

**Meeting Summary – Public Information Meeting #2
Delaware Avenue Complete Streets Feasibility Study
September 26, 2017**



The second public information meeting for the Delaware Avenue Complete Streets Feasibility Study was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at the Town of Bethlehem Town Hall. The meeting was well advertised and attended with approximately 100 attendees including residents, business owners, stakeholders, and study advisory committee members. The meeting began with introductions by John Clarkson, Town of Bethlehem Supervisor, and Michael Franchini, Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Executive Director. Following the introductions, Jesse Vogl (Project Planner) provided a synopsis of the study goals and existing conditions, followed by Mark Sargent (Project Manager) who summarized the feedback from the first public meeting, presented the alternatives including pros and cons and technical studies, and facilitated a question and answer period. See Appendix A for the PowerPoint presentation.

The purpose of the meeting was to present and receive feedback on five complete streets alternatives being considered for the section of Delaware Avenue from Elsmere Avenue to the Albany City line.



Meeting attendees had several opportunities to take in the information and provide input, including a poster and a comment box at the library, an open house prior to the technical presentation, the technical presentation itself, a question and answer session, a comment box at the meeting, website address and project email address, and a ranking activity at the end of the meeting. There were two map areas (both alike) with posters of the five alternatives and corridor enhancement concepts.

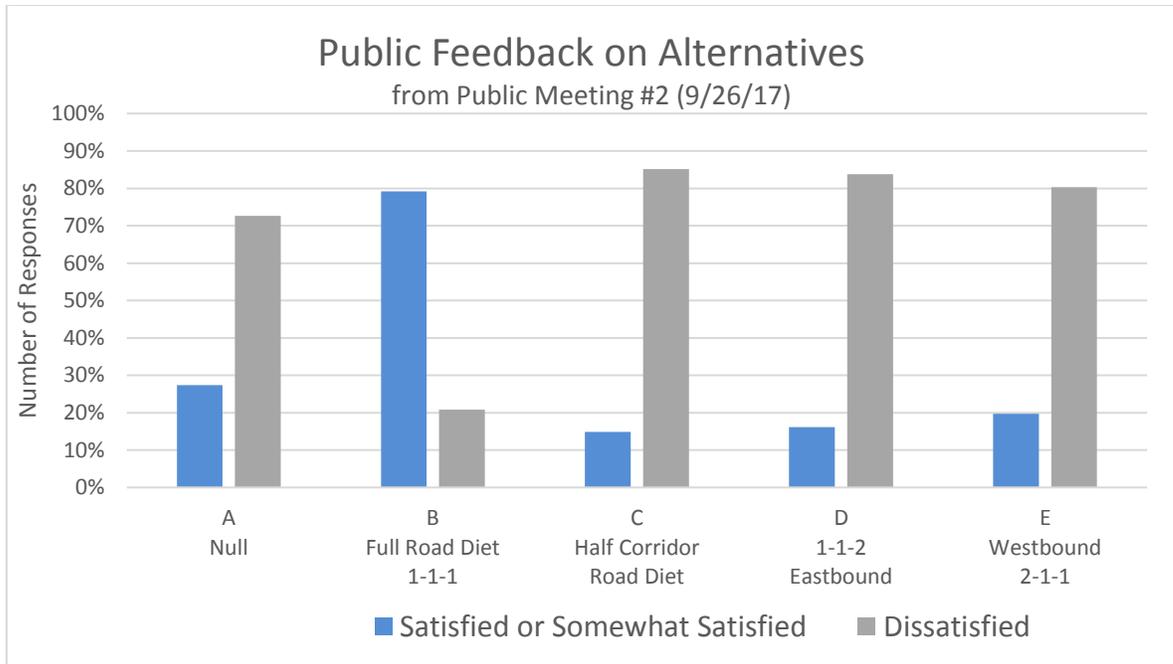
During the Q&A, the following general comments and responses were provided.

1. After the slide with pedestrian crossings was presented, the comment was made that more pedestrian traffic would slow vehicles down and cause additional delay that was not included in the model –
 - It was agreed there could be incidental additional vehicle delay when pedestrians cross the street.
2. Someone asked how there is only an additional 50 seconds of delay if the queues increase –
 - It was explained that motorists move through signals at about two to three seconds per vehicle.
3. It was asked if the speed limit would be changed on Delaware Ave. After responding that it would be pursued, the follow-up question asked how much of the delay was caused by the change in speed limit rather than the roadway reconfiguration –
 - It was reported to be about 1/3 of the additional travel time.
4. It was asked if the model factored in driver behavior, particularly at merges –
 - It does.
5. The comment was made that focusing on the peak hour commuting patterns would not provide an accurate representation of the overall travel on Delaware Ave –
 - It was explained that traffic analysis is typically done for the highest traffic volume time period.
6. There was a question regarding buses and where they would stop under the road diet configuration –
 - Answer, at the curb for the lower volume stops, and pursue bus bays at the higher volume stops.
7. A comment was made that the current school bus traffic in and out of Herrick Ave is a concern and that stop lines should be pulled back to improve turns for large vehicles –
 - Answer, stop lines are not appropriate and would violate the MUTCD, but “Do Not Block Side Road” signs should be considered. Do not block intersection pavement markings or turn prohibitions may also be considered. Based on this comment, the Town observed school bus operations on Friday 10/6/17 during the morning and afternoon school periods. The school is served by 8 buses that arrived during a 10 minute window from 9:03 a.m. to 9:12 a.m. 6 of the 8 buses made a left turn onto Herrick from Delaware Ave, 1 made a right turn in, and 1 arrived by going straight through Elsmere onto Groesbeck and arrived from the rear. 2 of the 6 left turning buses were delayed by about 15 seconds when making the left turn in, this would cause temporary delay to eastbound motorists under the full road diet alternative. The 9:00 a.m. time period does not coincide with the peak commuter traffic which is 7:30 to 8:30.
 - During the afternoon beginning at 2:55, 4 buses were already on site. 3 of the 4 remaining arrivals made a left turn onto Herrick from Delaware Ave. The 4th made a right turn in. 2 of the 3 left turners were delayed about 15 to 30 seconds which would temporarily delay eastbound through motorists under the full road diet alternative. The afternoon school peak (2:50 to 3:30) does not coincide with the afternoon commuter peak (4:45 to 5:45).
 - During the PM peak traffic count conducted by CDTC on 6/16/16, 8 vehicles were observed making a left from Delaware Ave onto Herrick during the PM commuter peak.
8. It was suggested that two lanes be maintained at the signalized intersections and taper down to one lane after the intersection –
 - Comment noted.

9. It was asked if pedestrian bridges were examined as well as the possibility of road widening to add capacity –
 - Answer, they were considered and rejected.
10. Someone asked if RRFBs were under consideration as part of this study –
 - Answer, yes, particularly in the western segment.
11. There was a question on why the null alternative doesn't include pedestrian crossings. The comment was made that since the width of the roadway isn't changing that crossings would be acceptable regardless of lane configuration –
 - It was explained that marking crosswalks on four-lane 40-mph facilities does not improve safety.
12. The comment was made that crashes seem to be located at turning lanes and that a road diet would not help that. The speaker continued that there are no bicyclists on Delaware Ave. and that they can use the rail trail. It was requested that we examine road widening rather than a road diet –
 - Crashes are concentrated in areas without turn lanes. Even though there are few bicyclists does not mean roadways should not accommodate them. The same goes for other users such as the young and the old, and disabled. Road widening alternatives are not consistent with the objectives of the study.
13. It was commented that the queues on Delaware Ave are greater than what the model shows –
 - Answer, the queues shown are averages.
14. Someone noted that increasing bicycle access to businesses would encourage cyclists and improve the economy –
 - Comment noted.
15. The comment was made that the model is wrong and that a road diet would slow traffic. There was also concern about buses stopping that would slow traffic –
 - The models are reliable for order of magnitude changes. There will be additional delay for motorists that are traveling behind a bus, which was believed to be 3 times per hour.
16. It was noted that it is not likely that another study will be done for another 20 years so this is an opportunity to encourage alternative modes of transportation that should not be missed –
 - Comment noted.
17. It was asked if right turn lanes into Delaware Plaza were examined –
 - Answer, they were not.
18. Someone asked if there was a contingency plan in case the model is wrong –
 - Answer, probably need to get the useful life out of the project before significant changes would be considered again.

1. Alternative Ranking Activity

Each attendee was given five dots, and instructed to place one on each alternative by selecting "Satisfied", "Somewhat satisfied", or "Dissatisfied" with each alternatives. The results are shown on the following bar chart and show that the majority of attendees favored the full Road Diet Alternative at approximately 80 percent favored. There was little support for the other four alternatives, at approximately 15 to 30 percent each.



2. Written comments

As of this writing (October 4, 2017), One week after the public meeting, 37 people provided written comments either by email, or in one of the comment boxes, The comments and responses are included in Appendix C. A synopsis of the comments shows that a majority of the written comments are in support for the full road diet (16 for, 9 against), and with 12 comments not related to a specific alternative.

The public meeting concluded with an invitation for meeting attendees to attend the upcoming Town Board meeting on October 11th, where the team will provide a summary of the Study and the feedback from Public Meeting to the Town Board.