

# SUMMARY OF MEETING



ENGINEERS  
PLANNERS  
SURVEYORS

This meeting summary represents the writer's understanding of the major issues discussed. If you wish to suggest edits or additions, please contact the undersigned.

- DATE:** October 11, 2016
- PROJECT:** Delaware Avenue Complete Streets Feasibility Study
- PLACE:** Town of Bethlehem Town Hall
- TIME:** 4:00 pm
- PURPOSE:** **The purpose of this meeting was to officially kick-off the project with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) and review the project goals and objectives.**

## ATTENDEES:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title/Representing</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
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See attached attendance sheet

## SUMMARY:

1. Rob introduced the study and explained that the goal is to build from the good work being done on the Delaware Avenue Enhancements Project, and begin planning for the improvements in this next segment from Elsmere Ave to the Albany City line.
2. Creighton Manning (CM) noted that the role of the SAC is to help guide the study and make decisions about corridor improvements. An overview of the draft study Goals was also presented. Any comments or suggestions on the study Goals should be sent to Rob and will be considered as the Goals are finalized. **Action: Send any comments regarding the study Goals to Rob.**
3. Educational material related to Complete Streets was presented and opened up for discussion. Comments / discussion included the following:
  - a. Regarding balancing the need of all users on the roadway, there was a concern that a road diet could make traffic worse. CM will develop a traffic model that will help inform this.
  - b. There are several new developments and people moving into the Town. With the influx of people, the corridor needs to be more sensitive to walkers, cyclists, and others not in cars.
  - c. The NYSDOT will be involved in the study, and a goal of the study is to help define and enable funding for a future transportation project.
4. The idea of "Critical Success Factors" (CSF) was introduced. Critical Success Factors are key items that need to be addressed by the study. This is not to suggest that these are the only items that will be addressed, but these are known up front and are integral to the study's success. The follow CSF were identified.
  - a. Feasibility of a road diet – Is it feasible to reduce the number of travel lanes on Delaware Avenue from four lanes to three?
  - b. Complete streets enhancements
    - i. "Preservation first" vs "Beyond preservation" – This means that study recommendations need to take into consideration where potential funding might

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- come from, since there is a programming emphasis on maintaining existing infrastructure.
    - ii. Multimodal access – This means that the needs of bikes, and pedestrians and transit users needs to be studied.
  - c. Speed reduction / traffic calming
  - d. Safe pedestrian crossing
  - e. Gateway
  - f. Trail access
5. The detailed scope of work was circulated. The group reviewed the Scope and schedule at a high level. This is Planning Study which should be completed in 12 months. There is some flexibility with the schedule to make sure issues are addressed, and that there is ample opportunity for public input. Two public meetings are planned with the first proposed in December or January. Regarding the scope, there was a general discussion about the following:
- a. It was noted that more public transit should be encouraged in the corridor. Sam noted that transit improvements could help increase ridership. The apartment in-fill and increased density in the corridor will also support transit.
  - b. Improved connections to the rail trail are also desired.
  - c. Improved public space is desired, such as pocket parks.
  - d. There are some concerns about traffic speeds, notably at night when fewer cars are on the road.
  - e. School zones are 20 MPH in Albany, and 30MPH on Delaware Ave, based on 10 MPH below the posted limit.
  - f. There are concerns with growth. Need to accommodate growth and maintain reasonable traffic, and don't do anything that will hurt corridor businesses.
  - g. There was a question if the road diet could be applied in segments, and Mark answered yes. For example, it was noted that traffic volumes are lower on the east end between Delaware Plaza and the Albany City line which might make this segment more feasible.
  - h. Dave explained that the speed issue should not be focused on speed limit alone, but that speeds can be reduced by establishing a "target speed", and then designing the roadway to achieve the target speeds.
  - i. There was a question if bike accommodations will be looked at, and the answer is yes. A road diet could create more room for bicyclists, or there may be other bike improvements identified.
  - j. Commercial vehicles with a trailer in tow sometimes have long delays and difficulty entering Delaware Avenue from side streets. Truck access needs to be accounted for in the study.
  - k. In response to a question about the NYSDOT's criteria for road diets, Audrey explained that the NYSDOT planning threshold for a road diet is  $\leq 20,000$  vehicles per day.
6. The Group discussed the draft Project Objectives. Seven typical complete streets objectives advocated by the National Complete Streets Coalition were shared, along with other examples. A preliminary list of three objectives for Delaware Avenue was presented and discussed - Safety, Access and Quality. It was explained that the final objectives will include a short narrative for each one, and will be used during the evaluation to make sure the corridor recommendations align with the project objectives.
- a. There was a concern that "Quality" was too ambiguous, while the group generally supported the "Safety" and "Access" objectives.
  - b. The group liked the "Place making" goal used by the Complete Streets Coalition and others.
  - c. There was consensus that a thriving business environment needed to be reflected in the final objectives, possible something like "Economy/Business".

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- d. There is a concern that a road diet could reduce traffic and hurt businesses. Anne noted that road diet case studies could be pulled together, and that the project web site could link videos or other materials to help inform this. **Action: A public involvement plan will be developed.**
- e. There was a discussion about keeping the objectives to a limited number, three or four, so they are memorable. **Action: The Objectives will be updated with narrative included, and discussed at the next SAC meeting.**

## 7. Next Steps

- a. It was noted that the study will be introduced to the Town Board with a short presentation on Thursday October 13, 2016.
- b. An optional field walk was scheduled for Tuesday October 18 with interested members of the SAC to walk the corridor and to begin to identify issues and improvement ideas. Ken was asked to be prepared to highlight a few pending projects that are currently before the Town, such as the Dunkin Donuts drive-thru, and a few different apartment projects.

## Summary of Actions:

### Creighton Manning

1. **Initiate technical studies and summarize existing conditions - speed studies, traffic model development, and crash analysis.**
2. **Prepare Draft Project Objectives with narrative**
3. **Prepare Public Participation Plan**
4. **Facilitate field walk**

### Study Advisory Committee

1. **Send any comments regarding the study Goals to Rob.**

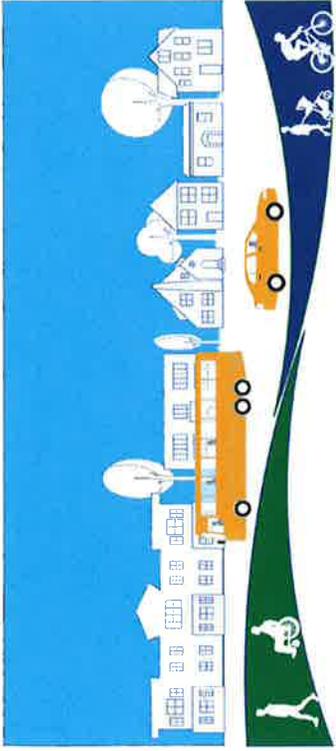
The meeting concluded at 5:30 p.m.

Kristie Di Cocco, PE  
Project Engineer / Planner

cc: Attendees  
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Delaware Avenue Complete Streets  
Feasibility Study

Advisory Committee Meeting

Bethlehem Town Hall, Albany, NY  
Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
4:00 p.m.

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Feasibility Study

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Bethlehem Town Hall, Albany, NY  
Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
4:00 p.m.



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