



Public Information Meeting #1 - Meeting Summary

May 27, 2009

Newburgh Activity Center, 401 Washington Street, Newburgh, NY

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Press at event:

- Mid-Hudson News
- The Sentinel (New Windsor)
- The Newburgh Advocate
- Mid-Hudson Times

Handouts:

- One-pager, overview of study with project timeline
- Public Comment Sheet
- Transit Orange Guide

Activity:

After signing in, meeting attendees were invited to review aerial photos detailing the corridors being studied and areas of environmental or land use concern. Three large base maps of the study area were displayed and study team members and consultants encouraged attendees to mark their paths to work and to shopping as well as congestion points.

Welcome

County Executive Edward Diana opened the meeting by welcoming participants. He expressed his support for the Study, his confidence in the Orange County Planning Department and the consultant team, and his conviction that this study would result in implementable recommendations.

Presentation (PowerPoint format):

Study Project Manager John Czamanske, Deputy Commissioner of Planning, described the project leadership and the role of the Orange County Transportation Council in comprehensive, continuing and cooperative transportation planning for the county. He explained the reasons for the study including overall growth and development in the area, with attendant transportation issues and needs, commercial development in vicinity of 17K and Route 300, the new Thruway and I-84 interchange; Stewart International Airport related development, the City of Newburgh redevelopment and waterfront revitalization and a need for local area transit planning.

Project Overview

Graham Trelstad, AKRF, discussed the project initiation process and detailed the OCTC member municipalities and agencies in the study advisory group. He described the scope of the project, including more detailed analyses of corridors and nodes: Route

9W, Broadway/17K, 300, 52 and 207, and Stewart Airport, Vails Gate and 300/17K areas.

Guiding principles for the project include: sustainable development, integrated transportation and land use planning and smart growth. Mr. Trelstad defined these terms as the intersection of environmental, economic and equity issues or, similarly, the connections between land use, transportation and people.

The study team's vision involves inter-municipal/inter-agency solutions to study issues and identifying opportunities for managing residential growth, economic development and environmental protection. The study recognizes Orange County's evolving role in the Hudson Valley.

After introducing the consultant team and outlining their areas of expertise, Mr. Trelstad described the initial outreach to municipalities and their shared concerns and priorities: traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, access to public transit and preserving a sense of place. He also reported on meetings with state agencies on the study advisory group: New York State Department of Transportation, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and MTA Metro-North. Metro-North is leading the West of Hudson Regional Transit Access Study in Orange County.

He presented the project timeline for the 24 month study, noting that public involvement is an ongoing effort, with specific opportunities for significant public input.

Public Involvement Plan

Nora Madonick, Arch Street Communications, explained the public outreach effort, whose goal is to *inform, involve and engage* interested stakeholders throughout the study. Interviews, roundtable discussions and public design visioning workshops with stakeholders will develop a collective foundation for planning. The study will hold 7 public meetings throughout the duration of the two year study, including 3 public design visioning workshops scheduled for fall 2009 and winter 2010.

Ongoing public communication will educate stakeholders and build awareness of study events, solicit ideas and encourage participation. Communication materials include newsletters, media releases, newspaper ads, notices and flyers, comment forms at public meetings and a study Web site (www.newburghareastudy.info). In addition to providing unlimited access to study information, the Web site allows for timely updates and provides a vehicle for the public to comment and ask questions regarding the study.

Community Outreach

David Kooris, Regional Plan Association, described plans for interactive community outreach. The study team will engage local communities in a series of focused roundtables this spring/summer that will lead up to a series of interactive public design workshops during the fall of 2009 and the winter of 2010. The desired outcome of these workshops is to develop sketch level plans for land use and mobility.

The four roundtables in June and early July of this year will discuss the broad range of transportation and land use issues as they relate to particular corridors and communities.

Targeted attendees are chief elected officials, local property owners, community representatives and other stakeholders in those areas. The purpose is to elicit locally perceived opportunities and challenges, ideas for each study area, and the necessary data for the design workshops. The workshops and roundtables will examine:

- Mobility alternatives
- Traffic calming measures
- Open space
- Land use
- Access to transit

Study Issues

Marty Taub, Eng-Wong Taub, outlined the study issues for land use, roadway network and transit including mobility options to be explored.

Traffic Modeling

Brian ten Seithoff, Cambridge Systematics, demonstrated 2D/3D illustrated traffic modeling capabilities with an animated simulation. These simulations will facilitate the process of evaluating impacts of proposed solutions.

Short-Term Transit Planning

Walt Cherwony, Abrams-Cherwony Group, spoke about short-term transit planning displaying transit maps that detail current transit routes north and south of Newburgh, the Newburgh-Beacon Shuttle and listing all existing transit services to be considered during the course of the study. He and his team have been gathering information about the system and identifying areas for improvement.

Next Steps

Graham Trelstad concluded the formal presentation by detailing key next steps. In June and July will be roundtable discussions, the distribution of the first project newsletter and ongoing transit and land use analysis. Public design workshops are planned for October 2009 through January 2010. He then opened the floor to comments and questions from attendees.

John Czamanske and study team members answered questions from attendees. Key topics and concerns mentioned were written on a flip chart and recorded below:

Questions and comments from audience (1 hour):

- There was strong agreement that the service frequency of buses is not adequate. There is a lack of ability to identify the bus stops, routes and services. This makes it hard not only for newcomers to the area, but also for residents.
- It was said that Newburgh's primary public transportation system was "Yellow Cabs" since the present bus system is inadequate. The high price of cabs makes it very difficult for those who do not own cars and cannot discern bus routes.
- The inconveniences due to the lack of sidewalks were emphasized. On Route 300, for example, patrons at the hotels have to drive to the restaurant down the road or across the street. Citizens expressed interest in making the area more pedestrian-friendly.
- There was general agreement that smart growth principles should be followed.
- Audience members expressed a desire that this study yield tangible results, not merely more reports.

Public comments/concerns captured on flip chart:

Transit:

- More outreach to transit dependent people needed
- Efficient transfer option thru city of Newburgh
- Transit on 17K and Route 300 corridors
- Transit service is limited
- Short term transit plan dates
- Bus route awareness – people don't know how to access transit or where it goes
- Light rail –a vision for Newburgh
- Need rapid improvement in Newburgh local service
- Access to West Point and Woodbury Commons
- Transit to West Point shifts—transit that serves shift workers
- Transit for tourism
- Commuter access

Other:

- Outreach to those without Web access important
- VMT reduction/emissions reduction
- Air quality
- Take into account current plans/ applications—not just those approved
- Address thru traffic in neighborhoods
- Pedestrian access—sidewalks
- 9W in city of Newburgh—noise/schools/access issues
- 17K bottlenecks
- Implementation of study recommendations
- Sprawl development—we need smart growth
- Open space preservation
- Stormwater management
- Land use

County Executive Diana took questions from the audience and engaged in a spirited discussion of issues affecting Orange County. He stressed that Orange County is a leader in integrating transportation and land use planning, and although much has been accomplished, there is still more to do. He expressed his commitment to improving transit in the area.

Attendees remained at the meeting site until approximately 10 p.m.

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