Sam Schwartz Engineering, D.P.C.
322 Eighth Avenue, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10001
phone: (212) 598-9010
samschwartz.com

Sam Schwartz
Transportation Consultants

Draft Memorandum

To:	Paul Hesse, City of Poughkeepsie
From:	Sam Frommer, *Sam Schwartz*
Date:	May 3, 2017
Re:	Justification for Preferred Alternative (PCCCP)

INTRODUCTION

Sam Schwartz, in partnership with Street Plans Collaborative, has been working with the City of Poughkeepsie to create a complete streets plan for City Center to help create a safer and more enjoyable environment for people traveling by all modes and to foster economic development. Known as the Poughkeepsie City Center Connectivity Project (PCCCP), it is part of a long-term transportation planning initiative closely linked with the city's broader efforts to revitalize its downtown and promote transit-oriented economic development. The Justification for Preferred Alternative documents the selection of the preferred alternative scenario for downtown streets and circulation. Ten alternatives were presented to the public along with five priorities at the second public meeting on February 2, 2017. Each scenario option was scored by the project team in terms of how well they address and balance the five priorities, as well as their relative costs. Members of the public then had the opportunity to rank the priorities and select their favored alternatives. A preferred set alternative was selected based on the numerous outreach efforts (outlined below); conversations with SAC members, City and County employees, residents, local workers, students, and elected officials; an online survey; and the direct feedback from the second public meeting.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- **July 18, 2016:** Poughkeepsie City Center Connectivity Project Kick-Off
  - Begin establishing project goals and objectives.
- **August 12, 2016:** Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting #1
  - Discuss overall project goals and objectives, ideas for changes to City Center streets, and the goals of the demonstration project.
- **September 2, 2016:** "Mobile Office" Public Engagement
  - Engaged with more than 45 people on the street on how to make Market Street work better for everyone.
- **October 7, 2016:** Market Street Connect Demonstration Project (Public Workshop #1)
  - Test traffic calming strategies and reclaimed space for public programming using temporary materials. Market Street was reduced to two northbound moving lanes from three.
  - Two formal public outreach activities were organized to solicit feedback from local community members in addition to informal public engagement on the street.
  - More than 250 members of the local community provided feedback and comments, reflecting their various priorities and concerns.
  - An additional 84 residents provided feedback using mail-in postcards and an online survey.
- **December 20, 2016:** SAC Meeting #2
  - Ten alternatives and five evaluation criteria were developed based on the existing conditions, public feedback from outreach efforts, and the SAC.
  - Feedback from the SAC led to a refinement of the ten design alternatives and the

evaluation criteria. Several of the alternatives were combined into higher level circulation scenarios, resulting in four primary circulation scenarios (A through D) plus six additional options (E-J).

- **February 2, 2017:** Public Workshop #2
  - Present the refined scenarios and evaluation criteria through an interactive public meeting.
  - Qualitative and quantitative feedback from the general public was used to inform the selection of the final alternative.
- **Next Steps**
  - High level impact, cost, and funding analysis of the preferred alternative.
  - Presentation of the preferred alternative to the SAC (meeting #3).
  - Draft and Final Report.
  - Presentation of Final Report to Common Council.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the feedback received throughout the project – including SAC meetings, conversations during the public meetings and demonstrations project with the general public, conversations with City and County staff, and elected officials – and the professional opinion of the project team based on the area's existing conditions, the history of urban renewal in Poughkeepsie, and the trajectory of Hudson Valley towns, the preferred, long-term alternative for City Center streets is *Option D: Two-Way Streets for Downtown*. Throughout the project, a constant and consistent refrain from nearly all stakeholders has been that the future of the City's streets should help do undo some of the damage done by the construction of the arterial system and should be safe, promote walking, prioritize local trips and the local economy, and encourage investment in downtown. There was also a strong preference for re-introducing two-way travel to downtown streets.

Option D is ambitious in its scope and range, and would likely require years of planning, millions of dollars of investment, and the sustained support of NYSDOT and other local and state agencies. We propose that a phased approach be taken in the Final Report, focusing on the short-term improvements that could be made and speaking more qualitatively about the longer-term projects. Essentially, focus on what is implementable, what the city can control, what is relatively affordable, and what could be the greatest catalyst for future change. In other words, moving past the planning fatigue and recommending an option that can actually be built in the short term (1-3 years).

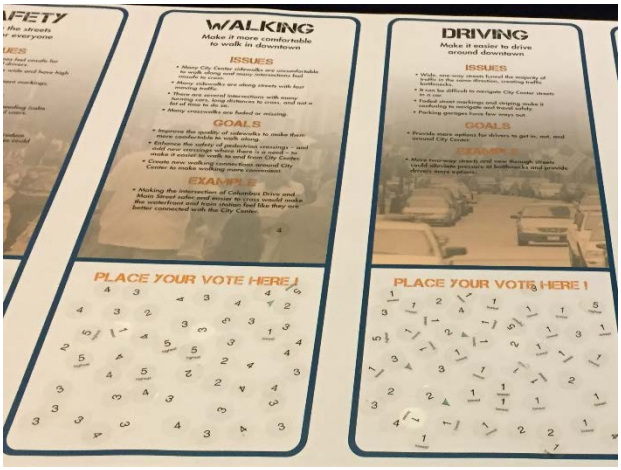
For these reasons, it is recommended that the impact analysis and implementation plan, which are the final deliverables for this project, be focused primarily on *Option B: Two-Way Market Street*. Option B is an essential component of Option D, but is much more achievable in the near-term. An in-depth analysis of a two-way Market Street could demonstrate that it could work from a traffic and cost perspective. Option D through Option J will be assessed at a high-level and can be included as components of the final plan. In the same way that the Poughkeepsie City Center Revitalization Plan laid the ground work for the PCCCP, the PCCCP lays the ground work for immediate and tangible improvements, and setting the stage for longer term planning efforts.

ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC MEETING #2

There were two primary activities at the second public meeting (held on February 2, 2017) in which participants could vote on their preferences.

1. *Priorities*: Participants were given five stickers with numbers 1 through 5 to place on each of the priorities to indicate which was the least (1) and most (5) important to them. The priorities were Safety, Walking, Driving, Bicycling, and Public Realm.
2. *Options*: Ten options were presented along with a relative cost. Participants were given 20 coins to "vote" for their preferred options. The total cost for all ten options was 32 coins, so participants had to choose how they wanted to spend their coins. Participants could vote for any option as many times as they wanted as long as they paid the "price" listed.

Figure 1: The priorities activity (left) and the options activity (right).



Priorities

55 people participated in the priority ranking activity. The results of the priorities activity are shown in Figure 2. It is clear that a majority of people made Driving their lowest priority, however it is more difficult to distill other trends.

Figure 2: Results of the priorities activity.

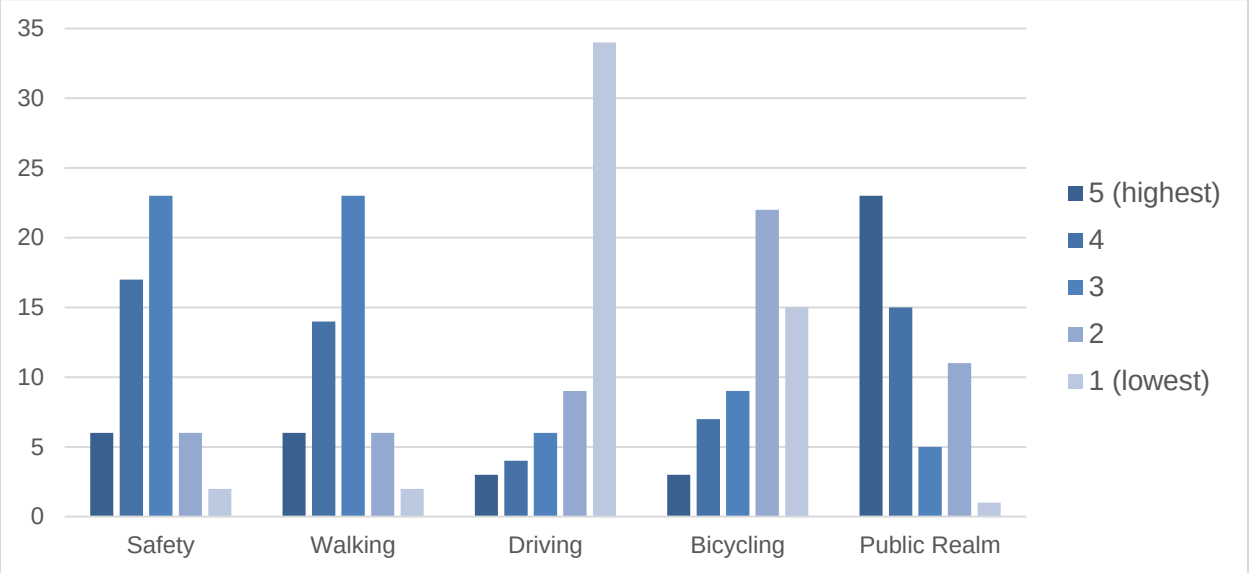
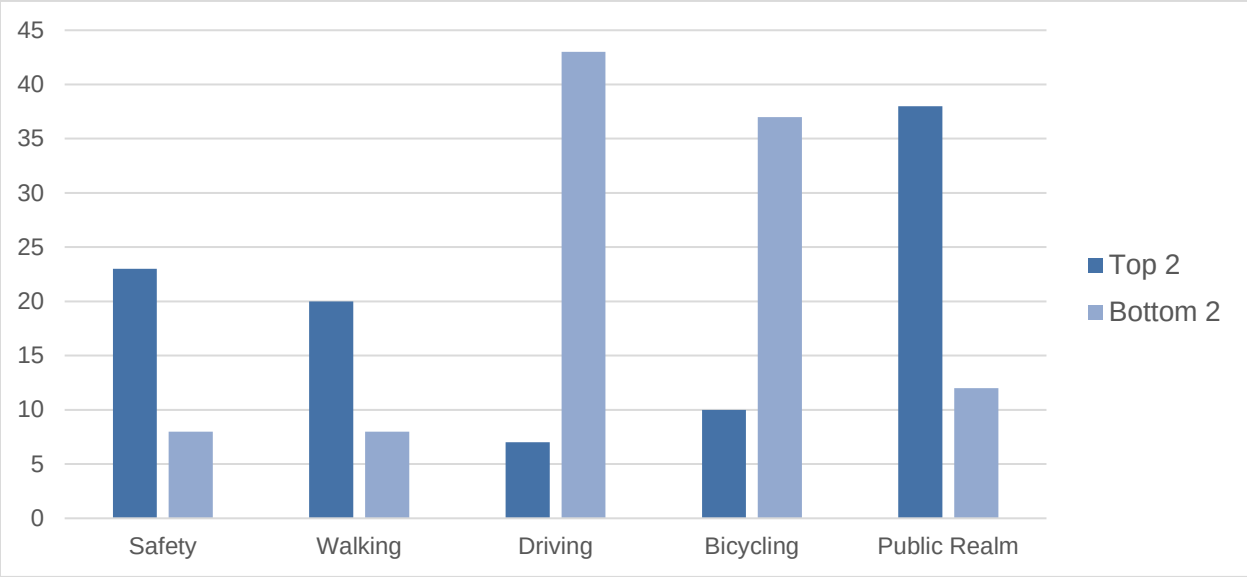


Figure 3 combines the number of times each priority got a vote of 1 and 2 (lowest) and of 4 and 5 (highest). This analysis makes clearer that the lowest priorities are Driving and Bicycling, while the highest priority is the Public Realm. Safety and Walking scored in the middle.

Figure 3: Results of the priorities activity, grouped by top (vote of 4 or 5) and bottom (vote of 1 or 2) two votes.



The weighted average for each priority is shown in Figure 4. The weighted average was calculated by summing the product of the rankings with the number of votes it received, and then dividing by the number of participants (55). The highest possible weighted score is 5, and the lowest is 1. Public Realm received the highest weighted score, and driving received the lowest.

Figure 4: Weighted average from the priority ranking activity.

Priority	Safety	Walking	Driving	Bicycling	Public Realm
Weighted Average	3.3	3.1	1.8	2.3	3.9

Based on the feedback from the second public meeting, Public Realm, Safety, and Walking were ranked as being relatively important priorities. Bicycling, and Driving in particular, were lower priorities for the people that participated in the activity.

Options

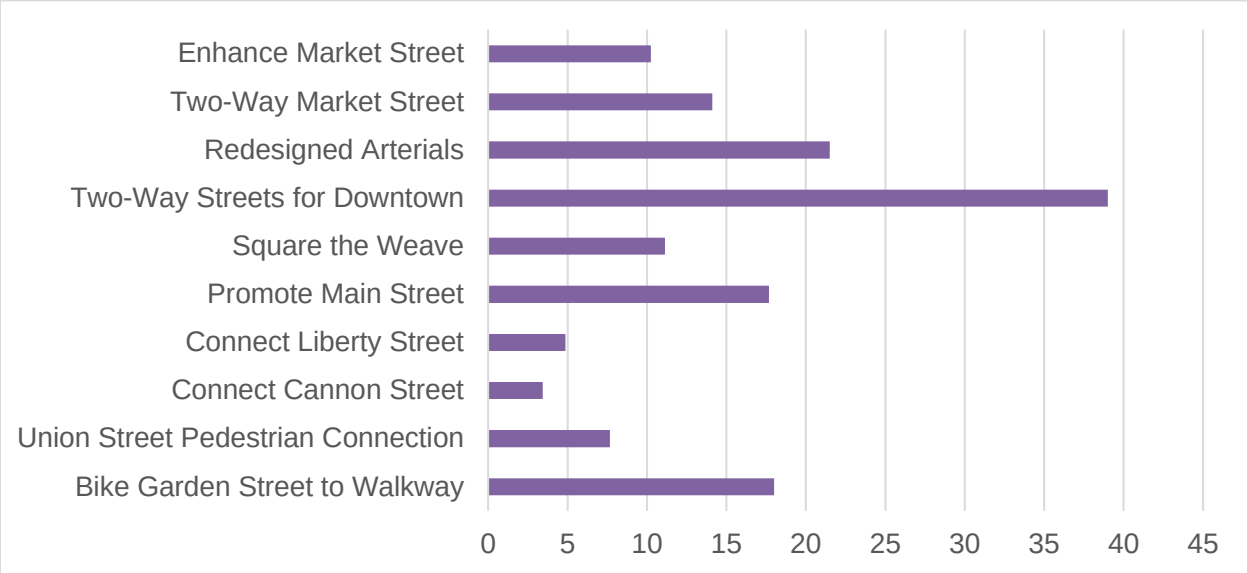
53 people participated in the options activity. The number of votes (shown in Figure 5) was calculated by dividing the total number of coins received by the cost. However, this does not necessarily reflect the true priorities of the participants since less "expensive" options (such as Option J) could receive votes more easily. To account for this, the number of votes were normalized to account for how expensive each option was (visualized in Figure 6). Option D received the highest normalized score, while the Option H received the lowest.

Figure 5: A summary of how participants voted with their coins.

Option		No. of Coins	Cost	Votes (coins/cost)	Cost Score*	Normalized
A	Enhance Market Street	82	2	41	4	10.3
B	Two-Way Market Street	127	3	42	3	14.1
C	Redesigned Arterials	172	4	43	2	21.5
D	Two-Way Streets for Downtown	195	5	39	1	39.0
E	Square the Weave	89	4	22	2	11.1
F	Promote Main Street	159	3	53	3	17.7
G	Connect Liberty Street	39	4	10	2	4.9
H	Connect Cannon Street	31	3	10	3	3.4
I	Union Street Pedestrian Connection	69	3	23	3	7.7
J	Bike Garden Street to Walkway	90	1	90	5	18.0

* Cost Score is the inverse of cost on the same 1-5 scale. This is used to normalize the number of votes to account for the fact that less costly items can be "bought" more easily.

Figure 6: Normalized number of votes for each option.



Another way to analyze the options is to compare the priorities of the participants (Figure 4) with the relative priority ranking assigned to each option (Figure 7). The sum of the product of the participant priorities with the rankings assigned gives the weighted sum of priorities. For example, Option A was assigned the following rankings for the priorities by the project team: 3, 4, 2, 3, 4. When those are multiplied by the weighted average of priorities based on the public input (Figure 4), you get the following:

$$3 * 3.3 + 4 * 3.1 + 2 * 1.8 + 3 * 2.3 + 4 * 3.9 = 48.4$$

The weighted sum of priorities is shown in the last column in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The relative ranking of each priority assigned to each option along with the weighted sum of priorities.

Option		Safety	Walking	Driving	Biking	Public Realm	Weighted Sum of Priorities
A	Enhance Market Street	3	4	2	3	4	48.4
B	Two-Way Market Street	3	4	2	2	4	46.0
C	Redesigned Arterials	5	3	1	3	4	50.0
D	Two-Way Streets for Downtown	4	5	3	3	5	60.4
E	Square the Weave	3	4	1	2	2	36.4
F	Promote Main Street	2	5	2	2	3	41.9
G	Connect Liberty Street	1	3	4	2	2	32.3
H	Connect Cannon Street	2	3	4	1	3	37.1
I	Union Street Pedestrian Connection	3	4	1	3	3	42.7
J	Bike Garden Street to Walkway	2	1	1	4	2	28.6

Option D received the highest weighted score, while Option J received the lowest. This is because Option D achieves so many of the project priorities, while Option J is mainly a bicycling improvement, which had a relatively low priority for the public.

Overall, the input received from the participants at the second public meeting support the selected preferred alternative.