

Forest Home Infrastructure Planning Steering Committee

Meeting – September 11, 2025
2:00 pm - Ithaca Town Hall

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDING

- Town of Ithaca: Rod Howe, CJ Randall, Joe Slater, Dave O’Shea
- Cornell Univ: Susan Riley, Leslie Schill
- Forest Home Community Task Force: Robin Blakely-Armitage, Ari Lavine, Jennifer Loucks, Ruth Mahr

AGENDA

1. Paving project recap and upcoming work (including speed bump repairs).
2. Downstream bridge repairs (perhaps using TAP Funding, with the County as the applicant, per Fernando).
3. RFQ discussion (ideally led by CJ). First look at draft RFQ.
4. If time, perhaps also: FHD traffic/pedestrian safety at blind curve heading to MVR Hall.

NOTES

1. Paving project

Ari: Shared Forest Home’s appreciation of the Town’s work. Roads look and feel great from a vehicular perspective, and the signage/striping by the bridge is getting positive reviews.

Ruth: Echoed Ari’s appreciation for the repaving. But has noticed that the speed humps on JFR have been reduced to a ripple effect compared to what they were before. Has also noticed an uptick in pedestrian traffic related to the beginning of CU’s fall semester, and repeated concerns about pedestrian safety.

Joe: The Town ran into some issues with its paving contractor, resulting in the speed hump “ripple effect”. However, this fall, the Dept of Public Works is going to use its own crew to test a method for re-doing the speed humps. Test location is FHD near Flat Rocks.

Ari: Re-doing the speed humps remains an immediate priority for Forest Home, even though speed humps are also in our future vision of improvements to roads and road safety.

Joe: Pending the result of the FHD/Flat Rocks speed hump re-do, Town might consider re-doing additional speed humps starting spring 2026.

2. Downstream bridge

Dave: Bridge is safe—the Town has put a short-term patch on the problem spot on the truss. In 2026 the County will bring in a bridge consultant to evaluate condition. Full bridge rehab in the future (2027 and on) would depend on grant funding.

Ari: Asked about the possibility of using Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to fund bridge work.

Rod: TAP funding is changing. Tom Knight/ITCT (not present at meeting) will be applying for grants, and some funding could come from the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

3. Grant approval/RFQ

CJ: Has received verbal confirmation of partial grant approval from Park Foundation. Has shared a preliminary draft of RFQ, based on the grant application but wants to meet with Tom Knipe and revise further, before obtaining Steering Committee feedback.

Jennifer: Park funds only cover part of the budget for hiring a consultant for the initial planning phase. Where would the rest come from?

CJ: Is optimistic that the Town Board will authorize add'l \$125K required (over two years) from the Town budget.

Ari: Very pleased with this outcome, enthusiastic about initiating the planning phase.

CJ: Defined the term “active transportation” as non-motorized modes of transportation, i.e., walking/foot traffic, bicycling, etc.

4. Other safety issues

Ari and Ruth: Concerned about FHD traffic/pedestrian safety at blind curve heading to MVR Hall on campus, although they recognize that's in City limits. Have observed aggressive use of e-scooters/e-bikes on campus, and Leslie confirms.

Rod: Town acknowledges these safety issues.

Rod and Robin: Pedestrians often walk on the pavement on FHD along Beebe Lake to/from campus—where the road curves and visibility is poor—instead of using the pedestrian pathways. How to change unsafe pedestrian behavior?

Next meeting scheduled for October 16th, 1:30-2:30.

Submitted 12-30-2025

JLL