

Meeting Details

From: Mike Madigan
Subject: Grand Island West River Bike Path Project Plan Options Review
Date: Friday August 5, 2016
Participants: Michael Madigan – Grand island Town Council
Mark W. Thomas – Director WNY District Parks
Angela P. Berti – Public Affairs and Marketing NY Parks

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Meeting Notes

- Meeting started by thanking the NYS Representatives for making time for the requested meeting.
- Reviewed the letter submitted to NYS stating GI Town Board rejected one of the three options (Option 3) proposed for the bike path in a 3:2 vote on Aug 01-2016.
 - It was confirmed by the NYS Representatives that it was understood that only one of the three options had been rejected.
 - It was confirmed, as stated in the letter received, that the GI Town Board continues to be fully committed to the bike path project.
 - It was confirmed by the NYS Representatives that they remained fully committed to proceeding with the project.
- Mark Thomas reviewed past project history:
 - In July 2013 the GI Town Board voted on a plan that involved a path located between the Parkway and river.
 - The October 2015 public comment meeting focused primarily on a preferred plan involving a path located between the Parkway and river consistent with what was voted on in 2013.
 - In the October meeting guard rails became a serious issue. Guard rails, it was suggested, were required for the entire trail. Guard rails were very unpopular with West River residents.
 - Guard rails were included in the costing for options 1 and 2 and drove the price of these two options up significantly when compared to option 3.
 - Mark Thomas indicated that it was primarily the guard rail cost, the resident feedback against the guard rails in options 1 and 2 and communication received multiple times in 2016 from the Town Supervisor that the Grand Island Town Board fully supported Option 3 and the Parkway closure that led the NY Parks to identify Option 3 as the preferred option.
 - It was acknowledged that the recent identification that the Town Board majority had not approved and does not support the Parkway closure was a serious error that should be corrected and similar communication errors must be prevented going forwards.
 - **Action:** It was agreed that communication of critical questions and decisions and actions involving input from

Comment [BA(1): Parks did not say it was a serious error. Mark Thomas informed Mr. Madigan of the policy that Parks works with the Chief Elected Officer of a municipality with the expectation that they share with their boards and councils. Mark Thomas acknowledged that moving forward, information would also be shared with the Town Board at Mr. Madigan's request.

Grand Island Town Government would be directed to the town board e-mail for the duration of the project to prevent similar errors in the future (TownBoard@grand-island.ny.us)

- Mike Madigan requested that for Grand Island Town public records purposes that a complete copy of all public feedback be provided from NYS from the most recent public comment period.
 - **Action:** Mark Thomas to provide the original copies/e-mails etc. for all public comments received year to date generated as part of the public comment request on this project for 2016.
- Mike Madigan asked if the following was true in regards to Options 1 & 2 and the guard rail requirement and Mark Thomas said yes these statements were true:
 - That there are millions of miles of bike paths in NYS, if not tens of millions, with no guard rails along 55 MPH roads (there are as well stretches w/guard rails as well but most are without).
 - That many or most of these same paths are on the shoulder of the road - much closer than our proposed path.
 - That many of these same bike paths are located on roads with hills and curves – hazards that do not exist on our path.
 - That many or a majority of these same bike paths have bike traffic and motor vehicle traffic that far exceeds, by many folds, the traffic of both bikes and motor vehicles that would exist on our path and Parkway (our path would be very low risk when compared to a majority of the 55 MPH road paths).
- Mike Madigan asked if it was typical to require the entire length of a bike path to have a guard rail or some other form of traffic barrier between the bikes and cars whether along a 55 or 45 MPH road.
 - Mark Thomas ~~confirmed it was not typical and was in fact rare~~ reiterated the discussion on the post Scajaguada construction of paths.
 - Mike Madigan asked, based on the terrain and risk involved, whether there was a good case to require guard rails along the entire length of our path.
 - Mark Thomas indicated ~~that he would inquire there may not be a strong case but that this decision was not his to make. He would have to determine~~ whether Option 1 and 2 could be approved without guard rails in low risk areas (flat straightaways)
 - **Action:** Mike Madigan requested the cost estimate that was used in options 1 and 2 for the eight miles of guard rails so that these two options could be reviewed without these costs. Mark Thomas agreed to provide.
 - **Action:** Mike Madigan will propose to the Grand Island Town board that we request NY Parks to price Options 1 and 2 without guard rails (Mark Thomas indicated such a request would need to come from the GI Board).
- Mike Madigan expressed concern regarding the traffic data assessments. He was concerned with the following:
 - The new path has the potential to generate significant increased traffic.

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Comment [BA(2)]: editorial

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Comment [BA(3)]: This entire conversation in yellow was predicated by Mr. Thomas on the fact that in the past, it is likely that paths could function along side high speed roadways. Mr. Thomas informed Mr. Madigan that after the tragic accident on the Scajaguada Expressway, it is highly unlikely that a new path would ever be built next to a high speed road without guardrails. The discussion of this project began before the accident. And now on the other side of the accident the mindset of bike paths next to roadways has changed.

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- Option 3 would result in all this incremental traffic being concentrated on the residential road.
 - A highly successful project could result in significant disruption for the service road residents' safety, noise and air quality wise.
 - A highly successful project could result in a significant increase in risks of pedestrian-car accidents and motor vehicle accidents in this area – especially for young children.
- Mike Madigan expressed concern regarding the traffic data. He was concerned with the following:
 - Who performed study – was it the DOT?
 - **Action:** Mark Thomas to verify who performed traffic study.
 - Whether these were true peak traffic periods and risk periods. Much traffic travels between 5-8AM and this data was omitted. Between 5-8 AM most work traffic occurs- especially for those leaving their residents going to work.
 - **Action:** Mark Thomas to provide raw data set so full 24 hour traffic pattern can be reviewed.
 - The time of year data was collected (it was not collected in Summer – peak use period). Mike asked if an additional study could be done to check M-F traffic in August 2016.
 - **Action:** Mark Thomas will inquire about an request additional study.
- Mike Madigan asked the following questions:
 - Does any of the three options transfer any maintenance costs to the Town of Grand Island? Mark Thomas – No
 - Will the state have a detailed maintenance plan for whatever option is selected including mowing and surface maintenance plan. Mark Thomas – Yes
 - Has a final plan been settled on and if not what is the plan for when it will be finalized?
 - A Final plan has not been settled on- options are still open. The current plan is:
 - End of Fall- Plan finalized/approved
 - Final design/engineering Spring 2017
 - Bid Summer of 2017
 - Construction start Fall 2017
 - Project complete 2018
 - Is there any revenue generating ideas that have been discussed associated with this project either directly or indirectly. Examples: Concession stands? Mark Thomas – absolutely none either short term or long term.
 - Is there any impact to the duck blinds currently located along the planned path (~~ground cover, access by motor vehicle~~, number of blinds or any other changes)? Mark Thomas – ~~No~~ no impact there will be the same number of blinds and Parks ~~he~~ is working with/meeting with hunters to address their concerns.
- Mike Madigan asked about current docks – are there any risks associated with the current dock use by home owners?
 - Mark Thomas communicated:
 - There are no current plans regarding permanent-permitted docks currently in use

- ~~The seasonal docks will likely no longer be permitted~~
 - Driving in any manner out to dock area on parkland would result in ticket (he indicated that should be the case currently as well)
- Mike Madigan asked if there are any other changes?
 - Mark Thomas communicated:
 - If Option 3 is the plan that is progressed that the DOT, the current managers of the Parkway area, would relinquish maintenance of the West River Parkway as it would no longer be a road. NYS Parks would pick up that responsibility. ign control over to NY Parks once the project is completed.
 - Options 1 and 2 would leave the Parkway under DOT management control.
- Mike Madigan asked if the GI Board's rejection of Option three would impact the decision regarding which option would be progressed.
 - ~~Mark Thomas said it would make it much more difficult to progress with Option three but that option three may still be progressed.~~
 - Mike Madigan asked if the Board continued to reject Option three but Approved Option 1 or 2 would that have any greater influence on the state in terms of option 3 being progressed.
 - Mark Thomas indicated that would make it very difficult to progress the town rejected Option three plan rather than progressing with the town approved option.
- It was suggested that the Grand Island Town Board may want to hold an open public meeting (Workshop meeting) with NYS Parks to discuss current project timeline and next steps (ideally on 15-August workshop at 6PM).
 - **Action:** Mark Thomas to confirm if a meeting on the 15th at 6PM is possible and if not will suggest alternate dates and times- preferably at or after 6PM Monday-Thursday.
- Mike Madigan requested a follow-up NYS Parks public meeting to review public comments received, project plan status and possibly a Q&A session. Mark Thomas committed to look into scheduling.

Comment [BA(4): Not sure what this means. Mr. Thomas indicated that he would not comment on docks that are installed illegally.

Comment [BA(5): Mr. Thomas indicated that Town approval is not required but desired.

Comment [BA(6): Mr. Thomas is unable to attend on August 15. We will advise of other potential dates if approved.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Status
Direct critical questions and decisions requiring Grand island Town government input to: TownBoard@grand-island.ny.us to prevent communication errors.	Mark Thomas	08-Aug-2016	In effect throughout remainder of project
Coordinate scheduling of Grand island Town workshop meeting with NYS Parks	Mike Madigan/Mark Thomas	15-Aug-2016	Open

Provide cost estimate for both option 1 and 2 for the guard rails (what is the cost associated with these rails)	Mark Thomas	10-Aug-2016	Open
Mike Madigan will propose to the Grand Island Town board that we approve a request that NY Parks price Options 1 and 2 without guard rails (Mark Thomas indicated such a request would need to come from the GI Board).	Mike Madigan	15-Aug-2016	Open
Verify who (what company/NYS Department) conducted Parkway traffic study.	Mark Thomas	10-Aug-2016	Open
Provide entire raw data set from the traffic study so 24 hour data can be reviewed	Mark Thomas	10-Aug-2016	Open
Request additional traffic study to be conducted M-F in August 2016	Mark Thomas	30-Aug-2016	Open
Provide the original copies/e-mails etc. for all public comments received year to date generated as part of the public comment request on this project for 2016.	Mark Thomas	10-Aug-2016	Open
Coordinate scheduling a NYS Public meeting to review comments/feedback and overall project plan that is being progressed	Mark Thomas	20-Sept-2016	open

Comment [BA(7)]: Working on this

Comment [BA(8)]: We have a request in to DOT

Comment [BA(9)]: Can send along but also available at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/tdv>

Comment [BA(10)]: Our consultants have asked for clarification. Do you want a new study or more counts?

Comment [BA(11)]: Working to get together