

Town of Rotterdam, Five Corners Transportation and Land Use Linkage Study



Public Workshop II Summary Report

Prepared on behalf of:

The Capital District Transportation Committee
and the Town of Rotterdam

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Capital District Transportation Committee

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I. Introduction

In February, 2011, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) and the Town of Rotterdam launched the Five Corners Transportation and Land Use Linkage Study. The study's goal is to develop a plan to revitalize the Five Corners area so that the heart of the Town of Rotterdam can become healthy and vibrant. This can be accomplished by developing a balanced circulation system that encourages various forms of travel by car, bike and foot in a way that complements the Town's existing and future land uses.

The study's objective is to develop a coordinated land use and access management plan for the Five Corners area to ensure that any redevelopment activity is properly accomplished using an integrated multi-modal network that embraces smart growth concepts. The final plan will include recommendations for traffic improvements, land use arrangements, access management, transit and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements, development standards and design standards.

II. Public Workshop II Presentation

In the 1st Workshop, BFJ Planning approached the community with preliminary ideas for Five Corners in terms of traffic circulation and land use. Based on feedback from the 1st workshop, the consultants developed draft conceptual land use and transportation plans. These ideas were discussed with the New York State Department of Transportation to see whether they are feasible and are in agreement with their policies. In the 2nd public workshop on July 28th, 2011, the consultants presented these revised plans for the public to comment on. Approximately 30 people were in attendance for the presentation.

The presentation began with an introduction from Peter Comenzo, Rotterdam's Town Planner. Mr. Comenzo then introduced Georges Jacquemart, from BFJ Planning. Mr. Jacquemart's presentation included the following topics:

- An update on the study's progress
- A summary of comments from the first workshop
- Four different improvement alternatives for the five corners intersection
- Improvement strategies for the Broadway/Olean/Draper intersection
- Bicycle and sidewalk improvements
- Rezoning Five Corners and Four Corners intersections as a Main Street/Neighborhood Center Zoning District
- Access Management recommendations
- Potential development scenarios

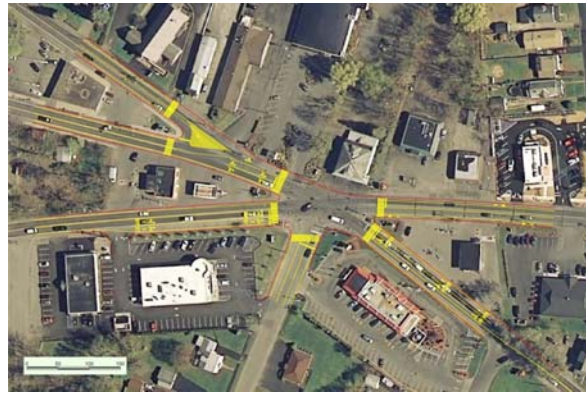
The presentation highlighted four design alternatives for the Five Corners intersection. Mr. Jacquemart showed illustrations for what can be done with and without a road widening/right-of-way taking. Attendees were shown streetscape plans as well as a table which outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the four alternatives (see next page). Mr. Jacquemart explained that alternative #2, which widens the road without a right-of-way taking would not increase safety for bicyclists or pedestrians. Option 4, which was inspired by an idea from the first workshop was deemed infeasible by NYS DOT. Only options 1 and 3 would substantially improve traffic conditions and safety for all users, however, these scenarios require right-of-way taking.

Five Corners Intersection: Design Alternatives

Option 1: Widening major approaches, add bike lanes/shoulders and sidewalks (streetscape design)



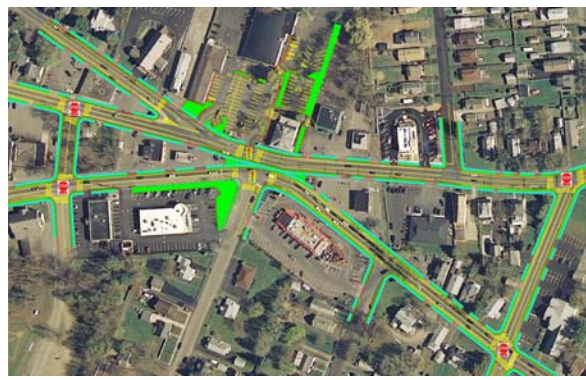
Option 2: Widening approaches of Curry, Duquesburg and Mariaville roads without new sidewalks and bike lanes and without right-of-way taking (geometric design)



Option 3: Double roundabout (streetscape design)



Option 4: X-scheme (geometric design)



Alternatives	Existing	#1 Widening with Sidewalks/ Bike Lanes	#2 Widening without Sidewalks/ Bike Lanes	#3 Double Roundabout	#4 X Scheme
Average Traffic Delay (Seconds in PM)	108.9	36.7	47.0	22.9	?
Right-of-Way Taking	---	Major	No	Major	Minor
Gas Station Removal	---	YES	NO	YES	NO
Provision of Bike Lane	---	YES	NO	YES	YES
Provision of Sidewalk	---	YES	NO	YES	YES
Order-of-Magnitude (\$million)	---	5-10	<1	5-10	<5
Sustainability	Bad	Fair	Bad/Fair	Excellent	Fair
Truck Circulation	OK	OK	OK	OK	Difficult
			Does not meet study goals		Unacceptable to NYSDOT

III. Roundtable Discussion Summary

After the presentation, there was a brief coffee break before the roundtable discussions. During the break, participants were encouraged to take a closer look at posters around the room of the various development scenarios in the study area.

Some of the attendees left after the presentation. Remaining participants were grouped into one large roundtable with a map of the study area and the questions below to address:

Roundtable Questions

1. Which one of the 5-Corner options should be proceed? Why?
2. What do you think about the proposed Broadway/Draper/Olean improvements?
3. What should be the priorities regarding other modes of transportation (transit/bike/walk) in the study area?
4. What do you think about the proposed zoning changes?
5. Should the Town consider establishing a special Improvement District including the commercial properties around the 5 Corners to generate a reasonable local financial contribution towards these improvements?

Roundtable Discussion

Participants seemed to agree that improving the five corners intersection for all users should be a priority. Much of the discussion was focused on the double roundabout alternative and whether it would work. By the end, most of the participants agreed that the roundabout solution would improve the neighborhood substantially, and should be considered by the Town. There was no support for the idea that commercial properties in a "Five Corners Special District" (properties adjacent to the intersection) should make contributions toward this capital improvement. This was stated even when representatives from CDTC said that contributions would show commitment from the community and could help raise the priority level of this particular project to get funding grants. Asking businesses to contribute was seen as too big of a financial burden, even though it would ultimately result in increased property values around the district. Some participants expressed concern that funds garnered for this project would be put in an unrestricted fund and used elsewhere. Mr. Jacquemart explained that other towns have set up restricted funds so that if people contributed money and it wasn't used by a set date, it would be returned.

Participants agreed that many people currently ride their bike through the five corners intersection and it is not safe. Participants expressed the need for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, not only at the Five Corners intersection but throughout the study area. The proposed improvements along Broadway, Draper and Olean streets were seen as a reasonable way to reduce congestion and improve safety for pedestrians. No strong opposition was expressed to the proposed zoning changes.

V. Conclusion and Next Steps

The forum was successful in attracting an engaged group of residents who were eager to discuss a range of issues. While participants agreed that significant improvements were needed, financing the capital expenditure would be the largest hurdle to overcome.

Following this workshop BFJ will deliver a draft report with implementation strategies that will help the town follow through on the proposed recommendations. Once the Draft Report is completed, it will be presented to the Town Board. This meeting will be open to the public.