

North Triphammer Road Corridor Reconstruction Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 6, 1996

Bolded items indicate action required

The third meeting of the Village of Lansing North Triphammer Road Corridor Reconstruction Committee (NTRCRC) was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Fresinski. Committee members Buck, Cross, Jacobs, Hickey, Sciarabba, and Tull were present.

The Committee discussed the "to-do" list from previous meetings:

As requested, a map was distributed to the Committee that offered a conceptual view of the entire area.

In order to invite public input, the Committee had talked about posting progress on the plan in a kiosk in Pyramid Mall. The Committee felt that was premature at this point but will reopen this suggestion once they have begun formulating substantive plans. It was suggested that **a survey should be provided along with the plan and/or model in order to get immediate feedback.**

Fresinski thought that it may not be premature to notify the *Ithaca Journal* that the Committee is meeting and to let them know that there is activity going on regarding the Corridor and how to get more information. Fresinski will give them a *press release*. Fresinski will circulate the press release to Committee members for comments before submitting it to the *Ithaca Journal*.

Fresinski spoke to Bill Mobbs and they have not made any further progress. Mobbs didn't have anything to say other than he appreciates the minutes from this Committee's meetings.

Cross had said that he would provide the Committee with an IPP (Initial Project Proposal) guideline booklet. Fresinski said that he was interested in trying to uncover what was really needed in order to get the funding so the Committee can keep that possibility open. It may be decided down the road that the requirements of getting the funding do not support the Committee's vision for the Village, in which case funding will not be pursued. The Committee doesn't want to pursue the funding and have potential approval and then find out that there are certain requirements that dictate that the funding be refused.

The Committee had discussed holding public hearings. They felt that it is premature for a public hearing at this point. Hickey said that it's important that it be held someplace on the Triphammer Road Corridor. The meeting sites can be alternated in order to avoid the impression of favoritism. **They should be called public informational meetings** instead of a public hearings because a hearing implies that you're taking an action or requesting the Village or Town or Board to act on something.

Another topic identified in previous meetings is submission of an IPP (Initial Project Proposal) for traffic light coordination across the bridge. Fresinski reported that Reinhart is prepared to make that submission and it will be given over to Reinhart to handle. Fresinski said that it's linked to the Committee's work because the Committee has now identified the fact that the lights are not coordinated. It supports the Committee's overall plan and is something to be done in parallel.

David Boyd had suggested that it might be useful to have Moynihan or Vedder come to a meeting. These are people who end up prioritizing and approving funding and they appear to be interested in the progress of the project. The Committee felt that it would be worthwhile to keep them informed, but to wait until the Committee had developed a more definitive design along with supporting material before asking to meet with them. **Fresinski will find out how they would like to be kept informed, and will suggest to them that at some future time the Committee might be interested in having them come to a meeting .**

It had been suggested at a previous meeting that the County circuit rider, Rebecca Lubin, be asked to join the Committee. Hickey said that she would provide a link to Tompkins County Planning Department and would offer an open-minded contribution to the Committee's work. **Fresinski will touch base and find out if she might want to participate**

Traffic Statistics/Supporting Information

Jacobs said that she is summarizing certain things from the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council's 20 year plan and other materials that were made available to the Committee. There are conceptual things that will probably be helpful for the group to gain a broader perspective as well as specific issues for when the Committee gets to the point of discussing issues in more detail.

Fresinski has spoken to Reinhart about obtaining traffic volume information. The information has been collected in the past and is available, so it's only a matter of when the Committee is ready to use it, and in what form. **Jacobs will follow-up with Reinhart regarding the acquisition of traffic flow information.**

Hickey said that there is also some information on the Triphammer bridge traffic that the County collected in the past. **Jacobs added that intersection data would be useful as well .** Her firm has looked into different consultants to collect that information, but if Reinhart has good information the Committee can utilize that instead. Hickey said that Reinhart collects information for all sides of the intersection but turning information may have to be inferred by traffic increases and decreases. Reinhart has been collecting information for Graham Road and Craft Road, Pyramid Drive, and Catherwood Road every year for the last 3 or 4 years, roughly between April and October.

Tull said that he can provide some information that Pyramid Mall compiles twice every year . They take license plates and find out where they come from in order to estimate what percentage of their patrons are from which surrounding area. Location is identified by zip code. They use this information to demonstrate to the State that they are a regional center, which they can do because a large part of their volume comes from within a 10 mile radius outside of the County. The Committee felt that information would definitely be helpful. Tull said that 34% of cars come from the Ithaca zip code. Cortland is number two zip code. Those figures suggest that an exit from the mall onto the highway would take a lot of traffic off Triphammer.

Cross thought that information may be helpful in making an argument for a direct exit ramp out of the mall. However, the off ramp onto Route 13 stretches almost to the center of the mall before that lane disappears, so it would be a difficult thing to accomplish without some modification to the Triphammer on-ramp. Tull said that this is very similar to NYS Route #12 in Utica. It's 4 lane north-south highway with limited access which goes over the thruway. There is an on ramp from the thruway area and at the same place that there is an on ramp, there's a deceleration lane and an off ramp that goes right into the mall. And it's a shorter distance than this. **Tull will obtain a local map of that area for the Committee .** He said that they have been successful with the NYSDOT in getting ramps directly off the limited access highways because it decreases traffic on the city

streets. The NYSDOT knows that if you're a super regional mall that gets traffic from a long distance away, if you take traffic right onto the mall property you're going to decrease the traffic on the city streets.

Hickey suggested that this be a topic that might be presented at the Lansing Business Association. A simple survey would give the Committee an idea of the business community's concerns regarding this project. The Committee needs to hear from the economic side of the community because N. Triphammer Road is the primary business corridor. However, it would be premature to invite any kind of participation at this point in time.

It was also suggested that shoppers be surveyed to identify where they are coming from. That information would be very helpful to the businesses as well as the Committee. Sciarabba said it would be helpful to be able to identify how much traffic is being generated by the neighborhoods within a 3 mile radius. He felt that on Saturdays and Sundays, for example, almost all of Bishop's business in the small mall comes from within a half-mile radius.

Tull said that Pyramid conducts surveys for a one week period to determine how far from the mall the shoppers live. The tabulation he receives tells him what percentages is within a given radius. That data wouldn't necessarily apply to the other malls. A grocery store would draw shoppers from a much smaller radius. Tull said that another method of surveying shoppers is to analyze address information from credit cards. Sciarabba suggested setting up one weekday and one weekend day to survey shoppers at all the malls.

Sciarabba asked Tull if he saw the mall expanding in size at some time. Tull said they are land locked right now, but there may be a desire to grow in the future as the market grows. This is the smallest of their malls. Sewer permits are not a constraint as long as they add on to the existing building. Hickey asked if the market demand is large enough now for the mall to expand. Tull said there has been a lot of interest from national retailers, and they have been turning them away.

Cross said that he didn't know how site specific the information is, but one of Boyd's projects is a travel demand model for the whole County, or at least the greater metropolitan area. A model isn't useful if it can't project something, and it has to have a decision tree for making certain projections. so they will conduct a survey or study that determines areas that are expanding, reducing, age groups, etc., by household. That information may be very useful. **Jacobs will follow up with Boyd.**

Cost

The Committee had inquired about the cost of the older three lane proposal. Boyd mentioned at the last meeting that it was something like \$2.25 million, about the size of the Village of Lansing's budget for one year. Sciarabba asked about the cost of bonding that amount based on the assessed evaluation of the properties in the Village. The Village budget is roughly \$1.3 million, and the tax rate is \$1.41 per thousand. However, the whole \$1.3 million doesn't come from the tax base. Taxes probably make up 60%. However, if there is still over \$100 million of assessed evaluation, raising \$150,000 a year in debt service would add roughly 1% to the tax rate. Buck said that the Village was 1% below inflation last year in increase.

Jacobs said that she hopes that this group really focuses on what they think is necessary, initially irrespective to some degree of budget. Further down the road, they can really see how feasible the plan is from a budget perspective and what they really can afford to do. Fresinski said they don't want to run into the situation that Cross described where they figure out that it can be done for \$3 million and then the submitted plan comes

back costing \$7 million, and the Village has to put in 30%. It's premature, but there's still an opportunity where the two Villages and the Town and the County might get together and do it outside of having state funding.

Study Area

Hickey asked if the study area has been defined geographically. They had talked about the contributions from the Town and Cayuga Heights, but realistically he didn't see where that would happen if the study area runs roughly from the bridge to Brook Drive. Fresinski said that for all intents and purposes, that is the scope is N. Triphammer Road. The reason we have participation from the adjoining Village and Town is because we want to expand the Village's focus to the entire Corridor - or all of N. Triphammer Road - since the surrounding areas affect that road. Fresinski reminded the Committee of Boyd's suggestion that the proposal may have to encompass the whole area in order to qualify for funding, but there would simultaneously be individual sections on which to submit proposals. So, if the Town or the Village wants to do something, depending on how things are submitted and how priorities are working, any one of the proposals may have a chance individually as well. Fresinski said that there may be three independent pieces, but we can better design our piece if we know what the other two ends are doing. If there's an opportunity to work together and/or submit together which leverages the whole plan and gets funding for it, then we'll go for that. But we'll know more as we go as to whether that's possible or not.

The Village's focus is very specific, but the study will go beyond that. Jacobs said it's a difference between terminology. The study can be the entire Corridor with the cooperation of the Village and the Town interests, but the design area will be limited to whatever the Committee sees as necessary.

Buck asked if there was a positive determination that the Town has conceptually bought into this. He said he can envision Cayuga Heights being a part of this, but he doesn't know if they have any desire to participate. Cross said he thought they have the desire given all the positives, but one of the negatives is that time-wise they're just not willing to wait. They have pressure to get the Kendal stretch fixed up. Hickey said that on the other hand, the Town is reviewing their zoning, and it would be very interesting to the Village to know how the southern end of the Town is going to be zoned along the Triphammer Corridor. If that's going to be rural residential, that tells us one thing; and if they're talking about putting in a business district, that means another thing for the Triphammer Corridor. Jacobs agreed that with respect to the Town it's important that we have a sense of what's going in because it will impact the two Villages. Hickey said that the Village initially presented this north-south corridor plan to the Town in a joint planning board meeting. They got almost no reaction from them at all because there wasn't any concern. But again, if this is truly going to be a corridor system, then this has to continue out to Asbury.

Tull will speak to some people from the Town to see if he can get someone to come to the meetings . Jeanine Kirby and Jeff Cleveland have both been invited. Jeanine has talked about extending Warren Road out to Peruville Road. She wants to get a lot of the trucks off the corridor. As far as the zoning, Tull's understanding is that they're trying to create a commercial center around South Lansing. Sciarabba confirmed that that plan is already prepared and is available for the public to review. **Tull will pick up whatever is available from the Town Clerk's Office and bring it to the next meeting.**

Desirable/Undesirable List

Fresinski listed those things that the Committee had articulated as "hot spots" in the Corridor or things that affected the Corridor, like the stacking and the Route 13 ramp. He suggested that the Committee now list things that have been identified as desirable and undesirable for the Corridor plan. For example, people have

said they don't want a four-lane highway going through the Village, and that two lanes are not sufficient. If this Committee can also identify things that they are pretty sure they want, that would help them focus on some particular types of solutions for the engineers to work with.

Traffic Signals

Hickey said that a Corridor that has very little stoppage in it in terms of traffic lights will allow people to shoot through and that won't help the business community. There are two traffic patterns to accommodate. Most people want access to the businesses on the Corridor and some are using the Corridor as a way to get home. A balance has to be struck between a smooth traffic flow and easy access to businesses.

Hickey asked if there is a need for additional traffic signals on Triphammer, particularly on Graham Road and Craft Road. Jacobs said that even if those issues are considered too detailed now, it's good to get all these ideas out so we can think about the benefits of those ideas. Fresinski asked if it would be desirable to look for ways to eliminate traffic signals, like a traffic circle. Hickey didn't think there was room for a traffic circle, and said that if without some kind of traffic signals you're not going to get the people out of Graham Road or Craft Road. Use of the traffic signals can be modified, however, in terms of the times they are used and how they are used (peak hours, etc.). Fresinski added that in addition to the Graham and Craft traffic signals, appropriate turning lanes would be desirable.

Traffic/Turning Lanes

The business corridor is 1.5 mile long in a low traffic commercial district. One problem has been that the road goes from four lanes to two lanes. The issue is trying to accommodate heavy traffic into the major industry there, Pyramid Mall. The commercial district ends at Brook Drive. The four lanes stop at Catherwood Road. Sciarabba said that a desirable feature for the list is that the lanes increase to three lanes from Catherwood Road to Brook Drive. Hickey asked if it was desirable to have a third lane all the way or just at the intersections for turning? Fresinski said that how it's functioning and how it's designed are separate issues. These lists aren't design criteria, but overall desires. You can have some turning lanes or you can have just two lanes, whether it's both going north or south or you change based on the time of day.

The question was raised whether a third turning lane should run down the entire strip or can it be in segments. The previous plan (the Hunt map) called for one solid turning lane so you couldn't use it for anything else but turning. Maybe it would be less confusing to keep it a complete turning lane for such a short distance. That also provides more room for traffic to maneuver. On the other hand, the parts of the center lane that aren't needed for turning lanes could be landscaped.

Access Roads

Tull said that most of the bigger development areas have access roads from one property to the next off of the main highway. They wouldn't be used as much as, for example, an outlet road from Cayuga Mall onto Dart Drive. The roads are behind the scenes so that people don't have to go out so much onto the main roads. Hickey said that Butler Road, which leads to the YMCA, serves exactly that purpose.

Alternate Corridors/Road Relocations

The Committee had previously talked about considering the back road from Dart Drive to Cayuga Mall. It was his position that this Committee ought to review the suggestion to open the back of Cayuga Mall to Dart Drive - if for no other reason than to bury it if it is not acceptable. Given the width of Dart Drive with big ditches on one side, he doesn't think it would help to open up that road. The Committee has to talk about the

issue and if it's the Committee's position to bury it, then bury it; if it's to do something then they ought to look at it. Buck felt that increased traffic on Dart Drive is not desirable. It can't handle the traffic it has right now.

There was also a lot of concern about what would happen when Warren Road expansion took place if the mouth of Dart Drive was too close to the state land and the intersection and the turning lanes. The Village has addressed some of these problems in a study that the Planning Board conducted on the northeast study area, called the Northeast Neighborhood Study. It just deals with the northeast residential quadrant of the Village and how they are going to deal with that.

There are four north-south corridors: Rt. 34, Triphammer Road, Warren Road, and Cayuga Heights Road. Hickey felt that the majority of people who want to get somewhere in a hurry use the outer corridors. If they want to get to the business area, they use the center corridor. One solution to consider is to emphasize the use of the other corridors as opposed to creating either new north-south corridors or cross corridor highways.

Jacobs said that it is important to keep in mind that if the plan does not include ways to handle the traffic in the study area or tries to minimize the traffic there, it will result in increased traffic at other locations. The concern is that if you try to impede traffic or don't allow for good flow, you build up certain desirable side roads that become major arteries off of the Corridor. There could be a heavy impact on Hillcrest Road. Jacobs said there will be the same kind of questions raised when you start looking at connecting some of the secondaries. There are positive reasons for connecting them, but one less desirable result may be the impact on the neighborhoods. You have to consider what you want to happen to the areas on either side. If you want it to maintain character, then you do you need a bigger Corridor.

Fresinski said that the key was to maintain the character but improve the efficiency, which may increase the volume but not to a large degree. Hickey said that he thought most of the people who are using Triphammer are probably using it because they're going to make a stop somewhere on Triphammer to do some shopping. The people who want to get home quick are going to use Warren Road or Route 34 if they live in an outer area. People that live in the immediate residential area have to use Triphammer. He thought that it may be the case that the actual volume of traffic on Triphammer is going down and not increasing because of the improvements on Warren Road.

Tull said that if Hillcrest Road were straightened out at one point and widened slightly, it would make a good alternative route for traffic going to Cornell. Also, the Forest Home and the one-lane bridge is a problem for traffic flow. Cornell might have some interest in doing something there to improve the flow for their employees.

Hickey said that Hillcrest was initially part of that East-West Corridor study. The idea was to address the imperfections of Hillcrest so that it would be a funnel up to Warren Road. They probably didn't want to change the residential flavor there which may be why they're now going to run Warren Road up to Peruville Road.

Sciarabba said that Oakcrest is very close to a very high density intersection at Graham Road which short-ends into the mall. He said it would make more sense to not have Oakcrest terminate into Triphammer and to utilize Graham Road. There is a major volume of traffic between Graham Road and the highway. Hickey said that one of the desirable considerations is to examine road relocations. It would not be difficult to relocate Oakcrest Road.

Bomax Drive is eventually supposed to connect into Craft Road. That development is moving slowly because it's building in segments and the market area for the homes is not there. Hickey said that certainly the Village can put the road in. Looking at making that connection should go on the desirable list..

Sidewalks

Sciarabba said that it's amazing how much residential there is in close proximity to this traffic. Hickey added that one positive side to that is that people can walk to those shopping areas. Only Graham Road has a sidewalk, and only on one side but it goes almost all the way to Dart Drive. A desirable feature, then, is sidewalks on both sides of Triphammer, or at least on one side. Jacobs said she would also consider connecting the sidewalks into the residential areas as desirable. Hickey said that sidewalks are needed for people coming off of Graham Road, crossing Triphammer and then going down to the mall. Fresinski said that the Committee will look at including community input into other travel modes. One important goal for the future public information meetings is to identify that it's not just traffic that the Committee is interested in, but a multi-modal plan that includes pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Cross added that as Janivar grows there are trails that cross over onto Graham. Hickey said that people are already using the trails. There is pedestrian accessibility into the commercial area - but not enough of it. It would be desirable to tie it all together to create a network of pedestrian walkways.

Curb Cuts

Hickey said that they don't need any more curb cuts on Triphammer, or at least need to minimize them as much as possible. Some are grand-fathered, and some will have to go in to make the property accessible when there's no other way to make it accessible. But the Village is very judiciously granting anybody curb cuts on vacant property now.

Hickey said that one of the things the Committee needs to discuss is the Sundown Farms property which lies between Oakcrest and Burdick Hill. When the initial development for Polaris Corporation came in, one of the criteria was no curb cuts on Triphammer. He didn't think it would be very hard to keep curb cuts on that west side at a very minimum number and make the Burdick Hill and the Oakcrest Roads the access roads to that internal property, or the Cayuga Heights Road.

Signage

Fresinski asked if it would be desirable to have buttons at the intersections that can be pushed to cause traffic to stop. According to NYS law, if a pedestrian is in a marked crosswalk, they have the right-of-way. Hickey said it may be desirable to put in traffic informational signs for pedestrian traffic. Sciarabba said that the signage issue is important so that people can easily find their way around and find parking. Jacobs agreed that on a Corridor like this, directional signage has a big impact on flow. The Committee agreed that parking was not an issue in the Village. Sciarabba noted that the Village has allowed parking deductions so businesses have the capacity to expand if needed and few have taken advantage of it. Accessibility is an issue, but once you're inside property lines, flow is good and parking is adequate.

Alternatives to Driving

Tull said that at one time Cornell was interested in using the mall lot for a park and ride plan. Instead, they changed the direction of the buses so more buses come directly back and forth from Cornell. Although Pyramid Mall never committed themselves to that plan, Tull said that it wouldn't be a problem for the facility because Cornell's need is M-F from 8 to 5, when Pyramid Mall is fairly low on traffic. He would have to determine whether it's allowed by the department stores. Jacobs said that is the type of thing that ISTE

(Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991) funding is really interested in seeing. Even if it's only going to impact a few percent, the fact that you are striving for a multi-modal plan would really enhance the proposal.

Sciarabba suggested for consideration the establishment of a shuttle service from College town and downtown. For that matter, considering the density of the residential population in the Village, a shuttle could run in a loop through the commercial district to bring in all those people from their apartments. Such a transport shuttle system may even pay for itself. Another possibility is a shuttle into Kendal.

Jacobs said that bus stop locations do impact the design. If it's going to stop in the parking lot that's a lot different than if you're going to have a bus pull off on the road. Are there places for pull offs and/or wide enough areas for turnarounds?

Sciarabba said that if you're establishing a target area from Graham Road to Brook Drive, Phase II of this whole thing may be to provide access there across from Bush lane and maybe put a traffic signal there. Hickey agreed that opposite Bush Lane would be the ideal place. Jacobs said that it's important to look at future moves as well, because the reality is that at some point it may be developed. Even if our Phase I design doesn't really take it into consideration if it comes up to the Planning Board at some time we want to have thought about it, and the potential traffic impact on this area .

Fresinski asked Jacobs, given this list of desirables and undesirables, if she was sensing solutions that the engineers could begin to focus on. Jacobs said that it would be necessary to look at what we've got there for right-of-way first. She requested a full copy of the Corridor Study that Hunt did 3 years ago with the specifications and documentation that goes with it. The engineering estimate on that plan was roughly \$2.5 million but they weren't sure if that included any right-of-way acquisition.

In summary, the following list reflects those desirable and undesirable features of the Corridor which the Committee has identified so far:

Desired features of the corridor

- 1) 3 lanes of roadway from Catherwood to Brook Drive
- 2) traffic signals at graham and craft and appropriate turning lanes throughout the corridor
- 3) encourage road relocation (minimize roads coming into Triphammer)
- 4) Promote secondary access roads to encourage traffic to stay of Triphammer
- 5) minimize or eliminate curb cuts on Triphammer
- 6) promote traffic information signs for pedestrians
- 7) promote vehicle directional signage
- 8) pursue park 'n ride for surrounding businesses
- 9) pursue intervillage transportation (small busses)
- 10) create direct access between Triphammer and Warren
- 11) mitigate traffic to private residences
- 12) aesthetically pleasing, lighted, and tree-lined
- 13) green space between road and sidewalks
- 14) striping of crosswalks
- 15) accommodate bikes and pedestrians

Undesired features of the corridor

- 1) increased traffic on Dart Drive
- 2) 4-lane roadway through Village

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

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