

MAIN STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A PATHWAY TO A BETTER POUGHKEEPSIE



DRAFT Working Paper #2: Planning Strategies

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to the City of Poughkeepsie



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INTRODUCTION

The Main Street Economic Development Strategy includes six strategies for revitalizing Poughkeepsie through coordinated investments along its Main Street corridor from the waterfront to Arlington. The purpose of these strategies is to (1) improve the quality of life for all residents, (2) repair the city’s urban fabric, and (3) enhance economic opportunity. Although these strategies focus primarily on the Main Street corridor, they are intended to have far-reaching effects not only on the whole City of Poughkeepsie but also the surrounding region. By reasserting the Main Street corridor as the region’s primary mixed-used urban corridor, the MSEDs hopes to reposition downtown Poughkeepsie as a robust economic center and channel new regional land use development to parcels that are walkable and transit-oriented.

The MSEDs was developed by Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting (KDLLC) and Pace Land Use Law Center (LULC) through a two year community based planning process. This process included extensive community outreach sessions, focus group meetings, ongoing meetings with city and county department heads, and regular communication with Poughkeepsie’s Common Council. Additionally, a group of diverse stakeholders, representing major actors in the city’s economic development process, regularly met during the planning process to provide feedback on interim planning proposals.

Main Street Economic Development Strategy	
1	Provide Dedicated Bus Service on Main Street
2	Make Market Street a Complete Street
3	Improve Safety Along Mill Street
4	Update the Zoning Code
5	Support Local Business and Job Development
6	Make Main Street Cleaner and Safer

THE PLAN

Described below are the strategies that collectively comprise the MSEDs. Along with describing the opportunity that inspired the strategy and the strategy itself, the necessary implementation steps are also provided here.

STRATEGY #1: PROVIDE DEDICATED BUS SERVICE ON MAIN STREET

The Opportunity

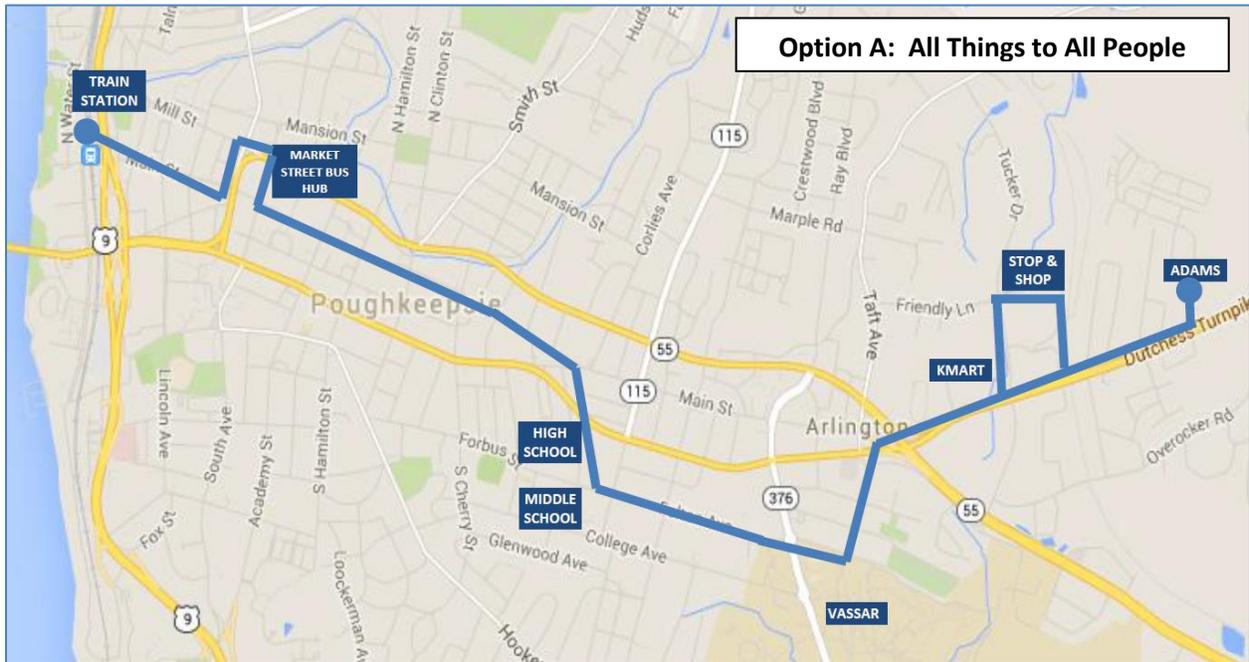
Currently, there is no direct east-west bus service along Main Street. Creating a dedicated Main Street bus route would help define the legibility of the corridor, improve public access to stores and restaurants, enhance access to public transit networks, and promote a more active street life.

The Strategy

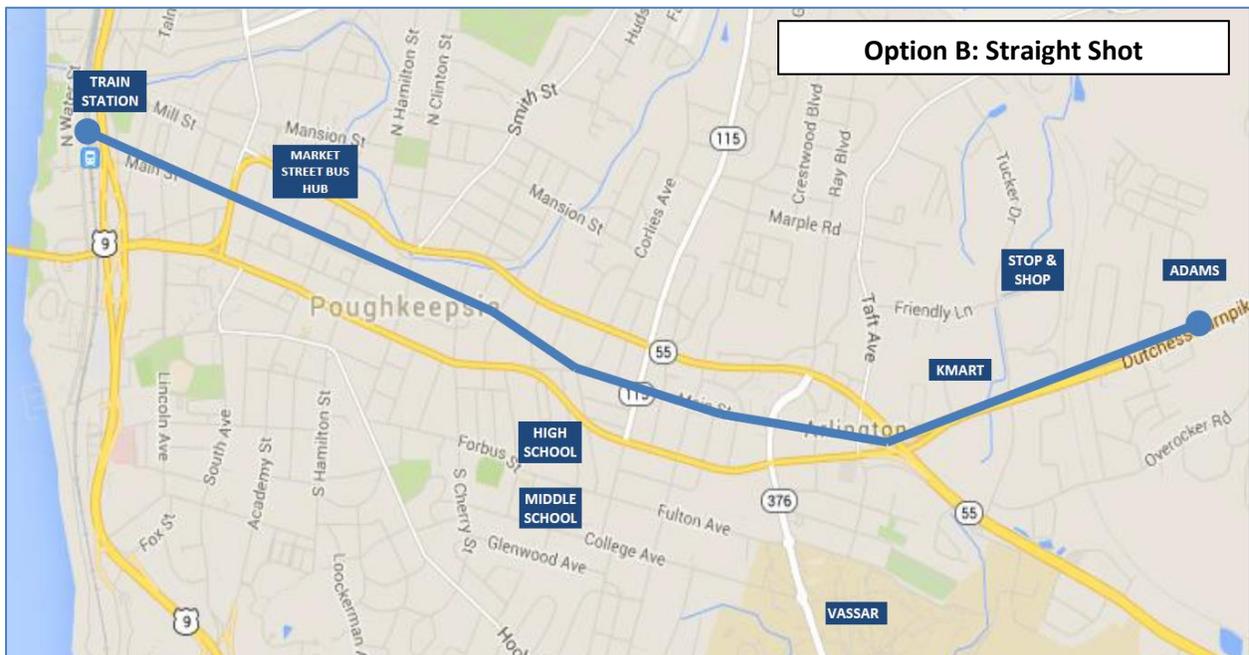
As summarized below, the project team evaluated three options for enhancing the performance of transit through the Main Street Corridor:

MAIN STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - DRAFT

Option A - All Things to All People suggests a transit line extending from Main Street to the Adams shopping plaza while operating almost exclusively along Main Street. However, the route would divert from Main Street in order to provide direct connections to the Market Street Bus Terminal; the high school; the middle school; Vassar College; and the store entrances to Kmart, the Shop and Stop, and the Adams shopping plaza.

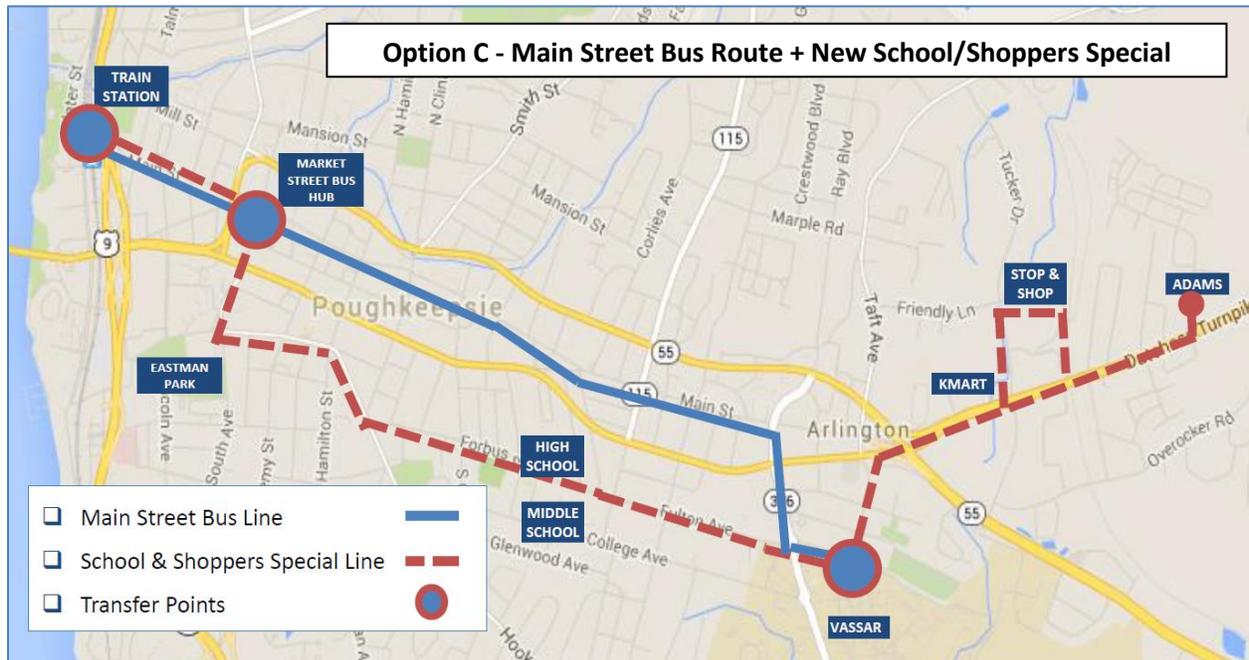


Option B - Straight Shot also suggests a direct line extend from Main Street to the Adams shopping plaza. Unlike Option A, however, this line would not deviate at all from Main Street, not even to serve the Market Street Bus Terminal



MAIN STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - DRAFT

Option C - Main Street Bus Route + New School/Shoppers Special proposes two separate yet interconnecting bus routes. One route would connect the train station with Vassar College via Main Street. A second route would connect the Market Street Bus Terminal with Vassar College via Forbus Road and then continue eastward to the Adams Shopping Plaza.



Implementation Steps

- (1) Develop a Financial Plan for the Preferred Option
- (2) Analyze FTA Requirements for Operational Changes
- (3) Facilitate Main Street Bus Planning Workshop with City and County Representatives
- (4) Develop Funding Plan with Broad Stakeholders
- (5) Generate Memorandum of Understanding Between Stakeholders
- (6) Develop Implementation Plan for Council Review

STRATEGY #2: MAKE MARKET A COMPLETE STREET

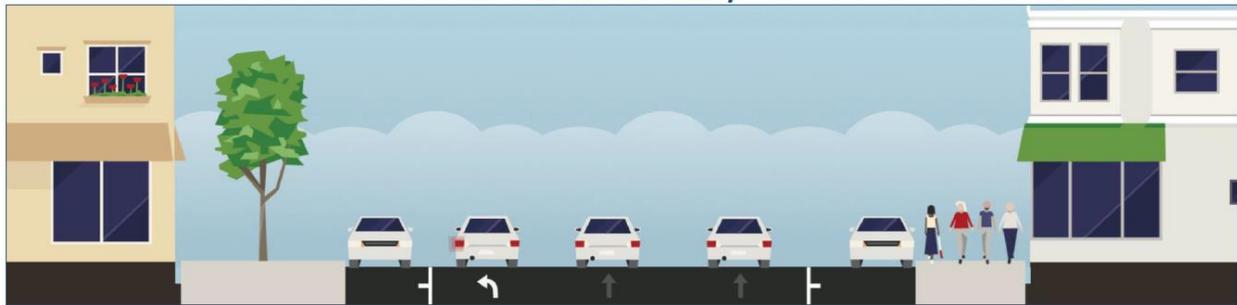
The Opportunity

Market Street currently operates in a one-way direction between Church and Mill Street. Converting this street to two ways would help improve circulation and access. Introducing pedestrian and bike improvements would also help enhance safety within the right of way as well as at Market Street's key intersections, especially the one at Main Street.

The Strategy

The project team proposes that Market Street be redesigned to include bi-directional traffic as well as temporary complete streets installations including curb extensions, medians, and share the road striping. The redesign of Market Street would be done in concert with a detailed traffic engineering analysis to ensure that the new circulation system enhances rather than compromises traffic flow.

Market Street Today



Market Street Tomorrow



Implementation Steps

- (1) Reach Closure On The Contract With NYSDERDA for the Cleaner Grant awarded to the Poughkeepsie City Center Connectivity Project
- (2) Assemble and Facilitate a Complete Streets Advisory Committee
- (3) Draft the RFP for Engineering Services
- (4) Execute the Complete Streets Demonstration Program
- (5) Secure Funding To Expand The Complete Streets Program And Pursue The Subsurface Infrastructure Upgrades To Market Street.

STRATEGY #3: IMPROVE SAFETY ALONG MILL STREET

The Opportunity

Mill Street currently serves as a critical east-west arterial that runs through the city's CBD and provides access to the bridge crossing. The current design of Mill Street does not adequately support pedestrian crossings. The intersection of Mill Street with Market Street is especially hazardous in its progression southbound to Market Street as it wraps around the Grand Hotel site. By making Mill Street more pedestrian friendly, the arterial would not only be safer for pedestrians but also help to improve access to the city center from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Strategy

The project team proposes that Mill Street's intersection with Market Street be redesigned in tandem with *Strategy 2: Make Market Street a Complete Street*. Specifically, Market Street would be redesigned to include a left turning lane from westbound Mill Street into southbound Market Street. Controlled

pedestrian crossings would be provided on all four sides of the intersection of Mill and Market Streets. Westbound Mill Street would also be redesigned so that it no longer curves dangerously into Columbus Drive. Instead, the intersection of Columbus and Mill Street would be reconfigured as a T Intersection.

Implementation Steps

- (1) Reach closure on the contract with NYSERDA for the Cleaner Grant awarded to the Poughkeepsie City Center Connectivity Project
- (2) Develop additional operational schematics and drawings illustrating concepts for redesigning the intersection of Market and Mill Streets.
- (3) Draft the RFP for Engineering Services
- (4) Present RFP to NYSDOT
- (5) Develop Coordination Process with NYSDOT
- (6) Identify funding for capital improvements to Westbound Mill Street

STRATEGY #4: UPDATE THE ZONING CODE

The Opportunity

Poughkeepsie's zoning code has not been updated since the late 1970s. New zoning controls for the Walkway District and the Waterfront have been recently adopted to advance the possibility for sustainable urban infill development. These controls were developed as form-based codes. A similar form-based code could also be developed for the Main Street corridor, especially the segments of the corridor within the CBD where there is a high number of surface parking lots. The rezoning would ensure that land in this area is redeveloped to its highest and best use, maximizing not only the walkability of the CBD but also ensuring the greatest level of fiscal productivity.

The Strategy

The project team proposes that the City of Poughkeepsie update the zoning code for the central business district to enable high density mixed-used development. The revision to the zoning code would be done through form based codes in order to ensure that vacant lots are developed to their fullest extent and that also incentivize the creation of mixed income housing.

Implementation Steps

- (1) Analyze the 2010 Draft Zoning Code that was not adopted
- (2) Determine the boundaries of the CBD subject to the zoning code
- (3) Rewrite the zoning code and shepherd through environmental, administrative, and legislative review
- (4) Update the city's entire zoning code to reflect best practices in sustainable land use planning and economic development

STRATEGY #5: SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND JOB DEVELOPMENT

The Opportunity

Poughkeepsie's downtown contains numerous assets including a regional train station, a historic Main Street, and a walkable compact urban form. However, the city's property owners struggle to secure suitable tenants. Residents suffer from a lack of diverse retail options. And the City contains to struggle from high levels of poverty, underinvestment, and low income levels.

The Strategy

The project team proposes several interlinked strategies for advancing local business and job development. First, the City would resurrect the city's planning and development department and include Main Street marketing as a key service area within this department. Second, the City would create an Innovation District within the CBD to foster job training and educational opportunities for current residents through strategic partnerships with local educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and larger anchor institutions. Lastly, the City would proactively identify infill opportunities and aggressively market them through the city's planning and economic development department

Implementation Steps

- (1) Define a work plan for the city's new planning and economic development department
- (2) Secure funding for the creation of an Innovation District
- (3) Assemble an Innovation District Task Force comprised of city officials, college representatives, community organizations, and anchor businesses.

STRATEGY #6: MAKE MAIN STREET CLEANER AND SAFER

The Opportunity

Poughkeepsie lacks a vibrant Main Street corridor. Residents and visitors broadly cite concerns about crime, safety, and cleanliness as disincentives to coming to Main Street for shopping, dining, and recreational purposes. A cleaner and Safer Main Street would inspire more people to not only visit Main Street but also live and work there as well.

The Strategy

Through the creation of a Main Street Business Improvement District, the city's retailers and merchants would work cooperatively with the city's administrative staff on the improvement and financing of sanitation services as well as communications with law enforcement. Also, the City would work with the Police Department to bring 24 hour police patrols along the length of Main Street.

Implementation Steps

- (1) Organize the Merchants to Form a Business Improvement District
- (2) Work with the Poughkeepsie Police Department on the Implementation of a Main Street Policing Plan.