

Philipstown Trails Committee Monthly Meeting
Thursday, August 25, 2022
Via Zoom

Meeting began at 7:06 pm

Attendees: Jason Angell, Evelyn Berkeley, Daniel Biggs, Laura Bozzi, Bruce Croushore, Emily May Cheadle, Trace Danicich, Howard Kaplowitz, Jenny Kempson, John Pavlik, Rebeca Ramirez, Marianne Sullivan, Paul Thompson, Shamala Thompson.

Rebeca informed the committee that Chris Sandlund would be absent and that she would be taking notes and asked for volunteers to take notes next month. Marianne volunteered for September's meeting and Howard volunteered for October's. We need a volunteer for November.

Bruce asked about meeting notifications on the Town website. Laura clarified that, according to the PTC advisory committee founding document with the Town, we only have to place meeting notifications on our own philipstowntrails.org website. Rebeca added that we will however be broadening our efforts to get the word out about our meetings now that we are about to begin our community engagement process and will follow up with the Town to change wording on the Town site.

Laura introduced Daniel Biggs from Weston & Sampson, the consultant leading the Feasibility Study, to the meeting and shared the format for presentation and the Q & A process.

Presentation

Dan went over the presentation of the feasibility study and asked for the thoughts from the PTC members. He explained that what he was presenting was not a "plan", but a work-in-progress. He recommended that it be used as a draft of the study and as a foundation to speak to stakeholders in the community about the vision and project idea. Dan shared the many factors included in the "existing conditions" mapping and went over facility types and different user groups that the committee should consider when making a recommendation and possibly selecting a route to be considered. He reminded the committee to think about the variety of users as it drives the facility types and this determines how the community is served as a whole. He added that the trail project is focusing on "how to create a community resource" but it could also be a secondary goal for visitors. He showed how the goal created a North and South connection of resources and how some of the phases provide crossing points along 9D. In order for the project to move forward the committee will need to confirm property lines, secure permits or easements if/when necessary, and secure funding. The group would have to look at what funding would be needed to move the project forward at a later point in time. There are 4 phases in the feasibility study and the next steps include finalizing an alternatives map, confirming and recommending an alignment, identifying the phasing, preparing cost estimates, and conducting outreach to landowners and the community. The study is projected to be finalized in January & February 2023. To close out his presentation, Dan shared the overall project timeline and reminded that a project like this takes time, even with support. He also advised the committee that a process like this could take 5- 10 years.

Q & A / Discussion

Paul voiced that he was glad to see the Philipstown Recreation Center connected to the alignments because it has a convenient connection trail that gets people to the Garrison Train

station. Paul preferred a stand alone path (separated from the road) not sharrows on paved roads like 9D as this would still be unsafe for cyclists. (A sharrow is a road marking in the form of two inverted V-shapes above a bicycle, indicating which part of a road should be used by cyclists when the roadway is shared with motor vehicles.) Paul said sharing a dirt / unpaved road would be fine.

Dan clarified that most of the proposed trail is a multi-use path through the North to South of the corridor and that sharrows are more supplemental. He added that what is proposed as a right-of-way is separated by a buffer and that we are trying to use the Boscobel section of the street and then multi-use path facilities.

Bruce asked if the alignment along Foundry Brook in Phase 1 would require a bridge? Dan replied that a parallel only bridge would be required.

Bruce also asked where the committee is at with the budget? Laura replied that we have \$12,000 left in the contract and potentially \$2000 that can be used for outreach. Weston & Sampson bills the town and the town files for reimbursement. Laura shared that she would follow up with an email to the committee on the financial activity for the contract period.

Jenny voiced support for the south end past Garrison to the Rec Center and wants to see Cold Spring as a whole as a terminus for the trail. She asked if Weston & Sampson could provide visualization, sketch, or a diagram to see where sticky points are in relation to the four phases.

Jason asked Dan to speak to the committee about how the committee can get to the recommended alignment. Dan replied that it is important to flag this as a working document. He would like to have an alignment agreed upon with the group. Yes, there will be adjustments and more challenges to address, but in general it would be good to hear (from the group) something like “we all agree on the North and South direction with a terminus of this and we want to connect to here and here with these crossings.” Then we create a draft and go to the public looking for general feedback on the alignment with our data.

Evelyn shared that she was enthusiastic about the 9D possibilities and that she appreciated the detail. She asked about clarification of the “buffer” on the roadway, given safety issues on 9D. Dan explained that the proposed facility on 9D would be a separate pathway dedicated for bikes and peds. The consultants are analyzing where (and whether) there is sufficient space in the right-of-way to fit it in. The AASHTO bike guide requires a separation of 5 feet or more unless there is a barrier (curb or a guardrail).

Evelyn followed up with an additional question regarding the proposed alignment that goes over Foundry Brook (phase A): do you know which side the path would be on? Dan replied that in general it would be on the south or river side primarily because there is a building directly next to the eastern side. W&S does not yet have a rough cost estimate or any more detail on technical feasibility at this early time.

Howard asked if the group has walked this and how much is walkable? Dan replied that 9D currently is minimal in terms of walkability. Areas that are walkable are some of the carriage roads that are on private property. There are sections not in the ROW (right of way) in Garrison that are currently private. 9D is not conducive to bike/ped accommodations the way it is now. Dan added that every road has a dedicated ROW that is a section of land that is beyond the actual roadway. Some can be on private lands or institutional lands. You may have a ROW that

changes width from 40-80 or 90 but the road is not always centered within that ROW. In the event that ROW is too narrow, they try to avoid using it for any purpose. If we do not have land of ROW, you have to acquire land or get an easement from the landowner. The 9D road is about 30-35 feet but the ROW varies from 40-90 in some sections. It is wider along the old 9D corridor.

John asked if the feasibility study will tell us how many feet of easements we need. Dan replied that he is waiting for maps of surveys. For those parcels where we have good survey info we can tell you how much land you would need to be acquired. For those we don't have survey info for, we are using GIS and that is an estimate at this point. We will not know what portions yet and this might need to be in a future phase for land acquisitions.

Laura added that NYSDOT does not have surveys and they only survey when they do a project.

Paul asked what kind of surface would we likely recommend? Dan answered that he always begins with recommending a paved surface. The reason is because it is the most durable surface to serve the greater variety of users. If you make a softer surface like stone dust you are adding additional maintenance requirements. The paved surface allows for durability (20 years for asphalt). Sometimes if you go without a surface it comes at a cost as well.

Howard recommended the Putnam History Museum as a possible terminus. Others voiced that they thought that was a good idea.

Bruce: Asked about our deadline for the feasibility study and if the project was on track in terms of timeline. He also wanted to know if we needed an extension. Rebeca shared that she had recently been in communication with the grant manager at the Hudson River Valley Greenway and that they were updated on the project and where PTC was with the study. Laura and Dan added that we had one more year. Laura shared that the grant was a two-year grant and community engagement was planned for the fall/winter.

Subcommittees Updates

Jenny shared that Complete Streets subcommittee update and reported that their steps include conducting an audit of Cold Spring, taking a look at what is working, and what is not working for pedestrians. She shared that they have talked some of this through with Mayor Foley. The next steps are: an audit with a map, with simple streets and sections. Members and volunteers will go out and see what is a high priority, a medium priority, and what is a low priority. It would be great to get everyone's input. Trace and Jenny will digitize that feedback and then they will share some possible solutions where that might fit on a cost/ impact scale. That will go to the Mayor's office. Laura concurred (from perspective as a Cold Spring trustee) that the Village could use this information to inform active transportation planning and code updates.

Jason provided an update that the Town has been working with HHLT (Hudson Highlands Land Trust) on a Community Preservation Plan and potential Community Preservation Fund, which would raise funds to protect land. There will be a town workshop on this topic on August 31.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40PM.