

To: Delaware Avenue Hamlet Enhancement Study Advisory Committee  
Study Advisory Committee Meeting #2  
October 16, 2008  
From: Margaret Irwin, Katherine Ember, - River Street Planning  
Date: October 22, 2008  
Re: Meeting Minutes for SAC Meeting #2

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Attendees: Mark Kelly  
Dianne Barber Kansas  
Barbara Ostroff  
Virginia Acquario  
Henry Peyrebrune  
Steve Bolduc  
Michael Morelli, Asst. Director Economic Development and Planning, Town of Bethlehem  
Robert F. Leslie, AICP, Senior Planner, Town of Bethlehem  
Leslie Lombardo, Albany County  
Mila Vega, CDTA  
Michael Wyatt, NYSDOT  
Dave Jukins, CDTC  
Anne Benware, CDTC  
Jen Ceponis, CDTC  
Margaret Irwin, River Street Planning  
Katherine Ember, River Street Planning  
Peter Loyola, CLA SITE  
Michael Schreiber, CLA SITE  
David Fields, Nelson/Nygaard  
Amy Pfeiffer, Nelson/Nygaard

The Project Team presented a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the key findings from the draft Hamlet Area Profile as well as the Vision Statement, Principles and Objectives. CDTC's and Albany County's comments about the draft Hamlet Area Profile were distributed to the SAC and are attached to these notes. In addition, the following comments were made in relation to the Hamlet Area Profile:

- The zoning analysis should mention that drive-throughs are not allowed in the Hamlet District and that the district does not permit parking in the front yard. Care should be taken when recommending district improvements because there are other Commercial

Hamlet Districts throughout the Town that would be impacted by those recommendations. The profile should include more discussion about the design guidelines within the districts.

- There should be more emphasis on the Elsmere Avenue area addressing the four lane transition toward Albany as well as the area towards the Four Corners after the railroad bridge.
- The Delaware Avenue toll road and the Adams House are important historic resources that should be described in more detail.
- The crash data and diagrams of the intersections (that were shown in the presentation) should be added to the Profile.
- It was noted that cars cannot make a left turn onto Delaware Avenue from Herrick.
- It was also noted that residents in this area do walk to the gym or CVS and other area stores. Improvements should be considered to encourage walking among these uses.
- The bus stops in the area could be more prominent.
- The plan should consider a “road diet” - reducing the pavement and increasing walkability - in the area from Elsmere to the shopping center.
- The profile should highlight the importance of trees and mention the issue of National Grid’s tree maintenance. Refer to the DEC urban forestry program. It was suggested that some direct outreach to National Grid might help to clarify their policy although past efforts have not been successful.
- The group discussed Hudson Avenue’s use as a bypass of the Four Corners and mentioned that speeds along Hudson can be a concern. The profile should examine the intersection of Kenwood and Adams and Adams and Delaware. Pedestrian crossing can be difficult.
- Safe Routes to School should be addressed for the Elsmere School. The school district provides bus transportation for almost all students but having safe walking routes is an alternate mode and important for students and adults accessing the schools for evening or weekend uses.

The profile identified strengths and weakness of the target area. Comments included:

- It was questioned whether the land use mix is appropriate and suggested that the Project Team make some recommendations on the preferred land use mix. The key issue in this discussion was whether the mix of commercial and service uses in the target area are the best combination to create a vibrant hamlet. As part of the public meeting, we should be concerned to solicit public comment about this question.
- A weakness in that area is the lack of comprehensive approach or system to support bicycling and pedestrians.
- There is no education program on pedestrian safety, no maintenance of sidewalks and there is a lack of enforcement about cars not stopping for pedestrians. It was suggested

the recommendations include discussions about a sidewalk funding program and include a resource list.

- Clarify the bullet in the presentation that read, “Widening of Delaware Avenue”. The issue is community concern that past DOT efforts and recommendations, in Delmar and other communities, has focused on widening roads – not planning them for a multi modal environment.

The group discussed the vision statement and principles. It was suggested that both address the need to create the best possible combination of land uses, retail mix and amenities that create vibrancy in the hamlet, and make it pedestrian friendly. An ideal hamlet mix should be suggested. Principles should address the need for flexibility in design that makes it affordable to improve property.

- The group discussed the measures that were presented. One measure established that children should be able to walk to school safely. The team should understand the School Board policy that encourages students to ride buses rather than walking or biking.. The Town has received a Safe Routes to School grant for Slingerlands.

The Project Team will make edits to the documents and send revisions by email with a cover memorandum explaining the changes.

The group discussed public workshop. The Town will check meeting room schedules for November 20<sup>th</sup>, December 1<sup>st</sup>, or December 9<sup>th</sup>. The next SAC meeting will be scheduled following the community workshop.

Delaware Ave Hamlet Study/Hamlet Area Profile

10/16/08

CDTC staff comments:

1. Overall, a good job.
2. A brief discussion of study area crash history/issues should be included.
3. We may want to include level of service analyses for both Delaware Ave/Kenwood Ave & Delaware Ave/Elsmere Ave. CDTC can do these analyses.
4. The profile would be more complete study area wide with a bit more focus on the area around Elsmere Ave. Specific issues in the more suburban (and gateway to even more suburban area to the east toward Albany) relative to pedestrian crossing issues/potential opportunity to create a more complete street should be highlighted. Safe bike and ped access to the Elsmere Elementary school should be discussed. This is especially important if we want this study to lay out a vision for this area that could be integrated into a vision for the area to east which may need to come into play if NYSDOT progresses a project for that area within the next decade.
5. With respect to the Adams Place/Kenwood Ave intersection (general discussion on page 15) it should probably be mentioned that this is a skewed intersection that currently has inappropriate crosswalk placement and alignment. The result is poor visibility of pedestrians in the crosswalk by northbound Kenwood Ave drivers resulting in low rates stopping for pedestrians.
6. Should the profile include a brief discussion of the issues for both pedestrian crossing/access and vehicular conflict (& delay?) (& crashes) at the Kenwood Avenue/Adams Street intersection?
7. Regarding the discussion on transit, it should probably be mentioned that the Route 19 connects to the periphery of the study area (doesn't pass directly thru it) and that CDTA will be conducting its Transit Development Plan (TDP) process in Albany County within the next year or so. As part of the TDP route performance and other measures will be examined in an effort to better serve existing and emerging transit markets.
8. Pg. 23 – picky point. There are no parking meters in the study area (or anywhere in the Town of Bethlehem for that matter!)

## Katherine Ember

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**From:** Lombardo, Leslie [Leslie.Lombardo@albanycounty.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 15, 2008 4:26 PM  
**To:** Katherine Ember; William Sprengnether ; Mike Wyatt ; Mila Vega ;  
Todd Fabozzi ; David Jukins; David Fields; Michael Morelli; Robert Leslie; Margaret Irwin;  
Amy Pfeiffer; Peter Loyola; Anne Benware  
**Subject:** comments on draft - Delaware Ave. linkage study in Bethlehem

Good afternoon all,

I have a conflict with the meeting time tomorrow and will have to arrive late due to the Albany County Planning Board meeting. However, I have comments to make on the draft (dated October 7<sup>th</sup>) that will be discussed in regards to the rail trail. First, I thought the profile was accurate. The Vision and Principles stated were in keeping with the Town Comprehensive Plan and represent an inspiration for the community that I predict they will embrace based upon other Town planning initiatives that are under way. County Planning comments in regard to the rail trail are as follows:

- The County will be the eventual owner of the rail trail.
- The official transfer of the property will be at a minimum 300 days from October 31, 2008. After the property closing the County will possibly have infrastructure improvements to make before opening the trail for public use.
- The Town should discuss with the County the possible conflict of parking and lack thereof for access to the trail before making any recommendations in the study to encourage trail heads from dead end streets as suggested; Grove, Becker, and Howard. Also the term, "gateway" for Veterans Memorial Park area to the trail may infer that parking is readily available to users. That will have to be discussed.
- There was a comment made by a resident member of the committee to extend local streets such as Howard to Hudson, crossing the rail trail. The idea of adding vehicle grade crossings to the trail is not a favorable one.
- There was a reference to creating a connection between Hudson and New Scotland Ave. This obviously would not include any part of the rail trail, if it were vehicular use.
- The County Director of Economic Development, Conservation and Planning as well as the County Executive's Office would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions the Consultant team may have in order to have study recommendations reflect all future possibilities for the use of the rail trail.

Again I apologize for being late tomorrow. If we could avoid scheduling meetings on the afternoons of the third Thursday of the month, as it conflicts with ACPB meetings, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Leslie Lombardo

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