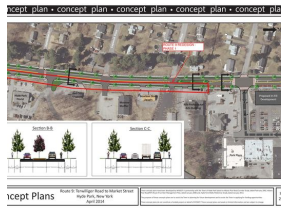


# Taxes at Work: Hyde Park wants a walkable Route 9



Roberto Cruz, Poughkeepsie Journal 11:31 p.m. EDT May 30, 2014



HYDE PARK – By leveraging a \$100,000 grant award obtained last year, town officials hope to secure federal funds to make a half-mile stretch on the east side of Route 9 more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

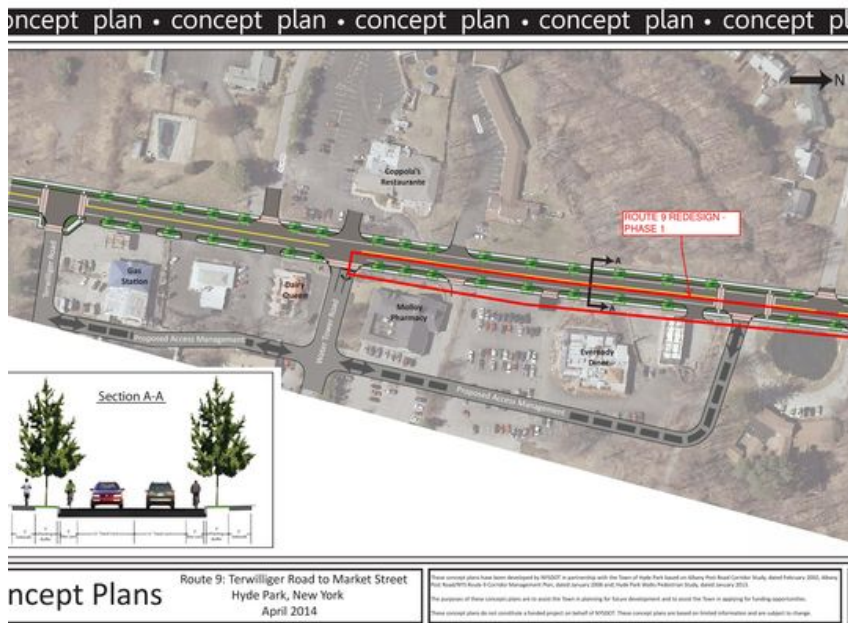
The town is applying for a slice of the \$50 million in federal funds available through the Transportation Alternatives Program. If successful, the town would be able to fund the first phase of a plan to revamp pedestrian and bicycle transportation along Route 9. The plan was developed in conjunction with the state Department of Transportation.

(Photo: Courtesy of the Town of Hyde Park)

"We're a historic town and people wonder where the main street is," Town Supervisor Aileen Rohr said. "If these are the cues people use to believe they are in a town, these are the infrastructures we must provide our

businesses."

The first phase of the proposed project includes narrowing the east-side shoulder of Route 9 from Park Plaza to Water Tower Road, to insert a bicycle lane. For pedestrians, new Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant sidewalks would be built, with grass space between the road and the sidewalk to give walkers enough space.



An illustration of a concept plan to construct new sidewalks and a bicycle lane on the east side of Route 9 in Hyde Park. The project was developed by the state Department of Transportation, in conjunction with town officials. To see a video report for this story, visit [www.PoughkeepsieJournal.com](http://www.PoughkeepsieJournal.com). (Photo: Courtesy of the Town of Hyde Park)

Applicants can receive funding for up to 80 percent of project costs from the state. Hyde Park officials plan to use a \$100,000 grant obtained by Sen. Terry Gipson, D-Rhinebeck, through the New York state Economic Development Assistance Program, and apply for a \$60,000 state grant to get \$640,000 through the Transportation Alternatives Program, town officials said.

The concept plan for the project was developed by the state Department of Transportation based on three Hyde Park transportation studies over the past 12 years.

One goal for the project is to make the town more walkable, to help tourists and residents on the west side of Route 9 access nearby businesses on foot, town officials said.

Lifelong Hyde Park resident Al Kaehler said he supports projects that improve living conditions in the town.

"Any outside money that comes in is a good thing for any town, but especially Hyde Park," Kaehler said.

The town could benefit from the project if new businesses open, he said. He said he would like to see the town loosen regulations, if possible, to help fill in some of the vacant commercial space.

The original intent of the \$100,000 grant, administered by the state Dormitory Authority, was to fund a commercial sewer district engineering report, as well as upgrades to the streets in the business district, according to town officials.

But the engineering report was shelved, due to specific parameters of the grant that did not allow for the funding of a report, Rohr said. The town plans to seek other grants to fund the study, she said.

With a commercial sewer system temporarily out of play, Dot Chenevert, owner of The Studio at Tilley Hall and a Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce board member, said a more walkable Hyde Park is a palatable option.

"The most important thing we can do is attract more business," Chenevert said.

The Town Board plans to discuss the proposed Transportation Alternatives Program application at a workshop at Town Hall on Monday. Applications are due by June 11, according to the state.

If the town does not receive Transportation Alternatives Program funds, the town would instead use the \$100,000 grant to expand existing pedestrian-level lighting from Main Street to Harvey Street and to create a bus shelter on the corner of Town Hall property, Rohr said.

The Federal Highway Administration provides the \$50 million in TAP funding, which is administered by the state Department of Transportation, according to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office.

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## VIDEO

To see a video report for this story, visit [www.PoughkeepsieJournal.com](http://www.PoughkeepsieJournal.com) (<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/>)

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