Background

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is preparing to reconstruct the US Route 62 from NY Route 75 (Lake Street) to Legion Drive (CR134) and NY Route 391, Buffalo Street to East Village Line in the Village of Hamburg. These routes traverse through the heart of the Village of Hamburg in the Town of Hamburg. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) selected Clough, Harbour & Associates as the consultant for the Preliminary through Final (Phase I-VI) Design of this project.

Design Report / Environmental Assessment

In 1969, Federal law created the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The law establishes a process that strives for a balanced approach to transportation decision-making. The process takes into account the potential impacts on the human and natural resources and the public's need for safe and efficient transportation improvements. NYSDOT embraces NEPA requirements in their Environmental Action Plan. In keeping with these policies, a draft Design Report / Environmental Assessment was developed that describes the existing conditions, project needs, social, economic and environmental considerations, and project alternatives. The project is being processed in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

Development of alternatives

The Design Report / Environmental Assessment examines the options of maintaining the existing roadway, rehabilitating the existing roadway, or reconstructing the existing roadway and concludes that reconstruction is the only feasible pavement treatment. This alternative includes full depth pavement reconstruction, with a closed drainage system, curbs, and sidewalks. Features proposed vary by roadway section and are detailed in the report and Appendix A, Typical Sections, Plans & Profiles.

Request for additional alternative

On January 15 and 22, 2002, Public Information Meetings were held at the Hamburg Middle School. At those meetings, NYSDOT and consultant representatives were available to discuss the project and answer questions. In addition, 3 meetings have been held with Village officials to both present project plans and gather information. After reviewing the proposed alternatives and attending a presentation on transportation options conducted by Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. representatives of the Village asked NYSDOT to develop an additional alternative. NYSDOT, sensitive to concerns raised about vehicle speeds, potential roadway widening
and loss of on-street parking in retail areas, agreed to fund additional public input and development of an additional project alternative based on the community input, which is referred to as the “community design alternative” in this report.

**Charrette**

The method selected to obtain additional public input and develop the community design alternative was a charrette. A charrette provides several opportunities for participants to express their concerns, learn about options, and work together to develop design solutions. The NYSDOT, through their design consultant Clough Harbour & Associates, retained Walkable Communities, specialists in livable communities charrettes, to conduct the three-day event. The charrette process and outcomes are summarized in the following pages.

The format provided numerous opportunities for public involvement to define the issues and explore solutions. Staff from NYSDOT, Clough Harbour & Associates, and Walkable Communities worked with the participants throughout the event. The process culminated in the development of an additional alternative to be considered under the NEPA process. Public input also resulted in the development of community planning recommendations that complement the Route 62 design, but will be implemented by the Village. Those options are presented in this report, but not included in the Route 62 project alternative.

**Outreach**

NYSDOT provided funding for a community based outreach effort. A grassroots organization referred to as the “Route 62 Committee” worked with Village Trustee Paul Gaughan to market the charrette event and encourage community-wide participation. Their efforts included numerous articles in the local media, banners and posters in prominent locations, and electronic signs on Route 62 and on Route 75, Lake Street to invite everyone to attend the events. Organizers estimated that 300 people participated in one or more of the events.

*Grassroots organizers worked to ensure that everyone who drove, walked, or bicycled in the Village would know about the charrette event.*
Activities

The charrette was conducted from Thursday, April 4 through Saturday, April 6, with a follow-up presentation on April 17, 2002. A summary of the events and outcomes follows, with details provided in the appendix.

Kick off

The charrette was preceded on April 3, 2002, by a community-sponsored reception for representatives of Clough, Harbour & Associates, Walkable Communities, and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The purpose of the kickoff was to allow informal meeting between the community and the people who would be working with them to develop the alternative.

Focus groups

On Thursday and Friday, groups of stakeholders were interviewed by Walkable Communities Director Dan Burden. He explained to the groups that the team was there to listen to them and help incorporate their needs into the project design. Highlights of the groups and their primary issues follow, with detailed minutes provided in the appendix.

Senior Citizens

- Make it easier to cross streets;
- Provide smooth surface sidewalks with benches for resting;
- Provide more walkable destinations;
- Remove parking (to improve visibility).

School Administrator

- Make it safer for students to cross streets;
- Buses have trouble at the Legion and Rte 62 intersection;
- Improve intersection of Legion and Division (potential project detour).

Local Businesses

- Preserve or increase on-street parking;
- Improve safety: concerned about big trucks, people crossing streets, people entering and exiting parking areas, and the number of accidents;
- Minimize business disruptions, especially during Christmas;
- Improve aesthetics: replace heaving pavers, improve building facades, plant trees;
- Accommodate truck deliveries;

Public Service Providers (snowplow drivers, police, public works, transit operator)

- Preserve emergency and service vehicle access;
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety;

Focus groups gave people an opportunity to explain their concerns regarding the roadway project.
• Snow removal and maintenance;
• Facilitate stopping and re-entry for buses;
• Better bus stop locations needed where there is no parking or standing;
• Bump outs at intersections hard for buses with rear door wheelchair lifts and for snow removal;
• Provide shelters, lighting, ADA access, snow removal and bike racks at transit stops;
• Improve crosswalks.

Schools and Community Groups

• Improve pedestrian crossings;
• Provide for bicyclists;
• Beautify, provide benches, support businesses;
• Poor visibility and few gaps for cars entering traffic stream.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

• More walkable; easier street crossings;
• Improve appearance: trees, facades;
• Slow traffic;
• Don’t sacrifice the Village to drivers;
• Diversify businesses; more places to walk to;
• Encourage proper bicycling and provide space.

Community Workshop

On Thursday, April 4, 2002, approximately 150 people attended the evening workshop at Union Pleasant Elementary School. Activities included visioning exercises, defining values, and establishing priorities. Participants also viewed a presentation by Dan Burden that featured images of Hamburg and other communities. Some images depicted possible solutions for concerns and needs in the Hamburg community, such as curb extensions to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and improve sight lines for drivers.
Values and Priorities
From the exercises a picture of the participants’ top concerns and needs was developed. They emphasized their desire to live in a friendly, attractive village. They asked for slower traffic, more walkable spaces, and a restoration of the commercial core and character of the Village. They wanted to preserve historical sites and have greater access to their downtown nature area, 18 Mile Creek. Residents also described the Village of Hamburg as they would like to see it if they returned in twenty years. Samples of their writings follow:

• “In 20 years, Hamburg should still be a village, with all the services and merchants within a walkable distance from residential areas, storefronts will fit into a unified whole, within a landscaped and planned business area.”

• “Hamburg should be a quiet community, not just a drive through for those living in Eden, Boston, and Orchard Park; a place where kids can play and ride bikes in the street without being hit by a speeding car; a village with lots of green places; a place with a library, schools, churches, stores easily accessible.”


• “A showplace – some place that people want to visit; places to eat, visitor places to see, friendly places to purchase.”

• “Hamburg will be an attractive, energized, community and a destination for many western New Yorkers.”

• “A true village with most services within walking distance.”

When asked what would prevent the Village from becoming what participants envision in the future, they wrote comments such as:

• Money/negativity
• Lack of consciousness
• Aims too low
• Regulations
• Naysayers
• Outside business control
• Apathy
• Lack of volunteerism
• Traffic congestion – too many vehicles

Several people wrote that there was no reason their vision couldn’t be achieved.
**Field Trip**

On Saturday approximately 100 people walked in 3 different groups to sites in the project area. At various sites the groups stopped to discuss specific issues. For example, they pointed out that traffic backs up from the intersection of Evans and Pierce into the Lake and Main intersection. Data shows that the Lake and Main intersection is functioning at a level of service “C.”

**Participant Reports**

When the groups returned to the Union Pleasant Elementary School way they shared concerns and ideas for improvements. The walkers noted that current facilities for people with visual impairments or limited mobility were not adequate. They reported that traffic speeds were too high and that there are few places for children to play, bicycle, or safely cross streets. They discussed street features such as pedestrian signals, the lack of resting places, sidewalk maintenance, inadequate lighting, and the numerous wide driveways. Many of their observations paralleled the concerns express during the Community Workshop and those cited in the Draft Design Report / Environmental Assessment.

They reported they had explored the use of roundabouts, medians in the center of the street, and gateway entrances at numerous sites during their outing. One participant used aerial photos to give an impromptu presentation about the potential for roundabouts to address traffic issues at Legion Drive and Clark Streets. They presented creative ideas to bring life to the downtown, such as a natural amphitheater at 18 Mile Creek and facade improvements.
Technical Presentations

Following the field trip reports, participants assembled in the audito-
rium to listen to and question the experts regarding the possible
design features for the Route 62 project.

The event began with a presentation on Context Sensitive Solutions
by Kimberly Richardson, landscape architect for NYSDOT. She
explained that the community has many options from which to
select the aesthetic features of the upcoming project. She showed
several slides of before and after streetscape efforts on other
NYSDOT projects. She brought with her a number of sample
materials for decorative sidewalk treatments.

Presentations by Dan Burden and Michael Wallwork, P.E. followed.
Topics were selected to help people consider possible solutions to
address the values, priorities, concerns and needs that had been
expressed earlier in the charrette. They included:

• Sidewalk and curb ramps: design considerations
• Curb extensions (bulb outs): impacts on crossing distance, visibility, and parking
• Parking: management, aesthetics, and space requirements
• Pedestrian crossings: refuge islands, markings, surfaces
• Bicycle lanes/marked shoulders
• Traffic calming and intersection controls, including roundabouts, and short medians
• Street furnishings and context
• Relationship of buildings, land use, and transportation
**Design Tables**

After a lunch break participants gathered around tables to discuss their concerns further and work with others to develop suggestions for features that would help them create the village they envisioned. They used plans to identify specific sites where they wanted roundabouts, curb extensions, improved crosswalks, and other features of the project and future development projects in the Village.

Many of the suggestions each group made were similar. Common suggestions included:

- Bike lanes or paths; bike racks
- Curb extensions
- Improvements to 18 Mile Creek area
- Roundabouts
- Trees; more public green space
- Lamps, lighting improvements
- Enhanced crosswalks; mid-block crosswalks
- Gateway entrances
- Bus stop improvements and/or relocations
- Better use of off-street parking lots
- Bury utilities
- Benches

Their suggestions are summarized and presented by location in the appendix.

Participants discussed their concerns and explored possibilities to develop their recommendations. While many ideas were similar, not everyone agreed. For example, one group wanted to eliminate on-street parking, while other groups wanted to provide it everywhere possible. In general, however, the groups achieved consensus on most issues.

Participant suggestions incorporated roadway elements discussed during the public workshop, the field trip, and the training presentations. Many roundabouts, curb extensions, and other treatments discussed during the charrette appeared on the citizens’ maps.
Children’s Input

About 25 Village children between the ages of 3 and 17 gathered to share their vision for the Village of Hamburg. They saw images of places that children might like to have in their community and talked about the purpose of communities. The children created drawings of a main street they would like to have in Hamburg. When they presented and explained their drawings to the adults, every child stated their preference for walking to school over other modes of transportation. More detail is provided in the appendix.

Young Adult Input

Two local youths who had gone on the field trip prepared a Power Point presentation to express their ideas for the Village. They did not have time to present their work, but their concerns about alleys, bike racks, crosswalk markings and other issues contributed to the community design alternative. A printed handout of their presentation is included in the Appendix.

Buffalo Street Festival

Despite the cool, cloudy day, participants were in the mood to celebrate the sense of jubilance that resulted from working together with the designers to create new possibilities for their community. They gathered outside the school on decorated bicycles and with children in strollers to form a parade to the Buffalo Street Festival area on closed portions of Buffalo Street. Children romped in the jumping room in front of the toy store and adults munched on popcorn from the theater. Music was provided by the Creekbend band. Participants chatted about their renewed sense of community and their excitement over the possibilities that emerged during the process.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Children Want:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place for a kids’ mural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play area activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another swimming pool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretty stairs at the creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fountain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Places to hang out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Places to hear music</td>
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