities are needed

All design suggestions were noted for consultant reference and consideration. Additionally, notes from each group are in an Appendix to this summary. The subsequent planning session produced a variety of useful suggestions for dealing with the broad expanse.

Next Steps:

There will be two additional public design workshops. One will focus on the suburban corridors and the other will address concerns of the non-urban village centers in the study area. These workshops are expected to be held in January 2010.

Appendix

Notes from each table/group participating in the Nov. 7 design workshop

Priorities and Goals

Table 1 - Facilitators: Rob Lane and Charlie Murphy:

This group wanted to add two principles, and to the top of the list:

The corridor needs to be designed as a transit corridor.

This includes the aspiration for light rail or trolley (see below) as well as the creation of several multi-modal hubs along the way (between 2 and 3).

- The corridor needs to become more intensively developed.
- A related concern is that several people wanted to make sure that we are building on the previous efforts.

Table 2 - Facilitators: Janet Jenkins and Judita Eisenberg:

Some of the priorities participants brought up during the introductions were:

- Connecting the waterfront to Stewart Airport to spur economic development
- Transforming Newburgh into a destination and developing its tourism potential
- Preventing accidents on the narrow portion of 17K
- ensuring a freer flow of traffic along 17K and not having to wait behind people making left turns
- Ameliorating the precarious pedestrian conditions along parts of Broadway/17K
- Fixing the condition of the sidewalks and lowering the crown in the downtown area.

Participants agreed that public transit needs to be a more explicit goal on this list, with a focus on the link between transit and economic development. It was also noted that Goal 4 (provide adequate capacity) should emphasize the inconsistency of the current traffic flow. It was also noted that there is an inconsistency between what is public parking and what is being set aside for developers; there needs to be clarity on what will be public in 20 years. Finally, it was noted that “green elements” should also incorporate trash cans.

Table 3 - Facilitators: Graham Trelstad and Paolo Ikezoe:

- Public transit is a “critical piece” to redevelopment of downtown Newburgh
- There is a “significant opportunity for change” and that any transit option should be “cool” to attract residents, new jobs, and economic activity to downtown Newburgh
- Downtown Newburgh serves as a sub-regional center for surrounding towns and there is a significant opportunity to attract hotel and entertainment/dining interest from individuals staying in hotels closer to Stewart Airport or those visiting the waterfront.
- Essential that a transit/intermodal hub be located within the downtown (in addition to the park-and-ride facility on Route 17K) in the Town of Newburgh.

In general, the group seemed interested in applying lessons from other urban centers, including European centers, and that the redevelopment of the downtown should not follow a purely suburban model.

Table 4 - Facilitators: David Kooris and Rich Klusek:

- Goals should include a discussion of zoning since land use regulations are paramount to allowing new business
- Goal should include need to connect communities; waterfront to neighborhoods and neighborhoods to other neighborhoods.
- Goals should encourage alternative modes of transportation that do not rely on fossil fuels.

Table 5 - Facilitators: Matt Carmody and Mark Pawlick:

The table felt very strongly that Water Street should be part of the study and evaluated if this should be a city street or a highway.

Design

Table 1 - Facilitators: Rob Lane and Charlie Murphy:

Broadway Downtown

This group came to consensus around a kind of hybrid plan/cross-section with the following features:

- **Parking:**
Parallel parking preferred. End-in parking worth considering, but overall the group wanted the extra space for other amenities. Over time, this should be combined with a strategy of consolidating parking. Cross-access behind the stores.
- **Median:**
Provide a green median that is wide enough to actually work as a usable public space at the crossing points. Broadway in NYC on the Upper West Side was cited as an example.
- **Travel Lanes:**
Allow two lanes in each direction, but make the lanes narrow – maximum of 11'. Except at the most major of cross-streets, do not provide a dedicated left turn lane. The feeling was that this kind of friction was good traffic calming practice.
- **Bike Lanes:**
Preference for the “on-sidewalk” model
- **Transit:**
The light rail/trolley idea is obviously appealing. This group appreciated that this is a very high bar, so they were satisfied with the idea that a Bus rapid Transit system should be established first and designed to anticipate the eventually transition to a fixed guide-way system, should that happen. Create 2 or 3 multi-modal nodes along the length of the corridor.

Broadway in the Town

- Develop the deep green area between the curb and the edge of the right-of-way as a linear green zone with a multi-purpose trail of some kind.
- Use landscaping to create a more unified aesthetic.
- Rationalize access to the businesses along the corridor.
- Over time, rationalize the intersections so that there can be some number of signalized “nodes”.

Additional

- Improve transit capacity and access throughout the Broadway / Route 17K corridor.
- Connect the Riverfront to Downtown and Downtown to the Airport.
- Consider a trolley along Broadway.
- Start with a bus, then go to a BRT and ultimately have a trolley or streetcar that connects the waterfront to the Airport.
- Newburgh should identify a couple of transit hubs such as:
 - Waterfront
 - OCCC
 - Fullerton T

Table 2 - Facilitators: Janet Jenkins and Judita Eisenberg: Broadway Downtown

Overall, this group was less focused on actual design elements and more interested in broader goals and recommendations.

The discussion began with a recommendation to create a median in the center of Broadway with a BRT line or some other type of public transit. It was noted that left turn lanes are needed, and that sufficient width for transit in the median and a left turn lane could be achieved by decreasing the width of the current sidewalk, which participants felt was too wide to begin with.

It was suggested that South Street should be the main through street, since it is a state road, and that to truly change the way that Newburgh uses Broadway, changes to South Street have to be implemented.

Participants wanted Broadway to be a destination, and some participants liked the idea of the bumped out plazas proposed in the Duany workshops. This was boiled down to a desire for intimacy on this street, as well as a sense of neighborhood and identity.

There was a suggestion to close off part of Broadway and divert some traffic to South Street, thus creating two business districts.

It was noted that pedestrian crossings are badly needed; however, there didn't seem to be much enthusiasm for a greened center median (though one participant noted it would be desirable if there were a bike path running through the middle of it). It was noted that a median along Broadway would never be as maintained as the one on Park Avenue, and that participants would rather see green space on the sidewalks. A green strip along the sidewalk would make a safer play area for children, and would help to narrow the sidewalks. Even more preferable to sidewalk green strips were the squares or small parks envisioned in the Duany workshops, since there was a feeling that green space along sidewalks often isn't well maintained.

Regarding parking, there were feelings that there are enough parking lots in Newburgh that angled parking is not necessary; however, other participants felt that in reality, people do not want to walk very far from their parking space to their destination, so ample street parking is a necessity. It was also noted that business owners would have strong opinions on this topic. Participants noted that the current parking design is dangerous; backing out of an angled space onto Broadway requires "holding your breath and hoping for the best." It was also noted that the spaces are too narrow, and that it is difficult to open your car door if someone is parked next to you.

It was noted that the crown should be eliminated—participants recalled stepping off the curb into deep puddles of water and slush, and there was also a suggestion to bury power lines.

When the group revisited the desire to have a public transit system in the median, we teased out that participants wanted this because it implied the permanence of transit facilities. They agreed that other solutions were possible, as long as people could build businesses near transit facilities and be certain that they would be there in the future.

There was also a suggestion to eliminate the metered parking on Broadway and replace it with the system used in parts of New York City, where drivers can pre-pay parking at machines that accept credit cards.

One participant also suggested that traffic leaving the college be forced to leave via other roads, and not Broadway.

Finally, it was noted that this study must include adjoining streets. Even if Broadway is improved, the other streets need to be improved as well.

Broadway in the Town

Participants noted that the absence of a left turn lane and speeding are two big issues in the town portion of the road. It was suggested that the width of the road be expanded to include sidewalks, turning lanes, and shoulders. There was also a suggestion to have a bike lane (Class I or II) on the faster parts of the road, because some Newburgh residents bike to work and this stretch of road is dangerous for bikers.

A suggestion was made that when law enforcement officers pull over speeders, they ticket them on the side streets, rather than taking up an entire lane of 17K and backing up traffic.

There was curiosity as to how the new interchange would affect the level of traffic on 17K, and it was suggested that this be studied.

It was noted that a consistent cross-section along this road to keep traffic flowing more smoothly would encourage people to drive into Newburgh.

There was a suggestion to eliminate parking on the narrower parts of Broadway/17K to enable more traffic capacity, but it was noted that some of the residences along this road don't have driveways, thus making this a less feasible solution. Similarly, a suggestion was made to relocate or narrow sidewalks at intersections to allow for a right or left turning bay.

It was also noted that there are specific issues along 17K between Chestnut Street and Wisner Avenue. When drivers heading eastbound on Broadway wish to make a left turn on Fowler Avenue, traffic backs up on 17K west of Fowler Avenue. This also happens with left turns on Wisner Avenue. There was a suggestion to eliminate some of the street parking here to add a turn lane.

A concern was also expressed that drivers speed through the light at Fowler Avenue, and then easily lose control and hit other cars or end up in the front yards of the residences lining 17K. 749 Broadway is one particular property where this happens.

Table 3 - Facilitators: Graham Trelstad and Paolo Ikezoe:

Broadway Downtown

Much of the design exercise was focused on how to accommodate a streetcar line within the existing Broadway roadway. Various options were explored graphically that maintain on-street parking in either angle or parallel format. There was some discussion as to whether the amount of on-street parking needed to be maintained if a streetcar line or other form of transit were to be provided (the group did acknowledge that a rubber-tire trolley could be effective). Some felt that better transit service could

obviate the need for as much on-street parking, especially if off-street parking facilities were available. Others felt that on-street parking was still an important element to the street. There was also an expressed desire to retain two travel lanes in each direction, although it was recognized that the capacity could decrease closer to the waterfront and that additional sidewalk area could be employed closer to the waterfront to encourage activity in front of Safe Havens and OCC.

The triangle between Broadway and Washington Terrace west of West Street was identified as a potential intermodal facility for buses and/or streetcars. There is, apparently, an old railroad right-of-way that extends south of this location that could be used to carry light-rail to Stewart Airport. Alternatively, streetcar riders could transfer to a bus to complete the trip to Stewart Airport.

A desire was expressed for more common spaces in front of important buildings, particularly the recently renovated theater building.

Broadway in the Town

Within the Town portion of Route 17K, it was recognized that there was sufficient area within the right-of-way to include a multi-use trail or a sidewalk and that access management could be considered within the same right-of-way.

Additional

Notes from stakeholders who were unable to attend:

- Where Route 32 comes up from the south and meets 17K, it needs 2 lanes with arrows, right turn lanes, no turn on red signs
- Route 32 is a truck route but most can't make the turn from 17K if cars are in the two southbound lanes close to Broadway, blocking traffic. Suggest moving the stop line further back from the intersection with 17K.
- A quick help would be to retime the light, keep the red until after the 9W light has turned green, whereas now all the 17K traffic moves up while 9W traffic is waiting at the red light.
- The first action should be to synchronize the traffic lights on Broadway and Robinson Ave. The next step should be to restore the "right on red" at most of the locations that there were when that idea started. Remove all of the stop signs in the middle of many blocks that are just there to slow down traffic.

Table 4 - Facilitators: David Kooris and Rich Klusek:

Ideas

- Need to increase availability of bike lanes and promote bike use
- Need to explore old plans for trolley on Broadway
- Eliminate angled parking, add large canopy trees, create pedestrian only areas, Utilities should be buried, and a bike line should be above the utilities (Pomona, Rockland County).
- Businesses rely on parking and it cannot be eliminated
- Need better pedestrian facilities throughout the city
- Strategy for parking should vary based on location and nearby uses

Discussion of Light Rail

- Need access to airport to build on expansion plans
- Need to get people out of cars
- Spur economic development

- Need to integrate existing transit. Shortline buses need to be reevaluated. Usage has dropped
- SUNY Orange is expanding – Transit should be considered

Discussion of street configurations

- General consensus regarding sidewalks – existing 20 foot should be maintained
- Parking should vary based on location
- General consensus about wide park-like median with bike lane within median
- General consensus that 1 travel lane with turning lane is sufficient
- General consensus to include bump-outs
- General consensus that transit should be provided.
- Median should leave future dedicated transit right-of-way as an option.
- Should consider available off-street parking

Table 5 - Facilitators: Matt Carmody and Mark Pawlick:

Traffic Issues

- There was much concern over the growth in through-traffic using Water Street, and the growing highway nature of this street is causing a divide between the city and the waterfront. The general sense of the table was that Water Street must be made more pedestrian-friendly by addition of traffic signals, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. The suggestion was look at pedestrian crossings at Colden, 2nd Ave, 4th Ave, and at the sidewalk opposite Broadway.
- Mr. Connor noted that the accident rate along 17K has seen a dramatic increase in the accident rates. The transition area is especially bad during morning and evening hours during sunrise and sunset as the sun glare combined with the lane drop seems to cause numerous accidents. He also noted high accident rates at the Target entrance, Old 17K, Chestnut and Stony Brook Ct.
- Another short-term priority need is the pavement condition in the 700 block. One resident indicated that the city DPW has tried to do periodic maintenance, but the pavement condition is so rough that a higher level of repair is badly needed. The resident indicated that truck traffic traveling through this area causes the buildings to shake.
- Existing signals are not coordinated. It seems there is too much green in the town section which tends to encourage excessive speed. Then in the city, the lack of timing causes significant back-ups during peak hours.
- Lack of left turn lanes in the narrow section also causes significant back-ups.
- There was a suggestion that in the transition area, the study should look at eliminating the lane drops (create a consistent thru section), but look for a way to do this without additional ROW impacts. The table suggested that relocating some of the on street parking and narrowing sidewalks should provide adequate space.
- It was noted that State Route 32 ends at Broadway, which tends to place through-traffic onto Broadway.
- Access management – most of the participants at table favored looking at access management. The group noted several “bad” driveways, such as the Ford dealer, which is near the top of a hill and has poor sight distance. In addition, turning left out of the bus parking lot is extremely difficult.
- Some locations that are signed “no lefts” have chronic problems from people who ignore the signing.

Transportation Issues

- There was much support for a “trolley” feature along Broadway, however, all agreed a rubber-tire trolley would be more practical in short term. However, a “trolley” look or “branding” would attract ridership and add character.
- The existing bus stops at Grand, which results in bus service stopping a little short of what could be a significant increase in convenience for some of the nearby nodes. Group suggested a short extension of the bus loop to Washington, Water Street then back to Grand. This would make it much more attractive and available for the college, the waterfront, and some of the parking areas along Water Street.
- There was also a suggestion to create a bus hub on Water Street opposite Broadway.

Streetscape

- All agreed the bump-outs were a good idea to shorten the crossing distance of Broadway.
- The fire commissioner representative noted that even with the very wide section of Broadway, emergency vehicles generally have to drive down the center of the road. His concern was in regard to potential impacts to emergency vehicle response-time caused by a narrower section and perhaps a median.
- If a median were placed, there would need to be an opening opposite the fire house to allow proper access in and out of the firehouse.
- The group also suggested that Broadway signal improvements should consider a Preempt system for emergency vehicles.
- In the town section, all agreed that sidewalks should be installed and pedestrian facilities improved.
- Bicyclist use seems to be increasing, and they have noticed bicyclists using the median area, thinking this increases visibility, when in fact reduces safety.

Parking

- Diagonal vs. Parallel parking – all participants at the table preferred the diagonal parking scheme since they felt it is easier to park and provides more capacity.

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