

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55

Open House Summary

Date: March 3, 2020, 4:30pm – 7:00pm

Location: Gallery 40, 40 Cannon Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Public Participants: 60-100¹

OVERVIEW

The first public meeting for the project was held on March 3, 2020. The open house was the first standalone public event for the project, which seeks to develop concepts to make the Arterials and Interchange safer, more accessible, and better integrated within the fabric of Poughkeepsie. The project was first introduced to the public at a pop-up event on First Friday on October 4, 2019. This Open House was designed for members of the public to stop by at anytime during the two and half hours, so there was no formal presentation. Instead, a series of boards were staffed by members of the project team equipped to answer questions and gather feedback about the data presented around the room. Paired with relevant data, several activities were available for participants to engage with the team and guide them on key decision points relevant for the next phase of work. After signing in, attendees were welcomed, offered fact sheets and comment sheets, and asked to place a dot on the a “Where do you live map”. Before they left, they contributed to an online priorities survey. Participants were also able to leave written comments in a comment box. Five comments were submitted relating to the meeting. A detailed summary of the meeting follows.

Participants said that they liked the format that allowed them to move at their own pace, and the conversations they had with staff. In addition to City of Poughkeepsie residents, about thirty percent lived outside the City of Poughkeepsie; many worked near the project boundaries or frequently use the roadways. A total of 98 stickers were placed.

To many attendees, some of the design challenges and existing traffic concerns were no surprise; however, most were grateful to put numbers to the problems. Some attendees had design ideas for the Arterials including express lanes versus local lanes, reversable lanes, as well as a boulevard concept (to add trees and green space). Reducing the Arterials from three lanes to two, and converting them to two-way streets was also discussed. These ideas will be considered as preliminary design concepts are developed.



¹ There was a discrepancy between sign-in sheets and “Where Do You Live” responses, due to multiple entrances to the meeting venue, couples jointly signing in, and individuals who placed a sticker on their place of work.

Next Steps

Materials shown at the meeting, as well as a link to the online priorities survey, are available on the project website (www.poughkeepsie94455.com). The online interactive map, which was open through the winter, is now closed for new feedback, though the map can be viewed on the website. Public engagement is scheduled to continue this summer, with the next public meeting focused on design concepts for the Interchange.

BOARDS

Welcome

The welcome board was the first informative board that the public interacted with. The board displayed general information including the project focus, goals, and timeline. As of the Open House, the project team has completed Data Gathering and Analysis, and is transitioning to Concept Development for the Interchange.

Safety: 2016 – 2018 Crash Data

This board presented a summary of crashes, their contributing factors, crash types and location hot spots. Following too closely (21%), driver inattention (21%), and failure to yield (11%) were the most common contributing factors to crashes in the study area. Of the total 1,371 crashes, vehicles accounted for 1,325 crashes, pedestrians for 30 crashes, and bicyclists for 18. 665 of the crashes occurred at intersections, 407 at the Interchange, and 301 along one of the roadway segments.

Interchange Operations

The Interchange, constructed in the mid-1960's, is a complex system that serves approximately 31,000 vehicles per day while the adjacent Mid-Hudson Bridge carries roughly 40,000 vehicles per day. Several factors contribute to the complex and unique conditions: left side entrances and exits mixed in with right side entrances and exits; expressway ramps controlled by stop or yield signs as opposed to a free flowing ramp; short weaving distances and spacing of ramps; poor pedestrian crossing facilities; and drivers traveling roughly 10 mph over the posted speed. Many attendees expressed concerns with blind spots and speeds.

ACTIVITY 1:

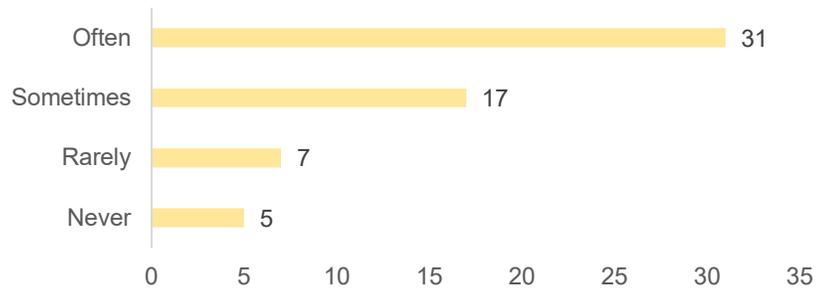
Avoiding the Interchange

Attendees were asked to share how often they avoid the Interchange due to congestion or safety concerns. Eighty percent of the participants said they avoid the interchange "often" or "sometimes". Several participants noted that they avoid the Interchange for southbound travel, and not as frequently for northbound travel. Comments included:



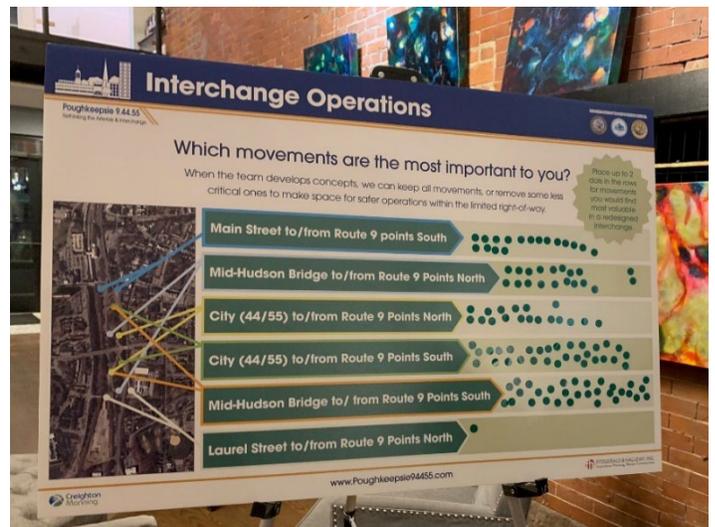
- “[I] come off [the] bridge to South Avenue to avoid [the] blind merge onto Route 9”
- “Even my Uber drivers avoid the interchange and override the directions on their GPS”
- “There is no access as a bicyclist or pedestrian”
- “I avoid the interchange both East and West during peak commuter times”
- “I’ll avoid it for Route 9 but I’ll use the loop to get from the Town of Poughkeepsie to City”

How frequently do you avoid the 9/44/55 Interchange due to congestion or safety concerns?

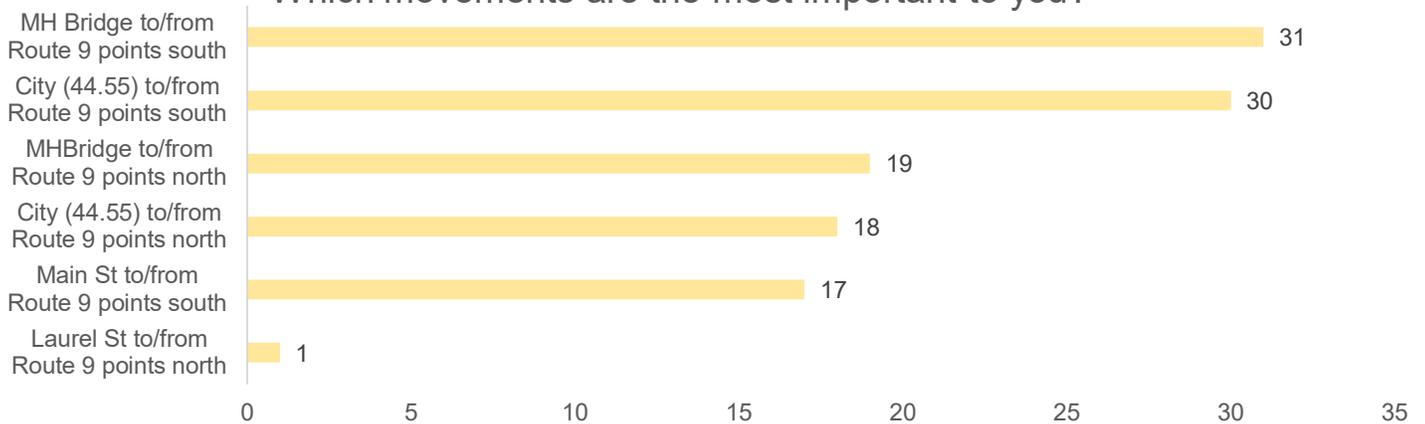


ACTIVITY 2: Interchange Operations

The next phase of this project is the Interchange concept development, which is why it’s important to understand what movements are most important to people and identify what participants find most valuable in a redesigned interchange. Ultimately, the design could keep all of the movements or remove some to make space for improvements that could have system-wide benefits. The two most important movements emerging from this activity were the “Mid-Hudson Bridge to/from Route 9 Points South” (27%) and “City (44.55) to/from Route 9 Points South” (26%). The lack of votes for “Laurel St to/from Route 9 Points North” indicates it was not an important movement to participants. The mostly residential area may not have had representation at the meeting.



Which movements are the most important to you?



Arterial Operations

The Arterials, which are at-grade expressways through the center of Poughkeepsie, carry over 3,500 cars during morning and evening peak hours while maintaining a significant flow of traffic the rest of the day. Attendees noted the different desire lines associated with each of the three lanes at key intersections along the corridors. For example, approaching the Mid-Hudson Bridge, queues develop frequently in the right-most lane westbound. There are heavy pedestrian volumes at intersections along the Arterials, especially within the civic core of the city. There are many problematic conflict points, especially at the weave at Columbus Drive/ Washington Street/ westbound Arterials as vehicles approach the Mid-Hudson Bridge. Reducing conflict

points, reducing speeding, and improving pedestrian facilities could improve conditions. One community member expressed concern over jaywalking across the arterials. Many participants also discussed the desire to redesign the Arterials for two-way traffic, or maintaining one-way Arterials with two lanes instead of three, or a reversible lane on the eastbound Arterial while making the westbound Arterial a two-way local street. Someone suggested that the team “make three Main Streets,” (desiring the conversion to two-way) and another suggested that we consider delivery trucks that need to use the corridor.



SURVEY

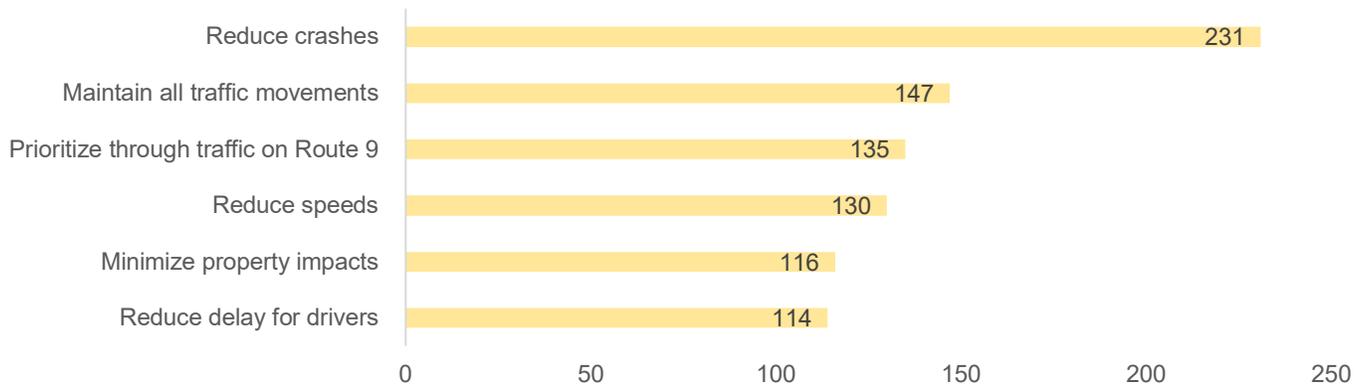
Once meeting attendees had a chance to review the existing conditions material on display throughout the room, they were asked to participate in an online priorities survey. On iPads, participants were able to rank their priorities for the Interchange and Arterials. For scoring, the top ranking was assigned 6 points, the second highest was assigned 5 points, and so on.

For the Interchange, the top priority was to reduce crashes, while lowest priorities were to minimize property impacts and to reduce delays (the latter of which received no first place ranking). Prioritizing through traffic on Route 9 consistently was ranked in third to fifth place. Some participants noted that reducing crashes or speeds was related to many of the other



options.

What should the Poughkeepsie 9/44/55 Team Focus on for the Interchange?



For the Arterials, the top priorities were less clearly distinguished, with friendliness for walking at the top. Middle ranked categories were all very close, including friendliness for bicycling, reducing speeds, and providing more two-way travel options which all reflect the desire for improved local mobility for all modes, over the current design which favors the movement of vehicles (through traffic). Preserving travel times for drivers also received a high number of first rank votes, but overall ranked last, underscoring the diversity of opinions on the subject. Other attendees noted a desire to rectify the legacy of property impacts from the construction of the Arterials.

What should the Poughkeepsie 9/44/55 Team Focus on for the Arterials?

