

# 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:** June 22, 2017
- PROJECT:** Delaware Avenue Complete Streets Feasibility Study
- PLACE:** Town of Bethlehem Town Hall
- TIME:** 3:00 pm
- PURPOSE:** **The purpose of this meeting was to review the proposed alternatives and discuss the analysis with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC).**

## **ATTENDEES:**

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

## **SUMMARY:**

1. Welcome – CM informed the group that since the last meeting, consultant efforts have been focused on analyzing the design alternatives for the corridor. The objective of the SAC meeting was to present and discuss the alternatives evaluation effort.
2. Review Alternatives – CM briefly outlined the five design alternatives (A – Null, B-Full Road Diet, C-Half Corridor Road Diet, D – 1-1-2 Eastbound, E – Westbound 2-1-1) that had been evaluated since SAC Meeting #3 on May 10, 2017. During the overview, the following comments and topics were highlighted:
  - a. Dave Jukins asked about enhanced pedestrian crossings on the western segment of the corridor under the half corridor road diet alternative.
    - i. CM responded that it is difficult to provide pedestrian crossings on a four-lane roadway and that there would be more crossing opportunities under other alternatives.
    - ii. Dave Jukins then asked about looking into another signalized intersection to accommodate pedestrian crossings.
    - iii. CM answered that the traffic conditions in the corridor do not warrant another traffic signal.
  - b. Maud Easter asked about pedestrian safety at the Delaware Plaza intersection under the full road diet alternative.
    - i. CM responded that of the design alternatives, the full road diet has the largest benefit to safety, based on crash reduction factors.
      1. Rob Leslie added that all alternatives would have a reduction in the speed limit which would also improve safety.
3. Evaluation of Alternatives/Discussion – CM outlined the pros and cons of the five design alternatives. CM explained that a tradeoff of 50 seconds of travel time during the PM peak commute could provide benefits to safety, accessibility, the economy, and overall sense of place.

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- a. Martin Daley asked whether the diversion factor applied to the full road diet alternative was mode specific.
    - i. Chris O'Neill responded that it was for autos and that most vehicles that do divert would likely use NY Route 32 instead of Delaware Avenue.
      1. Martin Daley responded that although the model estimates that there will be some vehicular diversion from the corridor during the PM Peak Hour, other modes such as transit and bicycling could see increased use.
  - b. The group discussed the half corridor alternative and noted that it really only addresses problems on the eastern end of the corridor. It was reiterated that while an enhanced pedestrian crossing may be possible in the western half of the corridor it will likely be difficult and won't reduce the multiple threat pedestrian crash type. (This type of crash can occur on a multi-lane road when one vehicle stops to let a pedestrian cross and another vehicle traveling in the same direction in the adjacent lane doesn't see the pedestrian that's crossing and the pedestrian can't see the oncoming vehicle.)
  - c. Jim Giacone stated that the 3% diversion traffic under the full road diet alternative would have a negative impact on business. He continued that the street currently works well as is, although he can understand the benefits of the Westbound 2-1-1 alternative for the PM peak hour.
    - i. John Clarkson responded that traffic diversion seemed acceptable and that businesses may benefit from increased pedestrian access and businesses will have better access for cars with the center left turn lane. There was brief discussion of ways people access businesses now and how they sometimes go out of their way to avoid making left turns in and out
    - ii. Rob Leslie questioned what the 3% PM peak hour traffic diversion actually means to businesses.
    - iii. Martin Daley noted that the changes on Madison Avenue in Albany make it easier to cross the street and as a result he feels more comfortable visiting businesses in that area.
    - iv. Maud Easter stated that diverting vehicle trips to transit should be encouraged and enhanced crossings at CDTA bus stops would help.
      1. Jim Giacone stated that CDTA stops need to be carved out in the one lane section of each alternative.
        - a. CM responded that this would be happening at Delaware Plaza where there is enough width. At locations where the road is narrower, buses would likely stop in the bike lane.
4. Alternatives Comparison/Discussion – CM provided a detailed analysis of each alternative using specific performance measures including vehicle crashes, traffic volumes, pedestrian and bicycle scores, vehicle delay and queuing.
    - a. Jim Giacone asked if the crash reduction was analyzed based on a reduction in speed only.
      - i. CM responded that the analysis was linked to lane configuration using accepted crash reduction factors, however speed reduction should improve safety.
      - ii. Dave Jukins requested that a dollar value be assigned to the crashes to emphasize the economic benefits of crash reduction.
    - b. Jim Giacone noted that vehicle queues at Elsmere Avenue in the eastbound direction are longer in the PM peak than shown in the graphic.
      - i. CM responded that there are rolling queues which may be longer than shown.

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- ii. Martin Daley stated that the two way left turn lane could eliminate queuing for vehicles turning into driveways which is not taken into consideration at the signalized intersection.
  - c. Virginia Acquario questioned the slide about economic concerns when bike lanes impact parking.
    - i. CM responded that there is no on-street parking on Delaware Avenue in the study area and therefore none of the alternatives would have this concern.
      - 1. Martin Daley noted that on-street parking was one of the biggest obstacles to a separated bike lane on the Madison Avenue project in Albany.
    - ii. Rob Leslie noted a recent bicycle crash on Delaware avenue at the intersection of Leonard on a Saturday afternoon.
  - d. John Clarkson acknowledged that there is a tradeoff between thru traffic and retail business and that Delaware Avenue businesses would benefit from slower speeds.
    - i. CM confirmed that the alternatives analysis assumed that the speed limit would be lowered to 35mph under all five alternatives.
      - 1. John Clarkson asked if the models produced different results using a 30mph speed limit, to which CM responded that there were no significant changes.
      - 2. Martin Daley mentioned that although the speed limit could be reduced, speed is also determined by road design.
      - 3. Rob Leslie noted that speed relates to severity of crashes and lower speeds would improve safety.
      - 4. Anne Benware stated that a lower speed would slightly increase travel time if people drive slower.
    - ii. The group discussed the speed limit further, noting that it is 30mph at either end of the study area. It was said that changes in the speed limit on Delaware Avenue are confusing to motorists and most people do not know the posted speed limit.
    - iii. Rob Leslie noted that higher speeds cause more noise and a reduction in speed limit would provide a nicer walking environment.
      - 1. Jim Giacone stated that noise was a factor in the design of the patio at his restaurant.
  - e. Maud Easter stated that a 50 second increase in travel time is a small price to pay for increased safety benefits.
    - i. Virginia Acquario agreed and stated that people shouldn't be willing to trade neighborhood aesthetics for quicker travel time.
5. Next Steps/ Schedule
- a. There will be a meeting with business owners scheduled through the Bethlehem Chamber on July 26, 2017 at 4:00pm.
  - b. There will be a public meeting scheduled late Summer or early Fall. There are no plans for the SAC to meet again before the public meeting.

## Summary of Actions:

The meeting concluded 5:00 p.m.

Jesse Vogl  
Assistant Project Planner

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cc: Attendees  
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