

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55

Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 10:00 AM

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Mark Debald	Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC)
Emily	DCTC
Dylan Tuttle	DCTC
Mark Sargent	Creighton Manning Engineering (CME)
Mark Nadolny	CME
Hannah Brockhaus	Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc (FHI)
Jeff Wright	New York State Bridge Authority
Joseph Chenier	City of Poughkeepsie
Jay Baisley	Town of Poughkeepsie
Vincent Grella	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Ed Goff	NYSDOT
Paul Hesse	City of Poughkeepsie Economic Development
Marc Nelson	City of Poughkeepsie Administrator
Lisa Mondello	NYSDOT
Michael Welti	Town of Poughkeepsie
Heather LaVarnway	Dutchess County
Vincent Grella	NYSDOT

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project update regarding travel patterns and interchange concepts, reach committee consensus on interchange concepts to move forward, and propose an approach for the second public meeting.

OVERVIEW

Mark Debald welcomed attendees to the fourth Advisory Committee meeting for the project. Following introductions, Mr. Sargent led a presentation that covered the following material:

- Origin-destination Study
- Interchange Concepts
 - Overview
 - Selection Criteria
 - Recommended Short-list
- Public Engagement
- Schedule

Origin-Destination Study

Streetlight Data (converted to vehicle trips) was used to conduct the origin-destination (O/D) analysis. The study included several queries to understand how traffic uses the Interchange and Arterials today, and to inform concept development as the Poughkeepsie 94455 study progresses. As part of the O/D analysis, several zones were established to capture origin and destination points to and from and through the study area. Through traffic on the Arterials was shown to be about 20% of the total traffic. Major travel patterns at the interchange were identified as east-west, followed by north-south. The analysis also reinforced what the team heard from public feedback – that many city residents use alternate routes and avoid the interchange to enter the city. It was noted that the Technical Memo summarizing the O/D study would be provided to the Advisory Committee after the meeting. It was also noted that the City of Poughkeepsie provides an interconnected network of streets that distributes volumes well throughout the City.

Interchange Concepts

Prior to the meeting, conversations were held with the City, Town, New York State Department of Transportation, and the New York State Bridge Authority to obtain input on early options considered and assess the feasibility of the concepts. Concepts were measured against four evaluation criteria: address known safety concerns; improve traffic operations; promote community character; and consider cost and constructability. Thirteen concepts were screened, those that do not provide reasonable traffic operations were rejected. This includes many traditional options for interchanges such as roundabouts, diamond, diverging diamond, and quarter clover options. This was largely due to the east/west volumes. Alternatives that stopped traffic on Routes 44/55 had impacts on the interchange including unacceptable delay and queueing on the Arterials. Each of the remaining seven concepts was described (details including diagrams of each option considered can be found in the meeting presentation). All 13 concepts were evaluated against a detailed matrix, assigned points relative to the following scheme (each sub-bullet was rated 0 to 4 points based on the extent to which it responded to the criteria.

- Safety
 - Eliminates left side ramps/weaves from Mainline
 - Reduces speeds on Route 9
 - Improves ramp terminal spacing
 - Intuitive design that lowers driver effort
- Traffic Operations
 - Reasonable traffic operations for major movements
 - Maintains free flow on MHB
 - Minimizes diversion of movements
- Community Character and Context
 - Consistent with desired community context
 - Effect to historic properties or existing neighborhoods
- Cost and Constructability
 - Lower cost/ easier to construct

Mr. Sargent then led a discussion on the concepts, with the goal to reach consensus on which should move forward for the next phase of analysis. Concepts that move forward will receive further due diligence and then be described for public feedback.

The Advisory Committee discussed cost and constructability of alternatives, particularly in the context of Concepts 11, 12, and 13. There was specific concern regarding construction phasing of alternatives while modifying ramp structures in the limited right of way that exists today. Concepts that require building new facilities in the space of the existing interchange would require more complex construction staging, diversions, and temporary traffic configurations. This was balanced against the expense of construction and maintenance of large new ramp or bridge structures. Concept 13 was flagged as problematic because grade changes for the elevated roundabout would impact the Mid-Hudson Bridge and Jefferson Street at Route 44/55 intersection. This was ultimately considered not practical, so the concept will not move forward.

By the same token, the relative ease of construction staging for an elevated Route 9 (Concept 11) was kept on the table for additional analysis and public feedback. This alternative was the winner of an internal NYSDOT design challenge. The team noted that elevating Route 9 may have a visual effect which would require detail study during design. Although moving forward with Concept 11 (rather than 12) the team will note in reporting that Concept 12 is an alternate three-level configuration that could warrant consideration after this planning level study.

Concerns were expressed about increased traffic near homes in Poughkeepsie including the historic district, specifically under Concept 9. In order to remove left side ramps, traffic is jogged to the east north of Routes 44/55 and jogged to the west south of Routes 44/55. This concept, as well as Concept 8 introduce roundabouts to manage traffic associated with some moves.

The team expressed some hesitancy regarding Concept 8, which uses roundabouts to create a more intuitive design and provide reasonable traffic operations for most movements. On the north side of Route 9 a two-lane roundabout would be needed to accommodate traffic volumes (the South roundabout only requires one lane). NYSDOT had suggested the addition of a collector-distributor road to eliminate weaving, the concept will be evaluated with this change.

Additional discussion focused on the idea of slowing or not slowing traffic on Route 9, which was expressed as a desire by the community. Concept 10, which includes two traffic signals (for minor traffic movements) was specifically questioned in this regard. It was noted that Route 9 currently has traffic signals north and south of this interchange, although those tend to be where the roadway abuts densely populated areas with lower traffic speeds (such as Marist College). NYSDOT noted that the signal Concept would introduce the potential for high speed rear-end crashes. Community feedback has suggested that Route 9 through the interchange area should be slower speed, and there was a discussion that the existing interchange already has a high frequency of rear-end crashes. Concept 10 will move forward for more detailed analysis.

The City of Poughkeepsie reiterated that this study and associated analysis should ensure the interchange has capacity to accommodate significant growth, especially in the post-COVID-19 era, as New York City is currently projected to lose population to more suburban areas over the coming years, and Poughkeepsie is the final stop on the Hudson Line of Metro North Railroad.

The group agreed that Concepts 8, 9, 10, and 11 would move forward for the next phase of the study and public feedback.

Public Involvement

Hannah Brockhaus presented the proposed approach for the second public meeting. The meeting is intended to provide an update on concept development for the interchange, detailing the screening process and providing analysis for the alternatives. The meeting will offer an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the alternatives and express preferences among them. The meeting will be a “Join at Your Own Pace” virtual event, whereby a webpage with video presentation and survey questions will be distributed for community members to participate in at their convenience over a month-long comment period. This has been accomplished successfully for other municipalities even prior to the COVID pandemic, for example for the I-684 and I-84 Transportation Corridor Study at NYSDOT. The setup is designed to be distributed among various networks around the region, and therefore the Advisory Committee was encouraged to share the information using social media, newsletters, or emails that would be forthcoming. It was noted that similar public notices had resulted in good use of the interactive webpage. The project email list from previous events will also be used. Information including draft language and a link will be forthcoming at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Next Steps

The team will continue analysis of the four selected alternatives and prepare materials for the upcoming virtual meeting, currently anticipated to begin in late August. An Advisory Committee meeting will precede the meeting in August.