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## Traffic and Safety in Dobbs Ferry

By: Larry Dengler, Trustee

Questions about Traffic and Safety often come up in Dobbs Ferry, along with questions about parking, and not just at the beginning of the school year. In a small place like Dobbs Ferry, or the not much bigger area of the Rivertowns, these questions should be answered in a larger context: All kinds of transportation and the impacts on local quality of life and on global climate change.

Transportation is not just cars. In Dobbs Ferry we are fortunate to have in our village also one of the best mass transit railroads, Metro North, an excellent county wide bus system and nearby air transportation. However, the most important factor in maintaining a real community life is to have a walkable village to start with.

What do we do about it? Transportation questions come to the Village Traffic Committee. This committee, all volunteers, continuously studies the circulation of traffic within the Village and advises the Mayor and Board of Trustees as to its improvement; advises the Mayor and Board of Trustees as to placement of traffic control devices, vehicular and pedestrian safety issues, and matters concerning the Metro North Railroad; advises the Mayor and Board of Trustees on all matters affecting streets and sidewalks; regularly hears public requests and comments on issues of vehicular and pedestrian safety and Metro North operations from Village residents and advises the Mayor and Board of Trustees as to the appropriate response.

The Traffic Committee has six (6) members, one of whom must be the Chief of Police or his/her representative, and one of whom must be the Village Metro North Liaison.

Although the Traffic Committee now works quite well, there are some changes that could improve the committee's work and its morale. High on the list is some formal coordination with the Village Planning Board and with the Village Department of Public Works.

Most people think of the Traffic Committee as the guys who put up all those stop signs. It's much more than that, and mostly the Committee reacts to requests for new stop signs by examining the request critically in view of NY State guidelines and often recommending against the request, unless it conforms to those guidelines.

In the past nine months, the Traffic Committee has studied these issues (list and comments follow) by going to the site, measuring the actual streets, walks, sightlines, etc., speaking with local residents and consulting with Village and Town workers. The Committee have then reported in detail and made recommendations to Village government, as appropriate.

Ashford Avenue Bridge Reconstruction. Members of the Committee met with local and State officials. When a traffic analysis, which the Village had requested, is complete, the project will be designed and the work will begin. The Village will be

contacted for input during the design process, at the following stages: when the process is 30% complete, 60% complete and 90 % complete. Actual construction will not start until 2010 at the earliest. The Traffic Committee is invited to accompany the Village Administrator to design phase meetings. Recommendation was made that Village Trustees hold a community meeting to inform the public about progress.

Lefurgy and Ashford Blind Spot. Drivers waiting to make a left turn from Lefurgy onto eastbound Ashford Avenue cannot see oncoming cars eastbound when a truck or van is parked facing west on Ashford Avenue close to the Lefurgy corner. The committee suggested that a no parking zone be designated here. There was a concern that parking spaces would be lost for the business district here, but the Police representative will check to see whether sight lines could be extended in some other way at this location. The committee also noted, generally, that it might be desirable to restrict parking at corners by vehicle height in downtown areas, for this reason.

Cedar and Main Streets and the lower end of Main Street. The Committee has studied these hazards and made recommendations for better crosswalks at both ends of Main Street, a “Pork chop” traffic island at lower Main, and other improvements. In this case the committee has done a lot of fieldwork, measuring, photographing, monitoring traffic and research of regulations, to support its recommendations. These recommendations are working their way through the Village staffing procedure.

Other Actions. The Committee has also addressed and solved such varying problems as Ogden Place and Ogden Avenue signage confusion, handicapped parking at the riverfront parking lot, community access gates, and traffic control signs needing replacement. The placement of walkways and crosswalks are considered for improvement and overall safety and utility.

The Committee also reviews traffic violations and incident data to identify and advise on possible trouble spots.

The Committee supports the Safe Walk to School program and is promoting development of sidewalks and pathways in the village so that children are encouraged to walk safely to school on a regular basis.

The Committee hopes to continue this kind of activity to contribute to the livability of the village and the sustainability of its life.