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The HIGHLANDS Current

SEPTEMBER 17, 2021

Shipping for a Small Planet

Schooner brings carbon-free shipping to the Hudson

By Brian PJ Cronin

Sam Merrett is the captain of the Apollonia, a 64-foot restored sailboat from the 1940s that last year began acting as a carbon-neutral shipping vessel, delivering goods up and down the Hudson River

powered only by wind. In advance of the ship's next voyage, Merrett spoke this week from his home outside of Hudson about seasonal shipping, healthy competition and why "good weather" means something different to a sailboat shipper than it does to people on terra firma. The Apollonia may make a stop in Garrison early next week.

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Capt. Sam Merrett (left) and Roman Horst, a crew member, aboard the Apollonia in the Highlands
Photo provided

Zoning Change Could Shape Marathon Site's Future

Would allow homes, offices, retail, parking on empty Kemble lot

By Michael Turton

A proposed zoning change could determine the future of the former Marathon Battery property, Cold Spring's last remaining, significant tract of

undeveloped, privately owned land. The classification of the nearly 12-acre field on Kemble Avenue, zoned Office-Light Industry, will change to Mixed Use as part of an ongoing update of the Village Code. That revision was one of many presented at a public hearing on Sept. 7, which considered four existing chapters of the code and one addition.

In addition to the property on Kemble, the eastern portion of the south side of

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Photo by Alexa Strudler

OPERATION Infrastructure

Congress is about to pass a \$1 trillion bill to fix roads, bridges, dams and water systems. What does it mean for the Highlands?

By Chip Rowe

Many parts of the Hudson Valley, New York and the U.S. need serious upgrades.

The Highlands have some trouble spots but overall seem to be in good shape. Mayors and highway and water superintendents are optimistic about the state of our roads, bridges, dams, drinking water and sewage systems.

After four years of stalemate with then-President Donald Trump, only recently has Congress advanced spending bills to address the problem of crumbling infrastructure. On Aug. 10, the Senate agreed, on a 69-30 vote, to send \$110 billion to the states over the next five years to fix aging

roads and bridges and \$55 billion for water infrastructure. The House is expected to vote on the proposal by the end of the month.

The Highlands still have challenges, and the money expected to flow from the U.S. Treasury to the states and then to counties and municipalities could have a substantial effect both on the condition of our shared resources and in creating jobs — although finding enough skilled workers to fill those jobs could be a problem that wasn't anticipated. It's another issue of many that may spiral out of the huge influx of cash.

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Infrastructure *(From page 1)*

The need for an infrastructure upgrade should not be a surprise. For years and decades, groups such as Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress and the American Society of Civil Engineers have been sounding the alarm, noting that the state of our shared resources is a reflection of the nation's economic vitality. Poor roads, bridges, dams and water systems make markets less efficient and life more expensive.

Every four years since 2001, the ASCE has compiled a report card on U.S. infrastructure. In their most recent, released this year, the engineers said they were hopeful, giving a grade of C-, an improvement over the D+ of 2017. It was the first time the grade had risen. By ASCE's calculation, there is a national "investment gap" in infrastructure of \$2.59 trillion, including \$1.2 trillion for roads, \$434 billion for water systems and \$81 billion for dams.

That's about the same gap — on a different scale — calculated nearly 10 years ago by New York Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli when he issued a report on the challenges facing local governments called *Growing Cracks in the Foundation*. He concluded that the rising costs of construction, fuel and asphalt were preventing many local projects from being completed and cited a study that projected local governments would need to spend \$3.9 billion annually on local roads and bridges and water and sewer systems. At the time, they were spending \$1.2 billion.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Democrat whose district includes the Highlands, sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. I asked him last week how the money will get from Washington, D.C., to our district.

"Typically what happens is that the federal dollars are funneled through the state Department of Transportation [DOT], according to the governor's priorities," he explained. "There are also funds [in the bill] for specific things, such as billions of dollars for commuter rail — Metro-North will do very well — and billions for water infrastructure.

"If you think about sewer and stormwater projects, those are important in communities with older infrastructure such as Beacon," he said. "There are [environmental] requirements around drinking water and stormwater runoff, and cities have trouble meeting it, so they get in situations where they are at odds with regulators but they don't have the resources to fix it."

The bill could also fund earmarks, or money set aside for specific uses such as a Philipstown highway garage, that governors can't divert, or a bill introduced by Maloney to fix thousands of



Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Democrat whose district includes the Highlands, at a news conference in May announced he had introduced six infrastructure bills (see right).

Photo provided

small community bridges across the country that are structurally deficient. "We have 1,700 of them in New York state alone," he said.

Given the gaps that the ASCE and others have identified in what is needed, and what this bill will provide, is it going to be enough? "I wouldn't get too hung up on that," Maloney said. "If you're spending what we're talking about in the bipartisan deal, you're talking about a significant increase in state DOT budgets, upward of 30 to 40 percent in some cases.

"That will allow the state to move further down the list of projects it has been holding off on because it has not had a guarantee of funding," he said. "One of the things that's so important about passing a five-year bill like this is that the state can issue contracts for a large number of projects next year and not have to wonder if the money will be there to finish them."

Asked what he thought of ASCE's most recent grade for New York infrastructure (C-), he said: "That sounds about right. We're not at the bottom but we're not where we should be.

"One of the great things about New York is that our parents and grandparents made big investments in infrastructure, and that has given us the growth and the economic power that defines the state," he said. "We need to continue those investments because so many were made 70 or 80 years ago and the useful life of those projects is ending. We can be an 'A' but we need to invest again."

In Dutchess, Marc Molinaro, a Republican who is midway through his third term as county executive, does not share Maloney's optimism about the infrastructure money expected to come out of Washington.

Molinaro says he fears that the billions

of dollars sent to New York will get tied up in Albany red tape and be distributed only to "shovel-ready" projects that may not address long-term needs.

That, he says, is what happened after President Barack Obama signed an \$831 billion infrastructure bill in 2009 and, to an extent, it's happening with American Rescue Plan funding distributed in response to the pandemic shutdown.

"I have seen every transportation bill that anyone has ever talked about in nearly 30 years, and this state squanders those resources and doesn't direct enough of the aid onto the ground," said Molinaro, who served in the state Assembly from 2007 to 2011 and ran for governor in 2018. "And I fear that that is going to be repeated.

"Historically, almost 80 percent of those federal dollars flow through Albany decision-making," he said. "We used to say that the state has this collar on Department of Transportation expenditures, and it's not going to let more than a few million dollars through that collar at any given time.

"Albany would tell us which [transportation projects] they want to move with. And if you're not ready to go, it's not happening," he said. "The last time we did this, we saw a great amount of guide rail enhancements, because those were the things you could move on quickly."

Although the word *infrastructure* can encompass many areas, including public buildings, schools, energy, levees, ports and parks, we will take a closer look at four. This week Jeff Simms focuses on roads and Leonard Sparks on bridges; next week Brian PJ Cronin tackles dams and Michael Turton water and wastewater.

Jeff Simms contributed reporting.

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Infrastructure Bills

In Newburgh in May, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney announced that he had introduced six bills intended for inclusion in the infrastructure legislation, including to:

- ▶ Fund repairs to New York's 1,757 structurally deficient bridges;
- ▶ Restore a lapsed 2012 program to provide \$325 million to communities across the country for scenic byways;
- ▶ Ban Chinese state-owned enterprises from receiving taxpayer funds for highway, transit or rail projects;
- ▶ Create an infrastructure bank to provide loans and bond guarantees for projects and make equity investments;
- ▶ Require the federal Department of Transportation to investigate any structural defects in the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge; and
- ▶ Create a grant program for utility companies to protect power lines against extreme weather.

What is Infrastructure?

The word infrastructure was first used in 19th-century France in the context of railroad planning. During World War II, NATO military planners adopted the term to signify any "fixed installations which were necessary for the effective deployment and operations of modern armed forces."

Adam Smith may have described infrastructure as "public goods" undersupplied by private markets; economists refer to roads, bridges, ports and water systems as part of the "nation's physical capital"; in the early days of the Republic the Whigs would have called for more public support for "internal improvements" like canals and turnpikes.

Today, President Obama might call for more investment in "nation-building at home." The term infrastructure, as we know it today, finally made its way into public discourse in the late 20th century when it replaced "public works" and is used to describe the physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads and power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

~From Infrastructure: An Investment in the Future, a 2016 report by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress

Bridging The Gap

Federal bill could boost funding for crossing work

By Leonard Sparks

For more than seven decades, the bridge on Sprout Brook Road in Garrison has been attacked by multiple foes.

The weight of personal and commercial vehicles, storms that are becoming more frequent and powerful because of climate change, the waters of Canopus Creek and time have corroded the 27-foot span's steel girders, eroded its concrete to expose rebar and eaten into the footings of the bridge's abutments.

Two years ago, in a report by TRIP, a research organization based in Washington, D.C., that focuses on transportation issues, the bridge was one of two in Putnam County and 25 in the Hudson Valley with the lowest ratings for the condition of their decks and supports. (The other is the Oscawana Lake Road crossing over Peekskill Hollow Creek in Putnam Valley, built in 1964, which the



The 86-year-old bridge carrying Sprout Brook Road in Philipstown over Canopus Creek is scheduled to be replaced at a cost of \$1.6 million.

Photo by L. Sparks



In 2019, the state spent \$2.2 million on repairs to the Indian Brook Bridge on Route 9D, which was a single lane for much of the summer.

File photo by Michael Turton

county said on Sept. 15 it planned to widen.)

The damage at Canopus Creek is so bad, that Putnam is in the process of completing a design for a new 28-foot replacement, with construction scheduled to finish by September 2023 at a cost of \$1.6 million.

The project highlights both the stresses on local bridges and the importance of state and federal funding to maintain, repair and sometimes replace structures that in some cases are more than a century old.

One of the Highlands' most-attractive features — a collection of water bodies

ranging from the Hudson River to small creeks and streams — requires bridges catering to an ever-growing variety of users, including residents, vacationers, trucks hauling merchandise and buses ferrying students and workers.

The region's network of crossings includes six bridges in Beacon and 14 in Philipstown, according to the state Department of Transportation. They range from the bridges carrying traffic on Route 9D and Churchill and East Main streets in Beacon over Fishkill Creek to multiple bridges and culverts in Philipstown

that traverse Clove Creek and the bridge on 9D spanning Indian Brook in Garrison.

More than half of the state's bridges are owned by local governments, and many are at least 70 years old.

The oldest bridge in Beacon, the one spanning Fishkill Creek on East Main Street, was built in 1911. The bridge carrying Horton Road over Clove Creek in Philipstown was built in 1925. Three other bridges in Beacon were built between 1915 and 1933, and nine of Philipstown's bridges were built in 1940 or earlier.

Besides the crossing on Sprout Brook Road, the only other local bridge rated in poor condition is the one in Cold Spring on Lunn Terrace, which is owned by Metro-North. The agency said this week it has no maintenance scheduled.

Under state law, bridges in New York must be inspected annually, and their condition is ranked on a scale that ranges from 0 (closed) to 9 (excellent). The bridge where Route 9D crosses Fishkill Creek in Beacon, built in 1933 and owned by the city, has a rating of 5, meaning it is in "fair" condition, according to the National Bridge Inventory, a database overseen by the Federal Highway Administration.

The condition of the span where 9D crosses Indian Brook in Garrison is also rated as fair, although the state spent \$2.2 million in the summer of 2019 to replace joints, add a drainage system, repair piers and abutments, seal the deck and pave its approaches. Still, the Federal Highway Administration has recommended the bridge be widened and its deck rehabilitated a cost of \$25.8 million. It also recommends spending \$11.6 million on the Route 9D crossing over Fishkill Creek in Beacon.

Carl Frisenda, the Philipstown highway superintendent, says that while he usually chooses one bridge each year to include in the budget for repairs, the town's bridges are in good shape.

The most recent major work was on the span on Horton Road over Clove Creek where the footings were being washed out and the stonework was crumbling. The steel undergirding also needed maintenance. And last week, a hole appeared in a 15-foot span on East Mountain Road North, just past the Beacon reservoir. Highway crews noticed the

(Continued on page 9)

A Bevy of Bridges & Culverts

BEACON	CROSSES...	OWNED BY	BUILT
East Main Street	Fishkill Creek	City	1911
Dennings Point Road	Metro-North RR	State	1915
Route 9D & Fishkill Creek	Fishkill Creek	City	1933
Churchill Street	Fishkill Creek	City	1979
Beekman Street	Metro-North RR	City	1991
9D & Metro-North Railroad	Metro-North RR	MNR	1998
COLD SPRING			
Lunn Terrace*	Metro-North RR	MNR	1930
PHILIPSTOWN			
Horton Road (0.4 miles east of Rte 9)	Clove Creek	Town	1925
3.4 miles south of Rtes 9D & 301	Foundry Brook	State	1929
2 miles south of Rtes 9D & 301	Indian Brook Road	State	1929
0.8 miles north of Rtes 9D & 403	Philipse Brook	State	1929
East Mountain Road North	Beacon Reservoir outlet	Town	1935
Sprout Brook Road* (3.7 miles northeast of Peekskill)	Canopus Creek	County	1935
0.7 miles east of Rtes 301 & 9	Clove Creek	State	1938
1 mile east of Rtes 301 & 9	Clove Creek	State	1938
3.6 miles north of Rtes 9 & 30*	Clove Creek	State	1940
East Mountain Road South	Clove Creek	County	1965
Old Albany Post Road (3 miles SE of Beacon)	Clove Creek	County	1984
Upper Garrison Street	Metro North RR	MNR	1990
3.5 Miles south of Rtes 9 & 301	Philipse Brook Road	State	2000
Mill Road (5 miles NE of Cold Spring)	Clove Creek	County	2017

Source: NYS Department of Transportation. * Rated "poor"

Bridging the Gap *(From page 8)*

hole before Tropical Depression Ida brought heavy rain to the area on Sept. 1 and 2, but the storm “opened it up,” said Frisenda.

“We’re going to have to patch that for now until we figure out what we’re dealing with,” he said.

While fixes and upkeep of the Bear Mountain and Newburgh-Beacon bridges are funded by tolls — the deck on the west-bound span of the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge is being replaced in a project scheduled for completion in July 2023 — counties and municipalities like Beacon and Philipstown have to rely on their own residents and whatever state and federal funds they can secure. Putnam is underwriting the design and construction costs for the Sprout Brook Road bridge with \$1.5 million it received through BridgeNY, a state program created in 2016 to fund bridge and culvert repairs. Philipstown mostly pays for bridge work using town funds, said Frisenda.

“There’s stuff that I would like to do, but it’s a limited budget,” he said.

Those budget constraints affect every municipality in the Hudson Valley, where 13 percent of the 2,251 bridges that are 20 feet or longer are in poor shape, with significant deterioration of the decks, supports

or other major components, according to a 2019 assessment by TRIP.

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association, using federal data, estimates repairs totaling \$3.2 billion are needed on 1,676 bridges in the 18th Congressional District, which includes the Highlands. Of those, 194 are “structurally deficient,” according to the association.

BridgeNY’s third round of funding, announced in January, has \$150 million available for local bridges, or \$50 million less than in 2018. The infrastructure money expected to come from Washington could close the gap. The \$1 trillion bill passed by the U.S. Senate on Aug. 10 that awaits action in the House includes \$1.5 billion for bridge repairs in New York state. More than half the funding, \$550 billion, is new money, including \$40 billion for replacement, repair and rehab.

Most bridges were designed to last 50 years, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. Funding shortages mean many local governments cannot afford preventative maintenance to extend the life of a bridge and prevent major work, said Bruce Geiger, state governmental affairs representative for the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association.

“Once you start falling behind, it gets hard to catch up,” he said. “That’s when

you start posting bridges [to limit capacity] and closing bridges. In most cases, they’re either way past their useful life or they were built so long ago they didn’t have the kind of traffic that they do now.”

Although BridgeNY has awarded \$450 million to 179 bridge and 118 culvert projects since 2016, and is an “important source of work,” only 36.6 percent of requests for bridge money and 13.4 percent for culverts were approved, said Geiger.

The state also distributes money for bridges through its Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement (CHIPS) and Extreme Winter Recovery (EWR) programs.

Each municipality gets funding from the CHIPS program under a formula, Geiger explained. The program is flexible, allowing money to be spent on roads, bridges, culverts or equipment, he said. Municipalities spend the money and apply for reimbursement.

The state budget passed by lawmakers in April was “particularly good” for local road and bridge funding, said Geiger. It increased funding for CHIPS by \$100 million to \$538 million and for the EWR program by \$35 million, to \$100 million.

“Things are getting better; we’re hoping that we continue that level of funding, and that level of commitment, going forward,” he said.

How Do We Pay for It?

That’s a good question and was the sticking point in many of the discussions between then-President Trump and Democrats in Congress.

In 2018, Trump proposed \$200 billion in federal funding paired with \$1.5 trillion in private investment and hinted at tolls on all federal highways, which didn’t go over well with the fleet industry. Public-private partnerships are attractive because they require less taxpayer money but carry the risk of “abdicating control of public property to private interests,” notes civil engineer Henry Petroski in his book, *The Road Taken: The History and Future of America’s Infrastructure*.

One relatively simple measure would be to raise the federal gas tax, which has been 18.4 cents per gallon since 1993, but many elected officials are reluctant to do that. It funds highway repairs but has suffered because hybrid and electric vehicle owners don’t pay as much or any of the tax.

Other novel ideas have surfaced, such as from the Construction Industry Council of Westchester, which has proposed that tax revenue generated by the legalization of marijuana could be spent on infrastructure in a plan it called “Pot for Potholes.”

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Democrat whose district includes the Highlands and who sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, argued that the \$1 trillion bill pending in the House passed with bipartisan support in the Senate (69-30) only because Democrats made it easy for Republicans to vote for it by removing the funding mechanism, which is higher taxes on corporations and ultra-rich Americans.

Without that, he said, “we’ve given the Republicans the chocolate-chip ice cream of infrastructure investments. We’re going to do that heavy lifting [of funding the bill] without them, so that has made it politically easy for them, and that creates a space for more bipartisanship on core infrastructure.”



Emily Warren Roebling, after receiving her law degree in 1899 (left), was instrumental in building the Brooklyn Bridge.

New-York Historical Society (1)

The Greatest Bridge Ever Built

And the Cold Spring woman behind it

By Chip Rowe

The Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883, is considered an architectural marvel, and the woman who led its construction for years, Emily Warren Roebling, was a native of Cold Spring.

The bridge linking Manhattan and Brooklyn was designed by John Augustus Roebling, who died in 1869 from an injury he received while surveying the site. (He developed tetanus after his foot was

crushed.) His 32-year-old son, Washington, took over as chief engineer but developed “caisson disease” (decompression sickness) when he ascended too quickly from the dry underwater space where the foundations were being dug to solid rock.

He was bedridden for most of the next 14 years, watching the construction in the distance from his window, while his wife, Emily, became the de facto supervisor of the project.

Born in Cold Spring in 1843 as the second youngest of the 12 children of Sylvanus and Phebe Warren (six of whom survived to adulthood), Emily attended

prep school in Washington, D.C. She met her husband in 1864 at a soldiers’ ball; he served on the staff of Gen. Gouverneur Kemble Warren, Emily’s brother.

Emily was the first person to cross the completed bridge by carriage, carrying a rooster as a sign of victory.

She died of stomach cancer in 1903, at age 59, at the couple’s home in Trenton, New Jersey. She and her husband, who died in 1926, are buried under runic crosses in the Cold Spring Cemetery. The 1840 home on Fair Street where Emily and Gouverneur and their siblings grew up still stands.

How They Rated

In 2016, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress surveyed 132 municipalities in the Hudson Valley, including some in Dutchess and Putnam counties, asking each to rate the conditions of their roads and bridges.

37

percent of respondents said their bridges needed only routine maintenance

22

percent said some bridges were in danger of imminent failure

55

percent said their roads were in "poor" or "fair" condition

Report Card

Every four years, the American Society of Civil Engineers rates the nation's infrastructure. In 2015, it also graded New York's.

	NATION	NEW YORK
OVERALL	C-	C-
BRIDGES	C	D+
DAMS	D	C-
DRINKING WATER	C-	C
ROADS	D	D-
WASTEWATER	D+	D

Road Warriors

Highlands communities contend with traffic, erosion and expense

By Jeff Simms

As Congress prepares to send billions of dollars to repair and repave the country's highways and roads, local officials say routes in the Highlands are generally in good shape. A state database shows mostly routine maintenance being planned for Dutchess and Putnam counties, including paving sections and repairing retaining walls on Interstate 84 and the Taconic State Parkway.

In Beacon, the city has a multiyear plan in place to repave the road and build new sidewalks along Teller/Fishkill Avenue (Route 52), from Wolcott Avenue (Route 9D) to the city's northeast boundary. The city is nearing completion of right of way acquisitions to install new stormwater drains, after which the two-year project is expected to go out to bid in 2022, said City Administrator Chris White.

Following the completion of "bump-out" curb extensions at six intersections, the city also plans to mill (remove the top layer of asphalt), pave and restripe Main Street this fall.

Highway Department crews typically mill and pave 10 to 20 road sections each year, depending on weather and what's needed, said White, who will present a one-to-two-year capital plan to the City Council later this year.

Beyond dam repairs and the renovation of the Tompkins Hose fire station — higher-dollar projects that have been in the pipeline — he doesn't expect it will include any surprises. "I'm benefiting from years of thoughtful investment," he said. "The state of repair of our infrastructure is much better than when I was here in the mid-1990s" as a council member.

Beacon's Main Street was constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the automobile was a novelty. But these days, with the city and many of its businesses thriving, delivery trucks routinely slow traffic on the narrow, mile-plus-long artery.

White said he anticipates further evolution, as people depend more on public transit to get from the riverfront Metro-North station to Main Street. This month, the city

“Quality roads are one of the real foundations for quality of life. Unfortunately, in some places you have to choose your route not based on what's the shortest trip but based on what will do the least damage to your car.”

- Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson



John Amato of Thalle Industries holds a core removed from newly laid asphalt to test its durability. The quarry, located on Route 9 in Fishkill, provides much of the asphalt and crushed stone used to build or repair local roads.

Photo by Michael Turton

submitted an application for a \$10 million state Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant with highlights including a public bus connecting the river and Main, a series of transit- and walker-friendly pocket parks along Main Street, and the creation of bicycle boulevards linking parks, schools and commerce.

"The good thing is that people want to be on Main Street," the city administrator said. "As it gets congested, it encourages non-motorized transportation. Maybe you don't need to take your car to get a gallon of milk. Congestion isn't always the worst thing."

If an infrastructure bill is passed, White said that in addition to wastewater, sewer and dam upgrades, he would use federal dollars to offset the city's 20 percent share of the Fishkill Avenue/Teller Avenue project. Beacon could also address rebuilding Pocket Road, a steep and narrow road on the city's east side that gives way to trails leading to one of its three reservoirs, he said. White estimated that project would likely cost \$200,000.

Less than 10 miles away, Highway Superintendent Carl Frisenda oversees an entirely different animal in Philipstown, with 30 miles of blacktop and 30 miles of dirt roads.

While Frisenda estimates that most municipalities manage road networks that are at least 90 percent blacktop, many Philipstown homes sit on steep, skinny dirt roads that have been the subject of debate for decades.

Many residents would like to see the roads



Federal infrastructure money could help Beacon rebuild Pocket Road.

Photo by J. Simms

paved, citing the expense of maintenance. Others oppose paving, citing the roads' rustic appeal and arguing that they slow traffic.

Regardless, "I have a crew on them every single day," Frisenda said.

Workers begin each spring to rebuild the roads by adding gravel, raking them and using compactors to pack the materials together. But huge storms, like the "remnants" of Hurricane Ida that tore through the region earlier this month, wreak havoc.

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Rough Roads

The condition of the 42,700 miles of highway maintained by New York State has begun trending downward after holding steady since 2015, according to a report by Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. Between 2019 and 2020, he noted, the number of highway miles rated only poor to fair jumped 4.4 percent.

Road Warriors *(From page 10)*

“When we get massive amounts of rain, water and dirt don’t mix,” Frisenda said. “Years ago it wasn’t as bad because you didn’t have as much traffic.” But now, with the proliferation of delivery trucks and other vehicles, “the amount of traffic on these back roads is crazy.”

Last year, the town paved 1,100 feet of dirt road, connecting East Mountain Road South and North. If increased federal funding makes its way to the Highlands, Fris-

enda said one priority would be to realign the problematic intersection of South Mountain Pass and Route 9D.

To address the Highlands’ crowded roadways, Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said he would rather see money invested in projects that are the product of regionally coordinated planning. For example, he points to the bottleneck at the Route 9D/Interstate 84 interchange just outside of Beacon, which, at rush hour, can leave cars backed up nearly to City Hall.

“That interchange is actually something

that can be remedied,” he said. “We have, what, six lanes of bridges? That interchange had the capacity at a time to make connectivity under 84, to connect the City of Beacon to 9D, underneath and near Dutchess Stadium. Those are all planning steps that the federal government doesn’t engage in and the state government doesn’t help with. And then local communities are left to try to catch up.”

Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, a Democrat whose district includes Beacon, said he asked the DOT in 2019 to convert

one of the northbound lanes at the interchange to a second lane turning left onto I-84. The agency said it couldn’t add a second turn lane without widening it, but instead installed “smart” stop lights that could be adjusted for rush-hour traffic.

Jacobson said the jury is still out on the lights, since commuting plummeted soon after their completion behind the pandemic shutdown. “The technology is in but we don’t know how to adjust it to see if it will work because we’re not at the old levels of commuters.”

Signal Improvements

Replace or install traffic control devices at intersections in Dutchess, Ulster and Westchester counties, including replacing signals, installing flashing beacons and adding pedestrian signals and crosswalks on Route 52 at eastbound and westbound exit ramps off I-84 in Fishkill.

2022 | **\$4.7 million**

ADA Sidewalks and Ramps

Build or repair sidewalks and ramps on state highway right of ways in southern Dutchess and Putnam to assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2024 | **\$2.5 million**

Guardrail Replacement

Replace deficient or obsolete rails along state highways in the Hudson Valley.

2023 | **\$3 million**

Bridge Painting

Paint steel surfaces throughout the Hudson Valley to protect against corrosion because of acid rain and de-icing agents.

2021 | **\$9.3 million**

Route 9D Breakneck Tunnel Lighting

Working with Central Hudson, replace the lighting system in the Breakneck Tunnel in the Highlands.

2024 | **\$2.1 million**

Biennial Sign Contract

Replace or upgrade signs in the Hudson Valley that have exceeded their useful life.

2024 | **\$3 million**

Bridge and Culvert Rehab

Correct or prevent problems related to the deterioration of components on four structures, including over Clove Creek on Route 9 in Philipstown.

2021 | **\$16.3 million**

Catch Basins

Repair or replace stormwater catch basins in the Hudson Valley to ensure that the drainage systems function as designed.

2023 | **\$1.5 million**

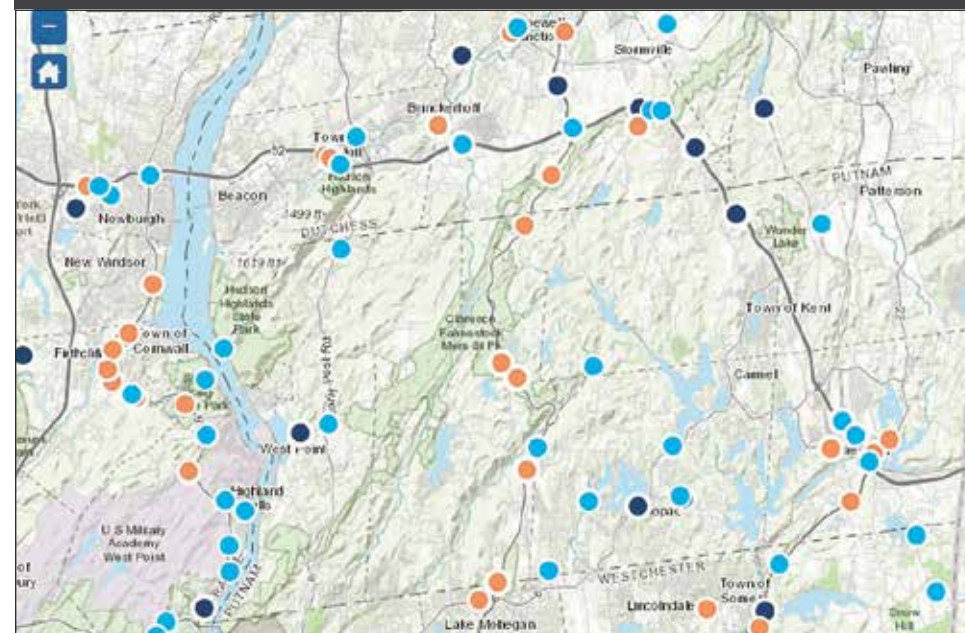
Emergency Repairs

Take immediate action to repair and prevent degradation of state highways during emergencies.

2022 | **\$3.7 million**

The state Department of Transportation keeps a running tally of its projects, their costs and deadlines. As of Wednesday (Sept. 15), the list contained 1,696 projects in the planning stages or under construction, including 253 in the Hudson Valley, 60 in Dutchess and 51 in Putnam. Below are examples of construction and maintenance contracts.

Punch List



Construction Projects

● Planned / Development ● In Construction ● Construction Complete

A state map shows construction projects in the region.

Biennial Mowing

Remove overgrown or undesirable vegetation and litter, including at exits along I-84 in Dutchess, Orange and Putnam counties.

2022 | **\$542,600**

Repave Parts of Taconic State Parkway

Resurface the parkway from the interchange at I-84 in East Fishkill to Route 55 in LaGrange.

2021 | **\$9.9 million**

Crack Sealing

Repair state highways using mastic or crack-sealing treatments to prevent water infiltration and prevent or slow asphalt aggregate binding degradation.

2022 | **\$1.5 million**

Culvert Rehab/Replacement

Repair or replace select culverts on state highways in Orange, Putnam, Ulster and Westchester counties, including along Route 9 in Philipstown. Roadway, sidewalk, wingwall and rail work will also be completed.

2023 | **\$3.8 million**

Resurface Segments of Route 52

Correct pavement deficiencies on Route 52 from Merritt Boulevard to Wiccopee Creek in Fishkill and East Fishkill and from Old State Road to the Putnam County line in East Fishkill. The work will primarily consist of milling the existing pavement and resurfacing the roadway with an asphalt overlay.

2021 | **\$6.4 million**

Rustic Rail Replacement

Replace select segments of the “rustic,” self-oxidizing metal guide rails with galvanized steel on state highways in Columbia, Dutchess and Putnam counties. The rustic guide rail is showing signs of extensive deterioration.

2022 | **\$3.6 million**

Signal Optimization

Install wireless sensors that will enable remote signal phase retiming in response to traffic volumes for four systems in Dutchess and Westchester counties, including on Route 9 in Fishkill. The retiming effort will reduce delays and improve air quality by reducing the number of idling vehicles.

2023 | **\$900,000**

Special Surface Treatment

Resurface state highways in the Hudson Valley in high accident locations that are typically related to wet weather or slippery pavement.

2023 | **\$2 million**

Culvert Repair

Repair or replace seven culverts in Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Ulster counties to address problems with corrosion, joint separation, bottom sag, pipe blockage, fill settling, cavitation of fill (sinkhole formation) and sediment buildup. Other maintenance will be considered to prevent inlet and outlet channel problems such as scouring, degradation, accumulation of debris, channel blockage, diversion of flow and bank erosion.

2022 | **\$1.1 million**

Biennial Geotech

Subsurface Exploration

Explore subsurface soil conditions to provide data needed in advance of highway, bridge and culvert design in the Hudson Valley.

2022 | **\$1.3 million**

Biennial Long Lines Marking

Apply epoxy and preformed pavement markings on state highways in the Hudson Valley to ensure markings maintain their delineation and reflectivity.

2021 | **\$7.3 million**

Next (Sept. 24): Dams & Waterworks