

VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER TRANSCRIPT

Route 15 & Berkshire Valley Road (CR 699)

Township of Jefferson, Morris County

Slide 1 – Title Slide

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 share the project's progress and to solicit feedback from the public to enhance the project as it progresses through Final Design and Construction.

Slide 2 – Presentation Agenda

This presentation will begin with a brief overview, followed by a discussion of the key project features. Last, we will discuss the project schedule, estimated construction cost and share information on how you – the public – can provide us your valuable feedback for this 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 – Key Project Features – 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. Because of this, Jefferson Township initiated a problem statement with the New Jersey Department of Transportation citing both operational and safety concerns at this intersection.

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.

Slide 5 – Key Project Features – Existing Conditions

Route 15 is a divided six-lane urban principal arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph. The existing roadway cross-section consist 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 6 – Key Project Features – Existing Conditions

Berkshire Valley Road south of the intersection with Route 15 southbound is an undivided two-lane urban major collector 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 as shown in the photo.

Slide 7 – Key Project Features – Existing Conditions

According to AASHTO, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the existing horizontal alignment of Berkshire Valley Road is comprised of several undesirable features. A “broken-back” curve is a horizontal alignment where two curves in the same direction are connected by a short tangent section instead of just one long curve. A reverse ‘S’ curve is an abrupt reversal in the horizontal alignment that makes it difficult for drivers to stay within their own lane. Berkshire Valley Road also has several substandard design elements related to stopping sight distance including vertical curves, horizontal curves, and non-signalized intersections.

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

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 will operate at a Level of Service “E” and “D”, respectively. The Level of Service “grade” indicates the average amount of delay a signal experiences, with “A” being the least delay and “F” being the most delay.

Slide 8 & 9 – Key Project Features – Proposed Conditions

8: 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.

9: The proposed traffic signal will also operate on a three-phase operation with timings to optimize the flow of traffic throughout the day. The Route 15 northbound and southbound signalized intersections are expected to operate at a Level of Service “D” and “C” during the AM peak hour in the design year 2040,

respectively. During the PM peak hour the northbound and southbound intersections will operate at a Level of Service “C” and “D”, respectively

Slide 10 – Key Project Features – Maintenance and Protection of Traffic

The proposed improvements will be constructed with as few interruptions to traffic as possible. Construction will be completed in two primary stages while maintaining the existing lane configuration and function of the intersection. During Stage 1, the travel lanes will be shifted to accommodate the proposed widening. During Stage 2, the travel lanes will be shifted onto the newly widened portion while the remainder of the improvements are constructed.

A reduction in the number of existing travel lanes by the contractor will not be permitted during the morning and evening peak travel hours. Daily lane closures during daytime off-peak and overnight hours, in addition to overnight ramp closures with a detour, are proposed to limit congestion and delay. Access to businesses and residences will be maintained. Advance notice of lane and ramp closures will be provided to allow for accommodation.

Slide 11 – Project Schedule & Estimated Construction Cost

The project is currently in the Final Design phase. Concept Development was completed in 2018 and Preliminary Engineering was completed in 2019. Final Design along with Right of Way acquisition is scheduled for completion in Spring 2022.

Construction is anticipated to begin during late Summer of 2022 and be completed within a year and is contingent on the availability of funding. The Construction cost is estimated to be approximately \$6.1 Million.

Slide 12 – 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!