

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55

Virtual Meeting Summary

Public Meeting 2

Survey Open: October 13 - November 11, 2020 (advertised close November 4)

Available At: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAUmzPx4-S8

Public Participation: 181 unique IP addresses

Overview

Due to in-person restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project team prepared a virtual workshop to solicit feedback on concepts for the Route 9/44/55 Interchange. The workshop was available online through much of the fall and allowed participants to “Join at their Own Pace”. The virtual workshop format included a series of videos describing the project, concept development process, and pros and cons of each of the final four concepts for the Interchange. The presentation was divided into three videos, which participants needed to click through, and each video paused at various points to solicit feedback through survey questions that asked participants to share their thoughts on the four concepts.

The virtual meeting was made available from the project website and distributed through the study’s contact database, identified stakeholders, and local media (e.g. Poughkeepsie Journal and Mid-Hudson News). It was also advertised through the Dutchess County Facebook page and the City of Poughkeepsie’s weekly eNewsletter, and further highlighted at a Poughkeepsie City Council presentation on November 2, 2020.

Feedback focused on the ways that each of the concepts performed in terms of reduced complexity of the interchange, reduction of unsafe conditions, and overall character of the design relative to the urban location. The remediation of unsafe conditions (such as left side ramps and fast moving traffic at merging areas) came up most often, followed by a desire to reduce speeds on Route 9. The appetite for each of the concepts largely followed how well the concept was able to address these concerns. Accordingly, Concept B ranked highest, with A and C not far behind. Concept D was rated much lower. Nearly all comments preferred one of the new concepts over current conditions. It should be noted that the initial reactions to each concept may not exactly match the rank that a concept was given later, because concept evaluation was further described during the third and final presentation segment.

Details of the results follows. The virtual meeting did increase overall engagement with the process; the website and virtual meeting page saw dramatically increased use compared to engagements over the last year. Survey response was low for the Concept Evaluation videos (with 35-36 responses), but there was tremendous interest in viewing each of the Concepts, and therefore much higher response rates were seen for those questions and the introductory question which preceded. For a detailed breakdown of survey results, comments are filtered by IP Address (a unique identifier) following the cleaning process, whereby duplicate responses associated with the same IP addresses were removed; undefined responses (questions left blank or skipped) were removed. Since IP addresses are not 100% unique (such as responses logged at a public computer), where multiple responses differed, all were kept.

Next Steps

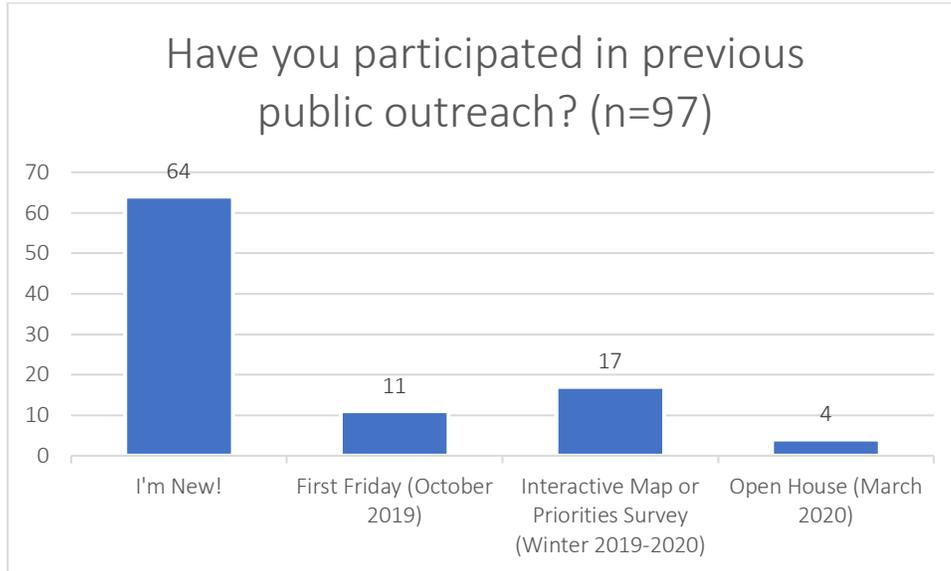
The presentation videos from the virtual meeting are still available to view online, although the survey has closed. The team will review feedback before recommendations are developed for the Interchange. Regular

Advisory Committee meetings will continue during the winter, as will public engagement, along with design development for the Arterials. The next public meeting will focus on design concepts for the Arterials.

Individual Survey Responses

Have you participated in previous public outreach?

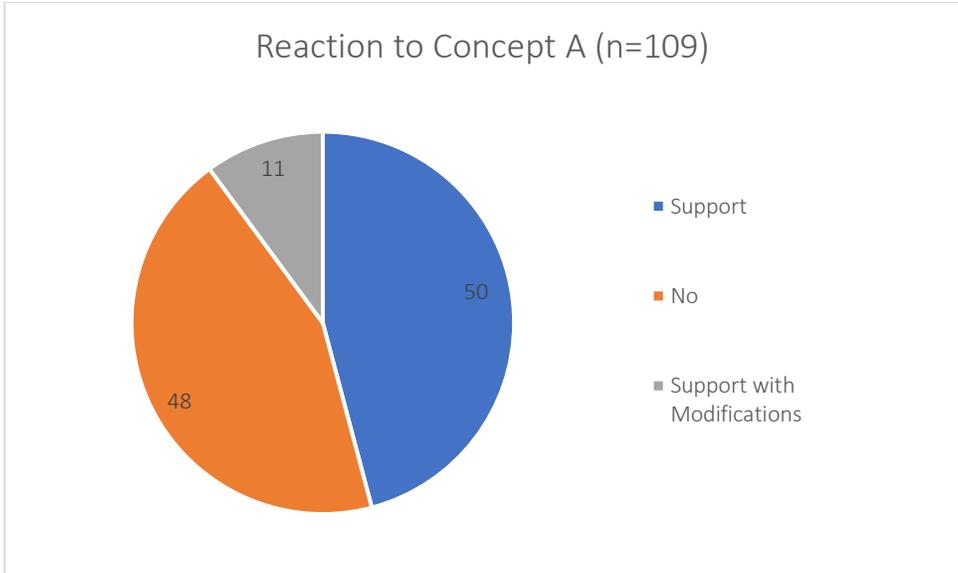
Two thirds of respondents (that answered this question) had not previously been engaged in this process. This represents a significant gain in exposure and feedback. This increase in new participation could be due to several factors including increased time community members are spending online; media attention due to the County Executive's office advertising the effort; and the reduced time commitment needed to participate.



What was your reaction to Concept A – Roundabouts on Route 9? Any additional thoughts on this concept?

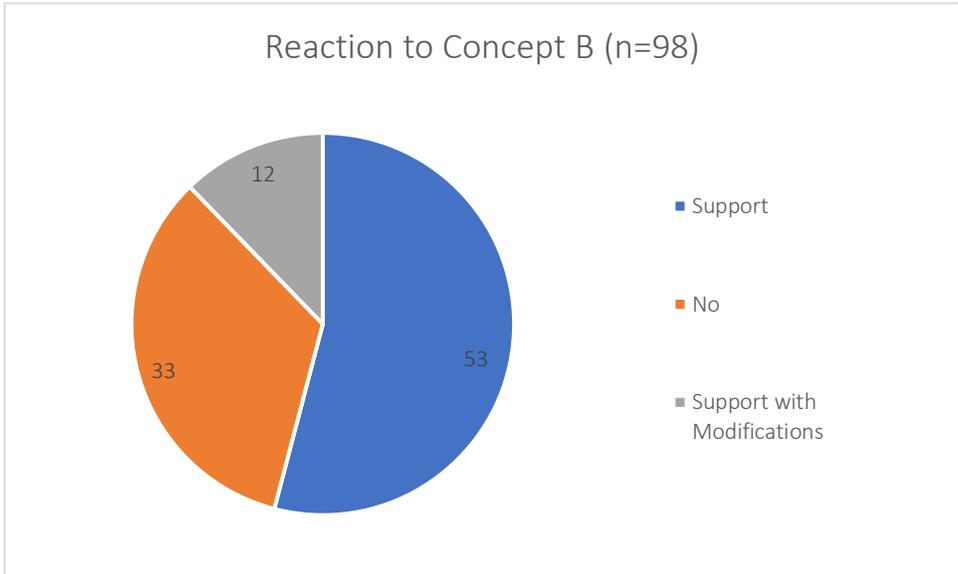
Reaction to this Concept was mixed, with slightly over half of participants supporting or supporting with modifications. Based on the comments, this can be largely attributed to individual perspectives on roundabouts and whether the individual thought they were useful for traffic calming or confusing.

Supporters liked that the roundabouts create space for placemaking around this important gateway into the City. They noted the proven utility of roundabouts to continue moving traffic, but calm traffic, and thought that this would reduce speeds on Route 9, which was a plus. However, many participants who desired modifications or did not like the alternative noted that left side ramps remain, which some considered a fatal flaw of this design. Many participants find roundabouts confusing or ineffective, and were especially concerned with the two-lane roundabout. The travel pattern between Main Street and the Mid Hudson Bridge was perceived as long and convoluted. Finally, concerns were expressed about the impact of this alternative on surrounding communities and surface roads like Rinaldi Boulevard.



What was your reaction to Concept B – Route 9 Realignment? Any additional thoughts on this concept?

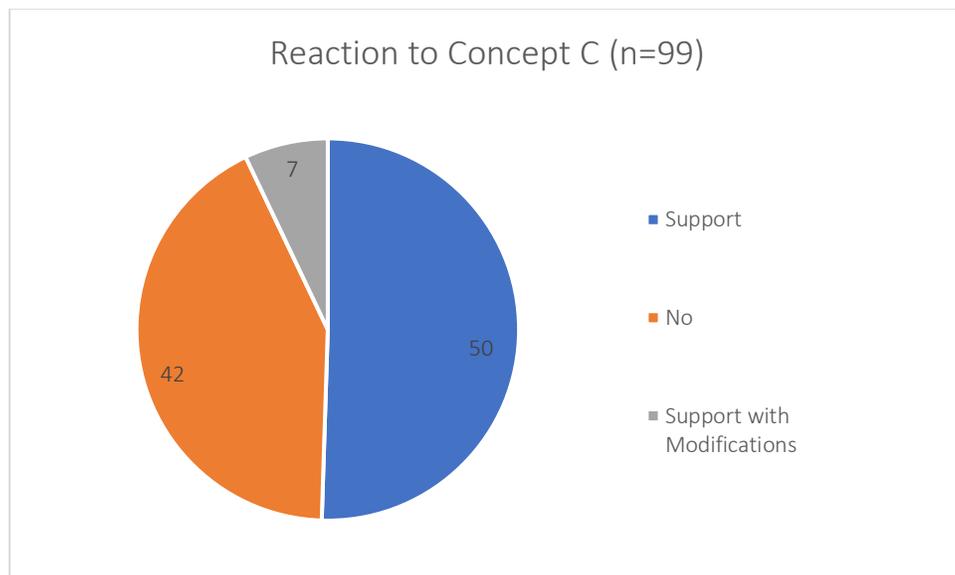
Participants were generally more supportive of this concept, with over two thirds of respondents either supportive or could be supportive (with modifications). Supporters maintained that this concept removed existing left lane exits and had more dedicated ramps for origins and destinations. However, commenters noted that the design appears confusing and is not intuitive, and must be accompanied by clear signage. Some participants argued that slowing traffic on Route 9 needs to be a high priority for the interchange design overall, regardless of which alternative is selected. Additionally, concerns were expressed with the realignment and its impacts to historic areas. Participants noted that preservation of the historic district is important, and wanted more details regarding potential noise and property impacts.



What was your reaction to Concept C – Half Clover? Any additional thoughts on this concept?

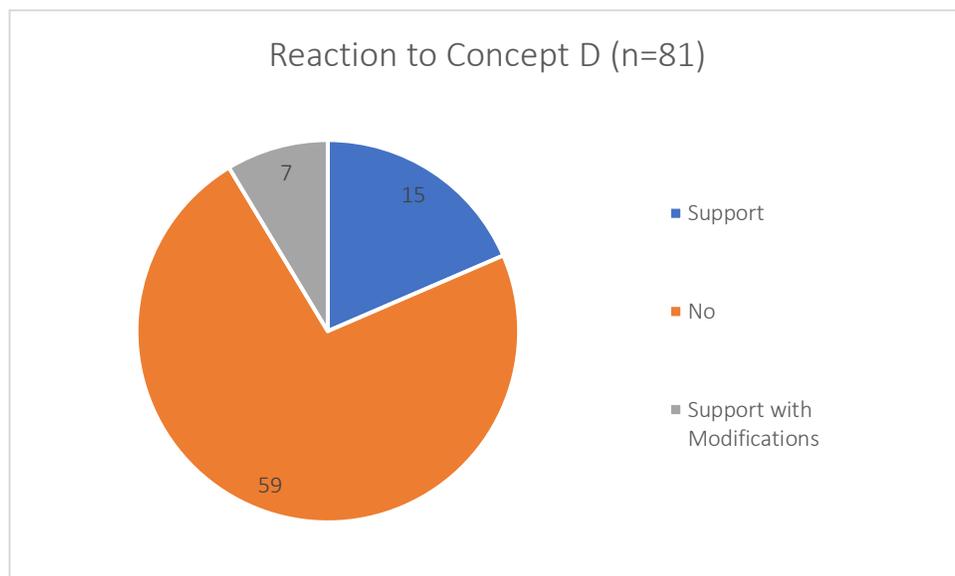
Support of this concept was mixed, with over half expressing support or potential support (with modifications). There was a suggestion to reduce speeds on Route 9 to 40 miles per hour and add an additional signal at Columbia Street. Those who supported this concept liked that it was intuitive and easy to understand. There is a perception that the lack

of signals in this section of Route 9 contributes to high speeds, which cause safety concerns, and so some were glad to see traffic signals introduced. Additionally, the flyovers would separate bridge traffic from city bound traffic, which some participants saw as beneficial. Those who did not support this concept were focused on the signalization of Route 9, fearing the potential for safety concerns with signals. A few comments noted that signalization may not be an effective way of slowing and calming traffic compared to roundabouts – some were concerned about delay associated with more signals on Route 9.



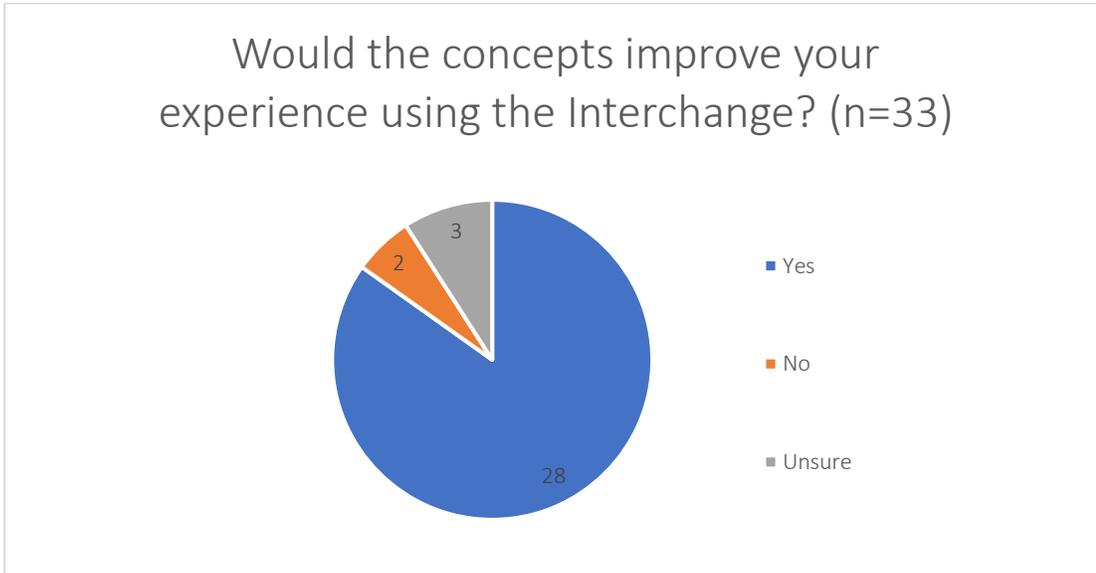
What was your reaction to Concept D – Route 9 Flyover? Any additional thoughts on this concept?

Overwhelmingly, participants were not supportive of this concept, with about three quarters not supportive. Generally, visual impacts and lack of weaving/safety improvements were concerns, despite the simplicity of this concept. Supporters liked the fact that this option maintains flow of through traffic on Route 9. Significant concerns were noted, pertaining to three themes. First, the concept does not offer safety improvements for key problems at the interchange, notably weaving areas, high speed merge areas, and left side merges. Second, it was perceived to be out of character (historic, environmental, quality of life) for the location at the gateway of the city. Finally, the high cost and visual impact of a third level at the interchange was not perceived to be in balance with the benefit this would offer over the existing configuration.



Would the concepts improve your experience using the Interchange?

Most participants agreed that the concepts would improve the experience of using the interchange, indicating support for moving forward with one of these concepts as the preferred alternative. Many fewer participants continued through the end of the concept evaluation video, with numbers dropping by two thirds for this question and the final ranking of comments (below.)



Please rank the concepts in order of your preference (with 1 being most preferred and 5 being least preferred).

Concept B was ranked highest, followed by Concept A, Concept C, and then Concept D, with a much lower rank. The No Build Alternative was ranked lowest, indicating support for advancing concept development and pursuing funding for one of the four concepts. It should be noted that fewer participants answered this question than previous questions about reactions to each of the alternatives. However, this ranking generally aligns with the level of support for each of the concepts as a proportion of all reactions to the concepts.

Concept Ranking (n=36)				
Concept A	Concept B	Concept C	Concept D	No Build
2.36	1.97	2.73	3.44	4.56

Other Questions and Comments

Participants were happy with the project and some expressed support for the virtual meeting format. Other themes of comments and questions focused around potential modifications for the concepts and items some commenters felt were not adequately addressed. A few comments highlighted the potential for combining elements of several of the concepts – for example, replacing the half clover intersections with roundabouts for Concept C, and the possibility of replacing the left-side merges with right-side merges for Concept D (Route 9 Flyover). Some commenters asked about accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists through the interchange, noting the presence of a pedestrian path on the bridge and the close proximity to the Poughkeepsie train station. Moreover, two comments hoped that the team could prioritize integrating the interchange with the surrounding areas, and shift priorities from vehicular throughput to a more holistic redesign. Overall, there was unanimous support for replacing the existing interchange, and comments recognized the complex nature of finding a solution.