

VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER TRANSCRIPT

Route 15 & Berkshire Valley Road (CR 699) Township of Jefferson, Morris County

Slide 1 – Welcome

Welcome to the Virtual Public Information Center for the New Jersey Department of Transportation Route 15 and Berkshire Valley Road (County Route 699) Intersection Improvement project. It is the goal of NJDOT to deliver infrastructure projects with the interests of the public as a top priority. This Public Information Center is intended to provide local residents and businesses with information on the project, which is currently entering the Construction phase. The public is encouraged to participate by providing feedback to enhance the project.

Slide 2 – Presentation Agenda

This presentation will begin with a brief project overview followed by a review of the project's existing conditions. Next, the Purpose and Need for the improvements and the proposed improvements will be summarized. Next, the construction stages and schedule will be explained, including how traffic will be managed through the work area. Finally, we will let you know how you can provide feedback on the project.

Slide 3 – Project Overview

The scope of this project is to improve the safety and operation of the signalized intersection of Route 15 and Berkshire Valley Road (County Route 699). The intersection is situated in Jefferson Township, Morris County, approximately 2 miles north of Interstate 80. The goal of this project is to improve the safety and operation of the signalized intersection while minimizing environmental, quality of life, access, right of way, and utility impacts.

Slide 4 –Existing Conditions, Route 15

Route 15 is a divided six-lane urban principal arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph. The existing roadway cross-section consists of three 12-foot-wide travel lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions with no outside shoulders. The left and right turn movements from Route 15 to Berkshire Valley Road are accommodated via forward jughandle ramps. Several businesses and residences occupy the median between the northbound and southbound travel lanes.

Within the project limits, Route 15 has several substandard design elements which include stopping sight distance on horizontal curves, stopping sight distance on vertical curves, and outside shoulder width.

Slide 5 –Existing Conditions, Berkshire Valley Road

Berkshire Valley Road is an undivided two-lane roadway with one travel lane in each direction. While it generally runs north-south, it has an east-west orientation through the intersection with Route 15. Berkshire Valley Road south of Route 15 southbound has a posted speed limit of 35 mph and is under the jurisdiction of Jefferson Township. North of the intersection with Route 15 northbound, Berkshire Valley Road has a posted speed limit of 45 mph and is under the jurisdiction of Morris County.

Both approaches of Berkshire Valley Road at the Route 15 intersection widen to accommodate a four-lane section between Route 15 northbound and southbound that consists of a through lane and a designated left turning lane in each direction.

The existing horizontal alignment of Berkshire Valley Road is comprised of several undesirable features, including a broken-back curve and reverse 'S' curves. Berkshire Valley Road also has substandard stopping sight distances for vertical, horizontal, and non-signalized intersection.

The existing traffic signal operates on a split, three-phase configuration. Following the Route 15 northbound and southbound phase, Berkshire Valley Road northbound goes and then the southbound phase follows separately.

In their existing configuration, the Route 15 northbound and southbound signalized intersections are both expected to operate at a Level of Service "D" during the AM peak hour in the design year 2040. During the PM peak hour, the northbound and southbound intersections are expected to operate at a Level of Service "E" and "D", respectively. The Level of Service grade indicates the average amount of delay the signal experiences, with "A" being the least delay and "F" being the most.

Slide 6 –Purpose and Need

Route 15 is a highly congested corridor that provides regional access to points north and south. Heavy delays are experienced by motorists in both the morning and evening peak hours.

The project corridor is listed as one of New Jersey's Congested Commuter Corridors on State Highways and is also listed on the NJDOT's Congestion Management System Priority Rankings as "High".

The NJDOT Bureau of Transportation Data and Safety assigned a Crash Data Safety Score of "7 out of 10" for Route 15 northbound and "5 out of 10" for Route 15 southbound with 0 representing no crashes in the area and 10 representing the worst score.

There are also several Controlling Substandard Design Elements within the project limits. The operational and safety issues can be attributed to these substandard elements.

Slides 7 & 8 –Proposed Conditions

7: The main component of this project is the realignment and widening of Berkshire Valley Road to improve the geometry and to accommodate a five-lane section between Route 15 northbound and southbound. This new five-lane section will include a dual left turn lane from Berkshire Valley Road southbound to Route 15 southbound. Additional improvements include widening and extending the Route 15 northbound outside through lane; the construction of sidewalks in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); the complete replacement of the traffic signals; along with upgrades to the existing stormwater conveyance system and guide rail.

8: The proposed traffic signal will maintain the existing three-phase operation and will include timings to optimize the flow of traffic throughout the day. The proposed lane configuration and signal timing improvements are expected to improve the operation of both signalized intersections. In the design year 2040, the northbound and southbound intersections are expected to operate at a Level of Service "D" and "C" during the AM peak, respectively, and a Level of Service "C" and "D" during the PM peak hour, also respectively.

Slide 9 – Construction Staging

Construction will be completed in three primary stages utilizing lane closures during daytime off-peak and overnight hours. The existing lane configuration and operation of the intersections will be maintained

during peak AM and PM travel times to limit congestion and delays. Ramp construction will only occur overnight and with a ramp detour in place. Access to businesses and residences will be maintained at all times.

Slide 10 – Construction Stage 1

The first stage of construction will maintain all three lanes of Route 15 northbound and southbound through the intersection during morning and afternoon peak hours when traffic volumes are at their highest but will utilize lane and shoulder closures during daytime off-peak and overnight hours. Berkshire Valley Road traffic will be shifted to the south to allow for the widening and reconstruction of Berkshire Valley Road on the north side. Work completed in this stage will include utility relocations, installation of the new traffic signal, and construction of full depth pavement, drainage, curb, sidewalks, driveways, and guide rail.

Slide 11 – Construction Stage 2

Like Stage 1, Stage 2 will also maintain all three lanes of Route 15 northbound and southbound through the intersection during morning and afternoon peak hours but will utilize lane and shoulder closures during daytime off-peak and overnight hours. Berkshire Valley Road traffic will be shifted to the north to allow widening and reconstruction of Berkshire Valley Road on the south side. Access to businesses and residences will be maintained at all times. Work during Stage 2 will include the construction of full depth pavement, drainage, curb, sidewalks, driveways, and guide rail.

Stage 3 will shift traffic to its permanent configuration and will utilize daytime off-peak and overnight lane closures to perform final paving and complete any outstanding work.

Slide 12 – Construction Schedule

Construction is set to begin in early 2023, with the Contractor currently anticipating a late January or early February start. Stage 2 is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2024. Stage 3 is anticipated to begin in Spring 2025, with a construction completion anticipated in Summer 2025.

Slide 13 – Public Feedback

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please fill out the website survey form or contact the NJDOT Office of Community Relations. Details are provided on this slide. Thank you for your interest in this project and for taking the time to view this presentation!