

# Town of East Greenbush / Town of North Greenbush / CDTC US Route 4 Corridor Study

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## Meeting Summary

**Purpose:** Public Meeting #1

**Date and Time:** Monday, March 27, 2023, 6:30 PM

**Location:** Hybrid: In-person at Defreestville Fire Department and via Zoom.

**Attendees:** Approximately 100 attended in person and 84 attended via Zoom.

| Agenda Item                             | Discussion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Key Decisions and Outcomes |
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| <p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> | <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) welcomed the attendees and introduced North Greenbush Supervisor Joseph Bott. Supervisor Bott provided introductory remarks about the history of the project effort and the purpose of the public meeting. Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) then gave an overview of the meeting agenda and introduced parties involved in the project:</p> <p><b>Project Sponsors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of East Greenbush</li> <li>• Town of North Greenbush</li> <li>• Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Grant Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community and Transportation Linkage Program (CDTC)</li> </ul> <p><b>Consultant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MJ Engineering &amp; Land Surveying, P.C.</li> </ul> <p>Chris Bauer (CDTC) then provided a brief overview of CDTC’s mission and membership. Mr. Bauer noted that CDTC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Capital District of New York and, as such, CDTC allocates federal transportation funding resources. CDTC members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)</li> <li>• Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC)</li> <li>• New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT)</li> <li>• New York State Thruway Authority</li> </ul> | <p>N/A</p>                 |

- Port of Albany
- Albany International Airport

Mr. Bauer encouraged attendees to complete the online survey to provide input on the project.

Ms. Hakes (MJ) introduced the members of the Study Advisory Committee (SAC):

- Anna Feltham (Town of East Greenbush)
- Dan Fiacco (Town of East Greenbush)
- Colleen Lallier (Town of East Greenbush)
- Joe Bott (Town of North Greenbush)
- Michael Chaires (Town of North Greenbush)
- Linda VonDerHeide (Rensselaer County)
- Mark Sounders (NYSDOT Rensselaer County Residency)
- Brian Kirch (NYSDOT Region 1)
- Chris Bauer (CDTC)
- Chaim Simon (CDTC)
- Ethan Warren (CDTA)

Ms. Hakes (MJ) then provided a description and map of the Study Area, noting that the *primary* Study Area is the US Route 4 Corridor, from Mannix Road in the Town of East Greenbush to NY 43 in the Town of North Greenbush. The *secondary* Study Area comprises just over 2,400 acres of land surrounding the corridor, and land uses in this secondary Study Area will be examined to evaluate the impacts on transportation within the primary Study Area. Annotated maps of the primary and secondary Study Area were shown.

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) next provided instructions to audience members to participate in an interactive polling exercise.

The first polling question asked attendees *What brings you to the Study Area?*

- The largest percentage of responses (~75%) were from those who live in the Study Area, followed by attendees who shop in the Study Area (~16%) and work in the Study Area (~4%).

The second polling question asked attendees *How often do you visit the Study Area?*

- The largest percentage of responses (~70%) were from those who indicated “Daily”, followed by attendees who indicated “Weekly” (~25%) and “Monthly” (~5%).

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|                                         | <p>The third polling question asked attendees <i>How far do you travel to reach Route 4?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The largest percentage of responses (~75%) indicated “Less than 5 minutes”, followed by “5-10 minutes” (~25%).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |            |
| <p><b>Project Schedule Overview</b></p> | <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) began by providing a brief Project Area Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US Route 4 is a key corridor with a variety of large-scale commercial and retail establishments in the Town of East Greenbush and the Town of North Greenbush.</li> <li>In 2006, the Town of East Greenbush and CDTC completed the Route 4 Corridor Study, a Linkage Study.</li> <li>US Route 4 is owned and operated by the NY State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)</li> <li>Coordination with NYSDOT will be critical throughout the entire process.</li> </ul> <p>The Study Objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address current traffic operational deficiencies</li> <li>Identify improvements needed to accommodate future anticipated growth</li> <li>Make recommendations to improve the transportation systems along the corridor</li> <li>Examine corridor profiles and develop a preferred Corridor Concept Plan for US Route 4</li> <li>Assist the Towns to pursue goals of enhancing the US Route 4 Corridor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve mobility</li> <li>Reduce traffic congestion</li> <li>Promote economic Development</li> <li>Improve safety</li> <li>Create a connected and integrated multi-modal transportation network</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) then outlined key milestones in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer/ Fall 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task 1: Project Initiation/ Coordination</li> </ul> </li> <li>Fall/ Winter 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task 2: Existing Conditions Inventory and Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>N/A</p> |

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|                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter/Spring 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Task 4: Future Operational Analysis</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Summer 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Task 5: Draft US 4 Corridor Study</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fall/Winer 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Task 6: Final US 4 Corridor Study and Implementation Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The resulting Corridor Study and Implementation Plan can be used for grants and other funding opportunities for implementation.</p> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) then went over the tasks which have already been initiated and/or are in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of SAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kick-off meeting (August 3, 2022)</li> <li>○ Field Walk (October 26, 2022)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft Existing Conditions Memo</li> <li>• Project Website created (<a href="http://www.nyroute4study.com">www.nyroute4study.com</a>)</li> <li>• Community Survey (Live from February 5, 2023; over 700 responses collected as of March 27<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>• Turning movement counts conducted (May 24, 2022; June 1, 2022; 5 intersections; collected turning movements, pedestrian movements &amp; traffic signal timing)</li> <li>• Existing data collection (relevant studies and reports, GIS mapping data, traffic data)</li> </ul> |            |
| <p><b>Existing Conditions Overview</b></p> | <p>Andris Blumbergs (MJ) walked through existing conditions within the study area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the Study Area</li> <li>• Provides overview of previous plans/relevant documents</li> <li>• Highlights of Existing Conditions Memo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Land Use &amp; Zoning</li> <li>○ Pedestrian Accommodations</li> <li>○ Traffic Data/Crash History</li> <li>○ Traffic Conditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Mr. Blumbergs (MJ) shared a list of relevant planning documents that will be reviewed and incorporated in the plan. Mr. Blumbergs then provided a brief explanation of the differences between land use and zoning:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>N/A</p> |

- Land use describes what the land is currently being used for
- Zoning describes the types of land uses that are allowed as established by local zoning laws
- Land use and zoning are a direct reflection of the community character that exists today

There are nine (9) zoning districts within the study area including:

- North Greenbush
  - Commercial (C)
  - General Business (BG)
  - Neighborhood Business (NB)
  - Professional Business (PBD)
  - Planned Development District (PDD)
- East Greenbush (Existing)
  - Residential-Buffer District (R-B)
  - Planned Development District (PDD)
  - Corporate Office Only District (O)
  - Corporate Office/ Regional Commercial District (OC)
- Land Use in the study area generally includes:
  - Commercial
  - Community services
  - Residential – medium density
  - Residential – low density
  - Transportation
  - Vacant land
- Pedestrian Accommodations within the study area include:
  - Sidewalks and Crosswalks
  - Concrete sidewalks are available along portions of corridor only
  - Striped pedestrian crosswalks have been installed at various locations

Mr. Blumbergs (MJ) noted that, in general, the Study Area has limited to no pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, or pedestrian lighting. An annotated map of the corridor was displayed to show the availability of sidewalks.

Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) walked through existing traffic data and crash history of the corridor.

- Traffic Data/Crash History
  - Most recent five years of available data June 6, 2017 to May 30, 2022.
  - During this five-year period, 428 crashes were recorded.

**Existing  
Conditions  
Overview  
(Cont'd)**

- The data received was for the roadway, connecting roads, and intersections along the US Route 4 corridor.

A color-coded graphic showing the prevalence of crashes along the corridor was displayed. During the five-year period in which the data was collected, 237 of 428 crashes occurred at intersections.

- Traffic Volumes
  - Traffic volumes were collected using Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs) and turning movement counts (TMCs)
  - Two ATRs collect 24-hour traffic volumes
    - Three days between Tuesday April 5 to Thursday April 7, 2022
    - Obtain Average annual daily traffic (AADT)
  - The locations of the ATRs:
    - Between I-90 Exit 9 and 3rd Ave. Ext.
      - AADT = 15,304
    - Between 3rd Ave. Ext. NY Route 43
      - AADT = 18,917
- TMCs collected at five (5) intersections
  - Intersection No. 1: NY Route 43
  - Intersection No. 2: Bloomingrove Drive and Agway Drive
  - Intersection No. 3: Grandview Drive/Plaza
  - Intersection No. 4: 3rd Avenue Extension
  - Intersection No. 5: Rensselaer County Plaza Driveway
- Midday – 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- PM – 3:00 – 5:00 pm
- Intersections 1, 2, 3, and 5
  - TMCs on Tuesday, May 24, 2022
- Intersection 4
  - TMCs on Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Ms. Hakes provided an overview of the data collected from the five (5) intersections:

1. NY Route 43
2. Bloomingrove Drive and Agway Drive
3. Grandview Drive
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Extension
5. Rensselaer County Plaza Driveway (Walmart)

The data reflects the Level of Service (LOS), which is a measure of the flow of traffic and is uses a letter grade system between best (A) and worst (F).



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|                                 | <p>The third polling question in this section asked meeting participants <i>What would you like to see changed on the corridor in the future?</i></p> <p>The top 5 mentions included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional Lane N Bound</li> <li>2. Sidewalks</li> <li>3. Roundabouts</li> <li>4. Better Bus Service</li> <li>5. Bike Lanes</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Next Steps</b></p>        | <p>Andris Blumbergs (MJ) then introduced the next steps in the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding Data Collection</li> <li>• Future Operational Analysis</li> <li>• Survey Summary – TBA (700+ responses)</li> <li>• Stakeholder Meetings</li> <li>• Public Workshop #2 – TBA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>MJ to hold stakeholder meetings with business owners along the corridor and others.</p> |
| <p><b>Q &amp; A Session</b></p> | <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) provided a brief explanation for how hybrid meeting participants could submit questions in the Q&amp;A. Ms. Hakes then solicited questions from meeting attendees:</p> <p>Q: Where is the money coming from? Who is paying for this study?<br/> A: This study is funded as part of a federal grant which allows the federal government to pay roughly 90% of the cost with a 10% contribution. This grant is just for the study, but it leads to a consensus with the community, NYSDOT, and the Towns for an achievable and fundable project that gives more firepower for construction funding grants.</p> <p>Q: There are several car crashes near McDonald’s, why can’t a road be built behind the building, as they do with the Dunkin Donuts?<br/> A: Thank you for your input.</p> <p>Q: Why is this study area different from the 2006 Study?<br/> A: The study area starts at Mannix Road and heads north. MJ joined the project after the study area was identified. The 2006 study was of the Route 4 Corridor, whereas this study is focused on the problems that link the two Towns.</p> <p>Q: Why were the midday and afternoon peaks used for the traffic counts/ data collection?<br/> A: ATR data was collected in 2022 and the volumes were looked at to determine when the peaks were for the study area. The team is aware of the traffic issues at Grand View</p> |                                                                                            |



intersection with the coffee shops and school, and recommendations for alleviating those issues will be included in the study.

Q: How similar is the AM peak to the Midday/PM peak?

A: There are specific statistical differences that were used to determine which peaks are used. But, typically, AM peak volumes continue to rise throughout the day leading to a higher peak in Midday and PM.

Q: Why were there no observations taken during the weekend?

A: The engineering project scope only included doing peak hour data collection twice and both during weekdays. The ATR data collected for the Study indicated these were the highest traffic volumes.

Q: How was the study area determined? Why doesn't it go all the way to Route 9 and 20?

A: The 2006 Study did include those routes. This study was more focused on the connection between both Towns.

Comment: There has been much change to the corridor. A 4.5-mile commute, but at Mannix Road they get stuck for 20-40 minutes. Significantly worse during holiday shopping season.

Q: How do we keep people from taking the survey more than once?

A: The survey can be taken on a cellphone, tablet, or computer. If a person chooses not to include their email, they can likely take it twice, but the project team can quickly identify themes and flag anyone who might take the survey multiple times. The survey is statistically invalid, it is simply to collect initial information on what people wish to see, what their concerns are, and more!

Q: I own a business on the corridor. Will I lose frontage?

A: That is currently unknown, the process is still just starting.

Q: Is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave study rating less because it is a T-intersection?

A: All different types of intersections in the study area have been noted and will be analyzed from a system and safety perspective.

Q: Are/ can the project team include information on background traffic to capture what others are experiencing? Are the southbound and northbound traffic both being looked at?

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|  | <p>A: The project team is working with the Town and CDTC to help capture the known/ unknown development in the secondary study area. A growth rate will be identified. North and southbound traffic is being looked at. Additionally, midblock data is being considered as well.</p> <p>Q: What were the professionals take away and observations along the corridor during your site visit?</p> <p>A: Stacking occurred very quickly. As a pedestrian on the sidewalk, it was very difficult to hear due to the traffic. As a pedestrian, it was generally uncomfortable.</p> <p>Q: Is there any comparison to pre-COVID data collection being considered? What is the projected level of service for the future?</p> <p>A: MJ and CDTC have identified that traffic is returning to previous numbers and the COVID-19 statistics are losing their relevance. The projected levels of service will be identified later in the process and an accurate answer is not available yet.</p> <p>Q: Does CDTC have any authority over local planning and zoning?</p> <p>A: No.</p> <p>Comment: By addressing just the traffic issues in the corridor, it cannot resolve the overall issue, which is the land use development that is happening outside the corridor.</p> <p>A: The secondary study area and development has been identified for this reason.</p> <p>Q: Question about specific development.</p> <p>A: We will not discuss individual development at this time. However, we are coordinating with both Towns to understand projects/growth in the pipeline. Please leave a comment card or reach out and we will get back to you.</p> <p>Q: With regard to a project in North Greenbush off of Blooming Grove, will the study include a plan for secondary routes to mitigate the traffic created from this development?</p> <p>A: Yes, we are currently identifying all options, which will then be refined to reflect actionable improvements.</p> <p>Comment: Examine side streets.</p> <p>Q: Will this result in multiple proposals or just one?</p> <p>A: Multiple concepts will be proposed, and then refined into one preferred concept.</p> |  |
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|  | <p>Q: Is there more signage or instructions for people using roundabouts?<br/>A: This will be looked into.</p> <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ): Additional input and comments can be provided through the survey, website, or comment cards available at the welcome table.</p> <p>Meeting concludes.</p> |  |
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This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:  
Andris Blumbergs, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, PC

cc: Consultant Team, CDTC, SAC, Project File

DRAFT