

MAIN STREET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

On behalf of the Land Use Law Center and the City of Poughkeepsie, we thank you for attending! The purpose of the Main Street Economic Development strategy is to reactivate the entire length of the Main Street corridor and reassert Poughkeepsie as the economic and cultural center of the Hudson Valley.

Description of Preliminary Concepts

Concept #1: Introduce Frequent Transit Service Along Main Street

The City of Poughkeepsie, in partnership with Dutchess County, could implement a high quality transit east-west service along the full length of Main Street between the waterfront and Raymond Avenue. At the intersection of Main Street and Raymond Avenue, the transit service could veer south and terminate at the entrance to the Vassar College campus located at Raymond Avenue and Main Campus Drive. This service would provide a connection high-speed connection between the waterfront, the train station, the Central Business District, the Middle Main Area, and the Vassar College Campus.

Concept #2: Transform Market Street into a Complete Street

The City of Poughkeepsie in partnership with New York State Department of Transportation could redesign Market Street as a “complete street” in which all transportation users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders are sufficiently accommodated. Designing Market Street as a complete street requires more than the insertion of a median and pedestrian bulbouts. A true complete street approach will also install sufficient bike and transit infrastructure within the right of way, resolve the hazardous intersections between Market Street and the arterials, and convert the intersection of Columbus Drive and Mill Street into a T-intersection.

Concept #3: Convert the Arterials into Boulevards

The City of Poughkeepsie in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation could convert both the westbound and eastbound arterials into pedestrian friendly boulevards. There are a variety of ways in which a boulevard concept could be introduced including (1) the retention of the existing number of travel lanes but the modification of the arterials’ intersections with north-south streets (2) the retention of the existing number of travel lines but the conversion of one lane on each arterial into a contra-flow lane and (3) the elimination of a travel lane on each arterial and its replacement with either a median or a bike lane. The feasibility of these concepts as well as the potential for combining them needs to be performed in the context of a comprehensive analysis of the city’s circulation system.

Concept #4: Restore Main Street as the Region’s Primary Commercial Corridor

The City of Poughkeepsie could restore Main Street as the region’s primary commercial corridor especially within the segment between Bridge and Hamilton Streets. In order to eliminate vacancies, shorten absorption times, and maximize street traffic, the City could undertake four key interventions. First, in accordance with Action #1, a high-performing transit system could be introduced along Main Street. Second, the City could enhance the overall visual image of Main Street through a comprehensive streetscaping initiative that goes beyond incremental façade improvements and improves the street’s lighting, pavement, curbs, landscaping, transit infrastructure, and bike infrastructure. Third, the City could prioritize the rehabilitation of distressed and vacant buildings through the introduction of a new redevelopment entity such as a land bank or a community development corporation.

Concept #5: Convert Vacant Lots into Transit-Oriented Housing

The City of Poughkeepsie in partnership with Dutchess County could develop a long-term strategy for converting the surface parking lots in the City Center into transit-oriented housing development that coincides with the installation of a high quality transit service along Main Street. Given the large expanse of land, it is possible for the City to undertake redevelopment at a fairly large scale in which a new mixed-income and multi-family housing is carefully coordinated with interior open spaces and pedestrian connections to the Main Street. The developments should be constructed to exploit the area’s proximity to the rail station and the potential to capture residents’ retail needs through walk trips to the Main Street Corridor.