

CHAPTER 5: AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5-1 PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Agency and public involvement is an integral part of the Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) process. Accordingly, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have provided, and will continue to provide, opportunities for open, collaborative, and meaningful agency and public participation throughout this study.

5-2 ENGAGING AGENCIES AND INDIGENOUS NATIONS

The goal of agency coordination is to establish a framework for facilitating agency involvement in the PEL process, including participating in the study’s activities, staying informed of progress, and contributing to key decision points. NYSDOT intends to carry recommendations obtained from agencies (on items such as a purpose and need statement and the preliminary screening of concepts) and decisions made as part of the PEL study forward to the subsequent NEPA review of any potential future project(s).

Agency coordination for the Reimagine I-787 PEL study was initiated in August 2023 with the formation of the Advisory Agencies Committee. NYSDOT invited representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, Indigenous Nations, and railroad companies to participate in the PEL study. **Table 5-1** lists the agencies and entities that are participating in the PEL study and their potential role or possible involvement as part of a potential future NEPA environmental review.

Table 5-1
Advisory Agencies Committee

Agency	Potential Future NEPA Role	Potential Future NEPA Involvement
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Cooperating Agency	Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act; Section 4(f), U.S. Department of Transportation Act
U.S. Coast Guard	Cooperating Agency	Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Cooperating Agency	Section 404, Clean Water Act permit; Section 408, Rivers and Harbors Act
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)	Cooperating Agency	Section 309, Clean Air Act Section 404, Clean Water Act permit Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands

Table 5-1
Advisory Agencies Committee

Agency	Potential Future NEPA Role	Potential Future NEPA Involvement
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Cooperating Agency	Section 7, Endangered Species Act; Bald and Golden Eagle Act; Migratory Bird Treaty Act
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries	Cooperating Agency	Section 7, Endangered Species Act; Essential Fish Habitat, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)	Cooperating Agency	New York State Article 15 coordination, Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit, Section 401 Water Quality Certification
New York State Department of State (NYSDOS)	Cooperating Agency	Waterfront Revitalization Program and Coastal Zone consistency
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Cooperating Agency	Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act; Section 4(f), U.S. Department of Transportation Act
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – NY State Parks		Section 6(f), Land and Water Conservation Fund
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Region II	Participating Agency	National Flood Insurance Program consistency
Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians	Participating Agency	Federally recognized Indigenous Nation; Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation ¹
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	Participating Agency	Federally recognized Indigenous Nation; Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation ¹
Delaware Tribe of Indians	Participating Agency	Federally recognized Indigenous Nation; Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation ¹
Capital Region Transportation Council (CRTC, formerly Capital District Transportation Committee)	Participating Agency	Metropolitan Planning Organization coordination
Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) Railroad	Participating Entity	Railroad in study area coordination
CSX (Selkirk to Schenectady)	Cooperating Entity	Railroad in study area coordination
Norfolk Southern (potentially in Schenectady area)	Cooperating Entity	Railroad in study area coordination
Amtrak (east of the Hudson River option)	Cooperating Entity	Railroad in study area coordination
Albany County	Participating Agency	Study county consultation; potential Section 4(f)
City of Albany	Participating Agency	Study city consultation; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Coordination; potential Section 4(f)
Port of Albany	Participating Agency	Port consultation
Town of Colonie	Participating Agency	Study municipality consultation; potential Section 4(f)

Table 5-1
Advisory Agencies Committee

Agency	Potential Future NEPA Role	Potential Future NEPA Involvement
City of Watervliet	Participating Agency	Study municipality consultation; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) coordination; potential Section 4(f)
Village of Menands	Participating Agency	Study municipality consultation
Village of Green Island	Participating Agency	Study municipality consultation
City of Cohoes	Participating Agency	Adjacent municipality consultation
City of Rensselaer	Participating Agency	Adjacent municipality consultation; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) coordination; potential Section 4(f)
City of Troy	Participating Agency	Adjacent municipality consultation
¹ Invitations to become a cooperating or participating agency would be sent out as part of a future environmental review. A cooperating agency is any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency with jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal that has been designated by the lead agency. A participating agency is an agency that has an interest in a transportation project and is involved in the process.		

The purpose of the Advisory Agencies Committee established for this PEL study is to provide input and guidance on various components of the study including purpose and need, methodologies for documentation of the existing conditions and assessing environmental effects, and identification of the range of design concepts and options. NYSDOT will consider recommendations provided by the Advisory Agencies Committee regarding elements to include in the design concepts and will present the initial design concepts to the committee for review and comment.

As part of one or more potential future projects, NYSDOT will need to obtain permits and approvals from various agencies in compliance with environmental statutes such as Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. While applications for such permits and approvals will not be submitted during the PEL study, coordination with the agencies responsible for these permits and approvals during the PEL study will help to establish working relationships with the agencies and to identify and begin to address agency issues and concerns in a potential future NEPA process. Consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA will not be initiated during the PEL study. NYSDOT sent letters to Federally recognized Indigenous Nations on June 16, 2023 to initiate government-to-government outreach and has had several subsequent meetings as detailed in **Table 5-2** below.

NYSDOT held the first meeting of the Advisory Agencies Committee on September 12, 2023. During this introductory meeting, NYSDOT presented an overview of the PEL process, study area,

study goals, and schedule. Meetings of the Advisory Agencies Committee will continue to be held at key decision points in the PEL study.

Agencies with relevant interests were consulted individually with respect to the methodologies of collecting and analyzing traffic and environmental data for the PEL study. The agencies provided guidance and important information about resources present within the PEL study area and potential ways to avoid and/or minimize environmental effects. **Table 5-2** presents the meetings held with individual agencies and entities during the PEL study.

Table 5-2
Meetings with Individual Agencies and Entities

Agency/Entity	Meeting Date
CPKC	June 23, 2023
Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians	September 15, 2023
SHPO	October 13, 2023
Delaware Tribe	November 7, 2023
USEPA	December 13, 2023
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	December 14, 2023
CPKC	March 15, 2024
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Delaware Tribe	August 23, 2024
Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians	September 24, 2024

Since CPKC is a prominent transportation entity along the I-787 corridor in downtown Albany, NYSDOT met with the railroad to discuss the interface of the PEL study and the freight railroad. Through these interactions, CPKC expressed the need to maintain their operations. As such, most concepts have been designed in consideration of the railroad remaining in its current configuration along the I-787 corridor.

In October 2023, NYSDOT met with SHPO to discuss the approach for data collection and methodology related to cultural resources. NYSDOT conducted a site tour with USEPA in December 2023 to provide an overview of the PEL study area and to discuss potential environmental considerations, particularly related to environmental justice concerns.

NYSDOT and FHWA have engaged with Indigenous Nations with an interest in the PEL study area to introduce the study, provide an overview of potential design concepts, and to understand any concerns of the Indigenous Nations with respect to cultural resources in the study area. In particular, NYSDOT and FHWA requested and received the Indigenous Nations' comments on the proposed methodology for the cultural resources analysis, the presence of culturally significant places, archaeologically sensitive areas, and issues of concern. Based on the long presence of Indigenous peoples in the study area and vicinity, the Indigenous Nations provided comments on the settlement patterns and cultural traditions of their ancestors and their ongoing interest in the study. Additional meetings with the participating Indigenous Nations will occur as the study continues and as part of a future environmental review of any future project(s).

5-3 ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

The goals of the public involvement/engagement process include providing information about the PEL study to the public; soliciting public input, including concerns, visions, challenges, and opportunities, to inform the scope of the PEL study; and involving the public early in the development of the initial design concepts and the purpose, need, and objectives.

5-3-1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS

NYSDOT and FHWA are committed to an open, participatory review process for the study and will continue to inform and solicit frequent feedback from the public and from agencies; encourage open discussion of study details and issues; and provide opportunities for comments and questions. Opportunities for public input have occurred and will continue to occur throughout the study and include those described below.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Public open houses are a valuable tool to keep the general public informed of the study and to solicit public input. Public open houses have been held at major milestones during the study, including initiation of the PEL study and development of initial design concepts, at convenient, centrally located, and transit-accessible locations. At these meetings, study team members are available to engage with members of the public one-on-one to provide information about the study and answer questions. Materials presented at the open houses include display boards, illustrations of the concepts, recorded and/or live presentations, and other appropriate materials.

Public open houses have been advertised and promoted in a variety of ways, such as local media releases (print and on-line newspapers [e.g., *Times Union*, *Daily Gazette*, and *CNY Latino*] and local news broadcasts); community message boards; local and regional civic organizations; study website and NYSDOT and CRTC social media accounts; direct mail/e-mail to the study mailing list; notices on Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) buses; and distribution of meeting notices at grocery stores, public libraries, churches, and community centers in Albany, Menands, Watervliet, Cohoes, Green Island, Rensselaer, and Troy. Meeting notices have been distributed throughout minority and low-income communities, including in the South End, Arbor Hill, North Albany, West Hill, and Delaware Area neighborhoods. In addition, NYSDOT has asked stakeholders (e.g., elected officials and City representatives such as neighborhood specialists, advocacy groups such as Albany Riverfront Collaborative, and numerous others) to help spread the word about public meetings.

Two initial PEL study public open house meetings were held on June 27, 2023, at the MVP Arena, and July 19, 2023, at the Albany Housing Authority. During these initial meetings, NYSDOT presented an overview of the PEL process, study area, study goals, and schedule. There were approximately 215 people at the first open house and approximately 65 people at the second open house. Both meetings consisted of an informal open house and a recorded presentation. Attendees were encouraged to submit Post-its and comment sheets with their input and

responses to questions posed on the display boards. A total of 777 comments were received on Post-its/comment sheets at the first open house meeting, and 118 comments were received at the second open house meeting.

NYSDOT held an open house meeting on May 1, 2024, at the Albany Capital Center. The meeting consisted of an informal open house and a recorded presentation. The purpose of this meeting was to present and solicit input on the draft proposed purpose and need, study objectives, data collection results, and initial design concepts. There were approximately 300 people at the open house. A total of 85 comment sheets were submitted at the open house.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

In addition to the open houses, other meetings have been held or are anticipated to be held with smaller groups to solicit input on the study, including information on the development of the concepts and the PEL review process. These meetings include neighborhood and community meetings; meetings with elected officials, interested parties and individuals; and other outreach efforts, as described below and presented in **Table 5-3**.

- **Neighborhood and Community Meetings.** The neighborhood and community meetings are designed to give residents throughout the region additional smaller group opportunities to learn about the PEL study, interact one on one with the study team, and submit their comments. These meetings have and will be held in areas with low-income and/or minority populations where possible. Neighborhood meetings were held following the second public open house and will be held after the third open house.
- **Meetings with Elected Officials, Interested Parties, and Individuals.** FHWA and NYSDOT have and will hold smaller group or individual meetings on the PEL study's status and progress. Elected officials will be briefed through joint meetings as well as individual briefings to keep them informed of study developments. These briefings will occur regularly, at study milestones. Efforts have been made and will continue to be made to hold individual group meetings with representatives from county and municipal governments (e.g., Albany County, City of Albany, City of Rensselaer, City of Troy, City of Watervliet, Village of Green Island, Village of Menands, and Town of Colonie) and regional agencies (e.g., regular meetings with the Capital Region Transportation Council [CRTC] and its member organizations, CDTA, Capital District Regional Planning Commission, New York State Thruway Authority, and Albany Port District Commission); the residential (e.g., Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations [CANA] and various neighborhood associations), business (e.g., Capital Region Chamber, Capitalize Albany Corporation, and Downtown Albany Business Improvement District [BID]), and commuter communities (e.g., Albany Bicycle Coalition, Albany South End Bike Way Link Task Force, and others); special interest groups (e.g., Albany Waterway Canal Project, Walkable Albany, Albany Riverfront Collaborative, and 98 Acres in Albany), and numerous others, as appropriate. NYSDOT has also met with the separate Reimagine Albany effort, which comprises members from the Albany NY Chapter of the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Arbor Hill Development Corp., AVillage, Inc., Capital District Clean + Healthy, Capital Area Urban League, Albany Riverfront Collaborative, and other organizations representing minority and low-income populations, such as the Albany Black Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to meetings arranged by NYSDOT, the agency has also attended meetings held by others, including neighborhood associations and other groups.

- **Outreach at Local Festivals and Community Events.** Information booths for the PEL study have been provided at local events, such those listed in **Table 5-3**, which shows meetings and public events up to publication of this document. The information booths are staffed with PEL study team members who provide information about the PEL study and answer questions. Comment forms were made available at each event, with information to access the PEL study's website for additional information and opportunities to submit comments.

Table 5-3
PEL Study Meetings and Outreach Events

Date	Meetings and Outreach Events
4/25/2023	South End Neighborhood Association
5/12/2023	Albany Waterway Meeting
6/7/2023	Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations
6/27/2023	MVP Arena Open House
7/13/2023	South End Night Market
7/19/2023	Albany Housing Authority Open House
7/20/2023	Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association Meeting
8/1/2023	South End National Night Out
8/1/2023	Arbor Hill National Night Out
8/17/2023	West Hill Neighborhood Association Meeting
8/26/2023	Latin Fest
9/20/2023	Ten Broeck Neighborhood Association Meeting
9/27/2023	Albany Riverfront Collaborative Meeting
10/06/2023	Albany Business Owners
10/10/2023	Albany Black Chamber of Commerce
11/18/2023	Albany Waterway at NYS Museum
12/6/2023	Albany Parking Authority
2/2/2024	Albany Riverfront Collaborative Meeting
5/1/2024	Albany Capital Center Open House
5/28/2024	South End Neighborhood Association
5/30/2024	Albany Riverfront Collaborative Meeting
6/13/2024	Albany Waterway Meeting
6/22/2024	Art on Lark Fest
6/22/2024	Albany Public Library: Howe Branch Open House
6/22/2024	AVillage's Reimagine Albany Open House
6/25/2024	South End Neighborhood Association
6/25/2024	Ten Broek Neighborhood Association Meeting
7/10/2024	The First Church Open House
7/12/2024	City of Albany, City of Rensselaer, and the Port of Albany Meeting
7/16/2024	USEPA/Reimagine Albany Site Tour
7/17/2024	Arbor Hill Open House
7/18/2024	West Hill Neighborhood Association Meeting
7/26/2024	Albany Neighborhood Specialists Meeting

Table 5-3
PEL Study Meetings and Outreach Events

Date	Meetings and Outreach Events
8/6/2024	National Night Out South End
8/6/2024	National Night Out North Albany
8/6/2024	National Night Out@Ezra Prentice—Albany Housing Authority
8/10/2024	Capital District Farmers Market in Menands
8/12/2024	National Night Out Sheridan Hollow
8/15/2024	Rensselaer Farmers Market
8/16/2024	SNUG Day
8/17/2024	Values-Voice-Vigilance Conference
8/17/2024	Capital District Farmers Market in Menands
8/24/2024	Troy Waterfront Farmers Market
8/24/2024	Latin Fest
8/24/2024	Washington Park Farmers Market
8/26/2024	Rensselaer Open House
8/29/2024	Arbor Hill Block Party
9/7/2024	Washington Park Farmers Market
9/9/2024	Menands Open House
9/14/2024	Washington Park Farmers Market
9/14/2024	Capital District Farmers Market in Menands
9/14/2024	Menands Farmers Market
9/17/2024	Delaware Avenue Farmers Market
9/18/2024	Empire State Plaza Farmers Market
9/19/2024	Rensselaer Farmers Market
9/22/2024	Albany County Farmers Market
9/24/2024	Delaware Avenue Farmers Market
9/25/2024	Empire State Plaza Farmers Market
9/26/2024	Rensselaer Farmers Market
9/28/2024	Washington Park Farmers Market
9/29/2024	Albany County Farmers Market
9/29/2024	Upper Madison Avenue Street Fair
10/5/2024	Reimagine Albany and USEPA Workshop
10/8/2024	Albany Yacht Club
10/12/2024	Troy Waterfront Farmers Market

COMMITTEES

Two committees chaired by NYSDOT have been formed to provide additional forums for active public participation:

- The **Steering Committee** is made up of representatives from FHWA, the City of Albany, Albany County, and the CRTC. This committee has provided input to NYSDOT throughout the PEL study. Meetings have occurred at major study milestones throughout the PEL study.
- The **Municipal Partnership Committee** includes representatives from municipalities in the PEL study area. Meetings have occurred at major milestones throughout the PEL study.

5-4 EQUITABLE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

It is the intent of the public engagement process for this study to ensure that all stakeholders are provided opportunities to be heard and to participate meaningfully from the outset of the study and throughout all phases of development. According to the demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS), there are minority, low-income, and limited-English proficiency (LEP) populations within the PEL study area. To ensure that EJ and LEP populations are engaged and informed, NYSDOT has implemented a variety of approaches to overcome language, cultural, economic, and other potential barriers to effective participation in the study.

5-4-1 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OUTREACH

Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, dated February 11, 1994, requires consideration of whether a proposed action would disproportionately and adversely affect prescribed minority or low-income groups (59 Fed Reg. 7629 [1994]). A preliminary review of potential environmental justice (EJ) populations appears in **Chapter 4, Social, Economic, and Environmental Considerations**. An EJ analysis to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations would be prepared as part of a future environmental review process.

In addition to EO 12898, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 stipulates that recipients of federal aid must certify nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Title VI specifically states that “no person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

EO 12898 also requires Federal agencies to ensure public participation from communities with substantial minority or low-income populations. Each Federal agency has developed a strategy to address environmental justice, with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) responsible for oversight and coordination. The environmental review process for a future project will follow all applicable guidance and methodologies, and other Federal documents as appropriate.

NYSDOT has made notices of public meetings and other public outreach materials accessible to minority and low-income communities in the study area. Meeting notices have been distributed throughout neighborhoods in minority and low-income communities and sent to the City’s neighborhood specialists and various leaders of community organizations to distribute to their members. Meetings have been advertised in local newspapers including those serving minority and low-income communities, such as CNY Latino.

NYSDOT has held meetings and attended meetings in environmental justice communities (see **Table 5-3**). In order to advertise the meetings to the public, the study team distributed flyers (in English and Spanish) to 49 locations (grocery stores, community centers, churches, etc.) within the

Capital District noting the time and location of the meetings. On July 19, 2023, NYSDOT held an open house at the Albany Housing Authority to bring the same information presented at the initial PEL study open house meeting to residents in that area. NYSDOT has attended a meeting of the Albany Black Chamber of Commerce and neighborhood association meetings in the communities of West Hill and Ten Broeck neighborhoods. Information booths for the PEL study have been provided at the South End Night Market and National Night Out and other events listed above.

5-4-2 LEP OUTREACH

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English have limited-English proficiency (LEP). Federal requirements concerning language access rights and obligations include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166. As noted earlier, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that no person in the U.S. shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Project Sponsors receive federal financial assistance. Title VI also requires access to information and services for LEP individuals. Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited-English Proficiency," was signed on August 11, 2000 and states that people with LEP should have meaningful access to Federally conducted and funded programs and activities. The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with LEP, and develop and implement a system to provide those services that allows meaningful access by LEP individuals. Furthermore, State of New York Executive Order No. 26, *Statewide Language Access Plan for Limited English Proficient Individuals* (2011), requires New York State agencies that provide direct public services to translate vital documents and provide interpretation services for LEP persons, as appropriate.

As shown in Chapter 4, Table 4-14, there are LEP populations within both Albany and Rensselaer Counties. Within Albany County, the percentage of persons with LEP ranges from less than 1 percent to over 33 percent. In Rensselaer County, this percentage ranges from less than 1 percent to over 24 percent of the population. In 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau reduced the number of individual languages published in its data, particularly at the Block Group level. Therefore, the most frequently identified language spoken is Other Indo-European language (a category that includes a host of major European and Indic languages); the second most frequently spoken is Spanish; and the third is Asian and Pacific Island languages. Therefore, Spanish is the single most prevalent language used by persons with LEP in the PEL study area. NYSDOT has offered in person Spanish interpretation services and other languages upon request. In addition, services such as Language Line or Lingularinx, which provide interpretation in 250 or more languages, have been available at the open houses.

5-4-3 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE

Public meetings for the Reimagine I-787 PEL study have been held in locations that are ADA compliant to assure that individuals with disabilities and/or elderly persons may have convenient access to meetings. Notices announcing public meetings provide instructions for requesting special accommodations such as sign language interpretation.

5-4-4 PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLS

NYS DOT has employed a variety of communication tools to assist with the public outreach efforts and keep the public informed about the PEL study, including:

- **Study Documents.** Study documents developed at key milestones for the purpose of informing agencies and the public about the PEL study concepts and results are posted on the study website and provided at local repositories.
- **Study Website.** NYS DOT hosts a website for the Reimagine I-787 PEL study (<https://webapps.dot.ny.gov/reimagining-i-787>). This website includes information on the PEL process, study activities and progress, public participation opportunities, and contact information. The website is kept up to date with information on the initial design concepts, environmental data collection, and current and previous study documentation. A link is provided to allow people to sign up for the mailing list and submit comments electronically.
- **Social Media.** NYS DOT issues social media posts as needed. These include information on the Reimagine I-787 PEL study and provide links to the study website, as well as information about public participation opportunities, study team contact information, and how people can submit comments or sign up for the PEL study mailing list.
- **Mailing List.** The PEL study's mailing list includes elected officials, public agency contacts, stakeholders and community groups, media, and members of the public with an interest in the PEL study, including groups and individuals with connections with minority and low-income populations in the study area. The mailing list is used to distribute meeting announcements and information about the study. Where email addresses are available, announcements are distributed electronically. The mailing list is continuously updated to include new contacts obtained from meetings and the study website.
- **Email Blasts.** NYS DOT uses email blasts to inform the public about upcoming public meetings and study updates.
- **Study Hot Line.** A telephone number, 518-457-1787, has been set up for members of the public to reach PEL study team representatives during business hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday).
- **Study Repositories.** Copies of PEL study documents and other study materials are provided at local repositories for public viewing. The repositories include agency and municipal offices, libraries, and community centers. **Table 5-4** lists the names and addresses of the study repositories.

Table 5-4
Study Repositories

Repository	Address
New York State Department of Transportation Region 1 Office	50 Wolf Road, Colonie, NY 12205
Albany City Hall	24 Eagle Street, Albany, NY 12207
Rensselaer City Hall	62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144
Watervliet City Clerk	215th Street, Watervliet, NY 12189
Cohoes City Office	Cohoes City Hall, 97 Mohawk Street, Cohoes, NY 12047
Troy City Clerk	433 River Street, Troy, NY 12183
Green Island Village Office	200 Paine Street, Green Island, NY 12183
Village of Menands Clerk's Office	280 Broadway, Menands, NY 12204
Town of Colonie Memorial Town Hall	534 Loudon Road, Latham, NY 12110
Albany Public Library Howe Branch	105 Schuyler Street, Albany, NY 12202
Albany Public Library Washington Avenue Branch	161 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY, 12210
Albany Public Library - North Albany Branch	616 N Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12204
Cohoes Public Library	10 Cayuga Plaza, Cohoes, NY 12047
Menands Public Library	4 N Lyons Avenue, Albany, NY 12204
Troy Public Library	100 2nd Street, Troy, NY 12180
Rensselaer Public Library	676 East Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144
Robert A. Fahr Watervliet Public Library	1501 Broadway #1, Watervliet, NY 12189

5-5 SUMMARY OF AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comments received at public information meetings, events, and via email and regular mail are summarized by topic in **Tables 5-5 and 5-6**. **Table 5-5** summarizes comments received between June 2023 and April 2024. **Table 5-6** summarizes comments received after May 1, 2024. Comments were collected via comment forms available at public meetings and events as well as through the PEL study's website. More than 1,300 comments were received, some on comment forms and some on Post-Its, both at public meetings/events and via email or mail. These comments were categorized into five general topics—Concepts, Environmental, Transportation, Outreach, and Miscellaneous—and further broken into subcategories (see tables below). Multiple comments on the same topic were combined into one subcategory. The letters used to identify comment summaries correspond to the overall topics (i.e., "C" for Concepts, "E" for Environmental, etc.)

Agency and public comments were used to guide and shape the proposed purpose, needs, and objectives, the design concepts, and the methodology and approaches for the study's data gathering. The guiding themes noted by commenters included the need for improved access to the waterfront; better and safer bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and more multi-modal transit options; concerns about negative effects on environmental justice communities; potential relocation and displacement of residents and businesses; preference for a canal and improved water access; concerns about traffic congestion; and flooding/resiliency. Other commenters addressed the future of the roadway—whether the best solution would be to leave it as is and

continue to maintain it or to cap it through Albany. The aforementioned issues were used in concept development to address commenters' concerns, as explained below.

- Improve access to the waterfront. The concepts consider enhancing existing access points to the river and looked to increase the number of access points where possible. The concepts also consider riverfront access via capping of the roadways, new underpasses, as well as canals and marinas, and examined relocation of the railroad away from the river so as to increase waterfront access.
- Improve bike, pedestrian, and multi-modal transit options. All concepts recommended to move forward consider connections to the existing trail system including: the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail; Mohawk-Hudson Hike-Bike Trail; Albany Skyway; Empire State Trail; and future Rensselaer Riverfront Multi-Use Trail. The concepts incorporate pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, including bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, and new or improved sidewalks.
- Environmental justice. The concepts aim to provide improved connectivity between neighborhoods disrupted by the South Mall Expressway and associated I-787 interchanges.
- Relocation and displacement. Concepts have been designed to remain largely within available existing rights-of-way or have limited footprint on land outside of the right-of-way (e.g., in the case of the proposed Dunn Memorial Bridge relocation near the Port of Albany), thereby limiting impacts to adjacent properties. Efforts to further avoid or minimize building acquisitions will continue as design advances.
- Canal and improved water access. Concepts explored several canal options, both in Albany and in Menands, to serve as riverfront connections.
- Cap the highway in Albany. Capping of I-787 in Albany has been considered for multiple locations along the Albany riverfront as part of the design concepts to create new ways to link the city with the waterfront.
- Traffic congestion. Macro- and meso-scale traffic analyses were performed for each of the major concepts to determine the viability of the proposed concepts as compared with existing traffic conditions.
- Flooding/Resiliency. As design advances, concepts moving forward for will incorporate measures pursuant to applicable resiliency design standards.

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
C-1	Commenters advocated for a canal . Reasons included that a canal would connect the neighborhoods to the water and serve as a social justice action; the canal, with other transit options, would connect the Downtown, South End, Capitol/Plaza, Center Square, Warehouse District, and Ten Broek neighborhoods to each other; would serve as an economic driver and a destination for visitors and businesses; create recreational opportunities; and represent a nod to Albany’s connection to the historic Erie Canal. Commenters suggested using San Antonio’s Riverwalk as an inspiration and re-envisioning the Erie Canal in Albany as a harbor; finding an existing study about putting a canal along Broadway; putting the canal on Broadway in the Warehouse District instead of along Broadway.
C-2	Commenters were against a canal , saying that bringing people to the Hudson River was the priority, not building a canal in the city, and that a canal would be unworkable in a downtown setting.
C-3	Commenters’ views regarding Dunn Memorial Bridge/Dunn Memorial Park included relocating the Dunn Memorial Bridge south of the port and away from the riverfront park, moving the park farther south, bringing down the South Mall Expressway to reconnect South Albany with the rest of the city, ending the direct access to Empire State Plaza, designing a new bridge, extending the bridge to reduce traffic, revamping its exits, and designing new bike and pedestrian routes to and in the park and inviting spaces under the road infrastructure.
C-4	Commenters advocated for a boulevard that would emphasize safe and ADA-accessible pedestrian, bike, and transit options over motor vehicles; be “post-car” oriented; reduce traffic speed, congestion, and noise through the city, provide access to the Hudson River; connect to transit options and the street grid; integrate notable buildings and public spaces with road infrastructure, introduce greenspace, aesthetically enhance the downtown cityscape, use historic interpretive signage, and hearken area history through the use of materials (e.g., cobblestone) and lighting design; allow vendors and encourage businesses to locate along its length; transform and entice people back to Downtown Albany; and it would be easier to repair than an elevated roadway. Pursuing federal aid to assist local efforts for the Boulevard concept was suggested.
C-5	Commenters advocated that I-787 stay where it is (No Build) , reasoning that it is a regional, not local, highway and remarking it would be a better investment to maintain and not reimagine it.
C-6	Commenters advocated for I-787 to be replaced in kind , noting that it is well used, an important connector, and therefore necessary to get drivers where they want to go and predicting that if it is replaced, commutes will become “dreadful.”
C-7	The commenter advocated for an at grade expressway to open up new land for businesses and office parks.
C-8	Commenters advocated for more interchanges or changes to existing interchanges: dismantling of oversized interchanges in Menands and Empire State Plaza; installing better, longer merge lanes or changing them to two-way stops to ease congestion at the exits; reducing the “cloverleaf” real estate; and adding traffic circles, similar to those at Northway Exit 7.
C-9	Commenters mentioned urban design concerns: replacing pollution-emitting infrastructure with aesthetically pleasing features such as new parkland, waterfront development, and more environmentally friendly buildings and structures to make Albany more attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors alike.
C-10	Commenters advocated for a tunnel to keep high volumes of traffic flowing underground while using the additional surface area for parks, buildings, and housing and to reconnect Albany’s neighborhoods. A tunneled highway would also reduce traffic-associated noise throughout downtown.
C-11	Making I-787 a depressed highway would have the advantage of keeping traffic flowing at high volumes while regaining waterfront access.

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
C-12	Commenters advocated for more transit options, including many advocating for light rail to connect travelers within Albany and regionally. Additional suggestions included reducing reliance on cars and implementing trolleys/tram use, free buses, operating more buses, dedicated bus lanes and bike lanes, room for E-bikes and scooters, water taxis, ferries, gondola, and a metro/subway.
C-13	Commenters advocated for capping the highway to make room for new commercial and mixed-use development and parkland.
C-14	Commenters advocated for installation of a gondola to connect travelers from the train station to Empire State Plaza with a stop at a new downtown transit center. A gondola would solve parking in Albany by having people park in Rensselaer and ride across the river and would be a memorable tourist experience.
C-15	Commenters advocated for removal of I-787 because it is dark, overbuilt, unsafe, and negatively affects community health; in its place, the city could have a beautiful park connecting downtown and other neighborhoods via pedestrian and bike paths to the waterfront, a light rail system, affordable housing and mixed-use development. 787 is not compatible with historic Downtown Albany. The highway has eroded community cohesion. The highway was created to facilitate the goals of redlining and should be dismantled. Removal would make Albany more livable, more for residents than commuters; people today want to live in dense, walkable, cyclable areas. Bringing the highway down would create more access to the Warehouse District from the south. Removal of I-787 would automatically encourage new housing and commercial development.
C-16	Commenters advocated for realignment of I-787 , suggesting it should be moved away from the river while maintaining quick access for workers/commuters and for events and thereby opening up the river to businesses, restaurants, and parks; and moving I-787 west of the railroad tracks for the length of the tracks that are currently between the traffic lanes and 787, with enough room on the east side of the highway to install concrete sound barrier walls to block the view of rail cars and offer a smidgen of protection in case of a fire.
C-17	Commenters suggested using tolls to charge drivers for the convenience of traveling through the city or to compensate for the damage I-787 causes the city and residents.
C-18	Commenters advocated for a gateway including references to the city's Dutch colonial history and with an architecturally notable entrance into the city. Another suggestion was having city gateways parallel to Empire State Plaza and enhancing the Albany entrance to Troy.
C-19	Commenters mentioned freight rail , suggesting rerouting Canadian Pacific rail onto the CSX right-of-way, including an additional bridge at the port of Albany; moving the railroad tracks underground; and relocating the rail line to make the line through Albany more efficient and safer for residents (in terms of air quality and noise concerns).
C-20	Transportation – Other . Commenters suggested installing a roundabout with better/integrated walkways and reimagining H.J. Blvd and I-90. In a barge/building on the Albany waterfront, make a Hudson River Ecology Center and Riverfront Museum showcasing the Hudson River's place in the community to attract residents and tourists.
T-1	Commenters advocated for increased and safer biking opportunities, including more bike paths with more connectivity, especially across the Hudson River; and designated, protected bike lanes; city-operated and guarded/protected bike amenities (locks, restrooms) at ground level; visually appealing bike paths, and better signage.
T-2	Commenters advocated for increased and safer pedestrian opportunities. Suggestions included preserving and making new pedestrian walkways across the Hudson River, affording improved traffic crossings and pedestrian signaling, providing amenities such as charging stations along routes; installing more speed bumps to slow traffic in pedestrian areas; using pedestrian-friendly design and signaling; provide more walkable streets.

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
T-3	Commenters advocated for increased and safer bike and pedestrian opportunities, including better crossings and better pedestrian signaling; more connections to public transit; ensuring accessibility for all residents regardless of ability; making pedestrian and bike paths accessible for those traveling both without and with a motor vehicle (making parking near paths necessary), and providing amenities, including portable toilets for pedestrians/bikers.
T-4	Commenters mentioned traffic congestion as an ongoing issue. Suggestions included dispersing vehicles from high-volume areas to locations with less volume to lessen congestion problems; reducing rather than redirecting traffic; the observation that traffic congestion will only get worse with more residential uses being built.
T-5	Commenters advocated for better transportation connectivity within Albany and regionally, including connections across the river. Suggestions included a variety of ways to make traffic connectivity better while not sacrificing ease of access or speed of travel. Additional ideas included connecting bike and pedestrian paths to transit options; making I-787 a connector to Albany instead of a bypass; making I-787 a boulevard that connects to the local street grid; installing pedestrian overpasses to access the riverfront; creating a bus/transit hub in downtown that could connect to a variety of connections—local streets, trolley, gondola, canal, and marinas; connecting South Pearl Street to the rest of downtown; extending Dunn Memorial Bridge to East Street (or re-routing US 9 to go up hill to meet US 20 in East Greenbush, possibly at Corellis Drive) to make access to passenger rail easier; changing the speed limit on I-787 and/or using traffic calming techniques; and reconnecting isolated neighborhoods with the rest of the city.
T-6	Commenters mentioned traffic safety as a concern, citing high vehicular speeds as an issue and the need to consider applicable complete streets design features to increase safety throughout the network. One commenter stated, “we’ve spent too much time focusing only on cars and not on pedestrians and cyclists.” Increasing maintenance, slowing traffic, improving visibility, reducing the number of trucks in traffic, making dedicated bike lanes and pedestrian paths, using reflective paint on the roadways, and improving signage were cited as suggestions for making driving, biking, and walking safer in the city. Bike lanes were also mentioned as being dangerous on the roadways. Many stated that the highway ramps and merge lanes need to be safer; there was a call for more police presence and traffic monitoring on the roadways.
T-7	Commenters advocated for numerous points of safe waterfront access via many sorts of transportation—by car, public transit (including water transit), bike, and on foot. Important elements of waterfront access included providing green space, promenades, boardwalks, and other public spaces; providing equal access to all residents; making access points easier to use; using the waterfront as a natural area and a place for commerce and events; building a marina, a Ferris wheel; making a swimmable beach; extending the waterfront-accessible area.
T-8	Commenters mentioned issues with local streets , questioning changes to Congress Street Bridge and Front Street and suggesting blocking traffic from Washington Park in Albany.
T-9	Commenters mentioned that local signage should be better, specifically for hospitals and connections between major roadways like I-90 and R17.
T-10	Commenters mentioned the need to facilitate opportunities for safe and affordable parking , create more parking around the MVP Arena and the train station, and provide parking adjacent to pedestrian and bike paths. One commenter suggested that newly accessible waterfront areas should have privately run parking lots.
T-11	Commenters advocated for undertaking an updated traffic study that would question the current purpose of a highway like I-787 through Albany.
T-12	Commenters advocated for EV charging stations , including for e-bikes and wheelchairs.

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
T-13	Commenters advocated for the installation of safe routes for E-bike users.
T-14	Commenters were concerned about emergency medical services (EMS) access to the bike path between Interchanges 6 and 7 for fire trucks, ambulances, and the police.
E-1	Commenters mentioned general environmental concerns, with one likening the I-787 corridor to an ecological and social “sacrifice zone” with particle emissions, noise, heat, and hazardous materials that compromise the environmental and human health integrity of the region. Another mentioned the area’s need for childcare services.
E-2	Environmental justice (EJ) issues raised by commenters included noting that the original construction of I-787 displaced residents who were primarily people of color, with many commenters saying that they hoped this wouldn’t happen again with this initiative. Commenters called for investment in disadvantaged communities and repair from the history of redlining; reconnecting South Albany with the rest of the city and its waterway as a way to improve a sense of community and prioritize the voices of communities currently and historically affected by the highway; stressed that non-auto transportation is important for the EJ population, as is adequate access to grocery stores and medical services; wondered about the effects of project construction, specifically increased truck traffic, on local communities; and suggested engaging with the New York State Museum, elders of various communities, historians of color, and learning from possible parallels in other cities. Commenters underscored the need to include the disabled and the unhoused population in study plans.
E-3	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns, specifically regarding Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations , requesting that a QR code be provided with translations in all languages. Language needs were identified (in no particular order) for speakers of Pashto, Hindi, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Swahili, Haitian, Russian, French, German, Chin, Burmese, and Karen.
E-4	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns, specifically regarding jobs , and suggested increasing the training and employment opportunities for poor and disadvantaged residents, hiring within the community, and making sustainable business ownership opportunities for people who choose to live in Albany. One commenter asked whether construction contracts would include project labor agreements.
E-5	Commenters stressed the importance of and need for affordable housing and suggested building affordable and supportive housing and single-family “starter homes.”
E-6	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns, specifically regarding gentrification . Commenters denounced the gentrification of neighborhoods that can occur when they are improved, with one saying, “just because an area is made beautiful doesn’t mean the poor and minorities have to be pushed away.”
E-7	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns about the potential project’s potential effects on health , asking the study team to consider a Health Impact Assessment
E-8	Commenters mentioned land use and suggested calling for the land formerly occupied by I-787 and zoned for industrial use to be rezoned for commercial and/or mixed use; zoning for a variety of land uses—housing (including affordable housing), parks, mixed-use development, mixed zoning, better and unlimited access to a vibrant waterfront, space for local business/cultural uses, an aquarium, more community areas, less highway infrastructure, better public transportation, and an outdoor amphitheater integrated into the Empire State Plaza area. Other suggestions included putting a rail station on the Albany side of the river; permitting uses designed to enhance the lives of disadvantaged residents with accessible food stores, public gathering spaces, and investment in affordable mental health and drug treatment; ensuring reusing of the Central Warehouse for cultural uses or converting it into the Albany Central Rail station at the lower levels and into office/apartments at the upper levels; converting country clubs into community farms; integrating buildings such as the

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
	SUNY headquarters and Kiernan Plaza into the redevelopment of the road infrastructure in the area; and collaborating with the planning department of Albany, which has done waterfront studies and plans.
E-9	Commenters put forth economic development as a way to bolster the activity and attractiveness of downtown Albany and its waterfront to encourage prosperity and enhance quality of life. Linking Albany’s downtown economic development with that of the waterfront was a common theme. Ideas for the economic development of downtown include providing residents and visitors with a diverse selection of businesses and uses, e.g., grocery stores, dining establishments, pharmacies, street vendors, shopping options, cultural venues, housing, public transport, and greenspace. For the waterfront, suggestions included a marina, restaurants, boat rentals, other tourist attractions, a museum and other cultural spaces, and residential and mixed-use development. Another suggestion included establishing gondola service with a plaza featuring shops and dining options for travelers with layovers in Rensselaer. One commenter stressed that successful economic redevelopment could only be done with the support of local, regional, state, and federal agencies.
E-10	Commenters mentioned community character , stating that they wanted to see the area benefit from an updated, less concrete-and-steel, more people-friendly and safe community space where the local community can walk, shop, talk, and generally live well. Descriptions of existing community character included money pit, depressing, overbuilt, disconnected, not for people, ugly, dangerous, and noisy.
E-11	Commenters mentioned concerns regarding relocation and displacement , stating that direct communication and consultation with residents was needed to give opportunities for public/affordable housing residents to relocate and to try not to displace as many people as has happened with previous projects.
E-12	Commenters mentioned cultural resources . Suggestions to enliven, enrich, and honor the city included preserving and/or restoring local historic buildings and other resources; creating a waterfront museum; acknowledging the region’s rich historical past—Native American, African-American, and Dutch Colonial; calling for archaeological investigations; honoring the history of the Hudson River—its riparian zones, river health, systematic displacement; using local artists’ work to beautify the city; and featuring the area’s history of underground railroad activity.
E-13	Commenters called for more parks and public spaces in the downtown/waterfront areas. Suggestions included providing promenades, boardwalks, and recreational opportunities near the waterfront; improving access to parks; rewilding and recreating parks and trails; creating a system of pocket parks; making a linear greenway; using empty lots and removing unused buildings to make parks; and using riparian areas for parks.
E-14	Commenter mentioned parks in Menands , stating that the park near the waterfront in Menands must be made more accessible to users (better access than walking along a dangerous on-ramp).
E-15	Commenters mentioned visual resources. Common themes were the need for more of a visual connection with the waterfront and river and in order to achieve this, removing any infrastructure that blocks this view. There were also calls for the urban deserts beneath the overpass to be redeveloped to create a vibrant urban neighborhood, a new design for the Pastures neighborhood, adherence to the early 1900s aesthetic, and providing an accessible waterfront that is vibrant and pedestrian- and bike-friendly with good landscaping and lighting.
E-16	Commenters mentioned air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions concerns. With the I-787 redesign, the potential project may disproportionately impact overburdened and other communities in Albany or could benefit Albany neighborhoods with improved air quality. Commenters cited automobiles and oil trains as significant sources of air pollution. Suggestions were made to align the study with the air quality study of the South End completed by PEL; evaluate the embodied carbon of project infrastructure; and consider the issue of hydrocarbon air pollution near the river due to the Port of Albany.

Table 5-5
Summary of Comments Received between June 17, 2023 and May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
E-17	Commenters mentioned traffic noise , noting that I-787 was too noisy and therefore detracted residents from fully enjoying areas near it, including the waterfront; and that noise barriers are needed, e.g., from Exit 3 to I-90.
E-18	Commenters mentioned natural resources in general . Suggestions included planting more trees and riverine wetland wildlife, reintroducing native plant species, and encouraging rewilding; and restoring, preserving, or improving local waterways—e.g., the tidal pond in the Corning Preserve, Normanskill Creek, Little River (replacing old culverts with a bridge), and Tivoli Lake, and Mill Creeks—and using these improved waterways for flood flow benefits. Some commenters noted that pulling down I-787 represents a good opportunity to make the area less dangerous to animals traveling in the area.
E-19	Commenters mentioned natural resources, in particular the Hudson River . Commenters focused on its water quality, stressing the importance of cleaning up the river so it can be enjoyed by residents and visitors. The suggestion was made to create a riparian buffer zone/ecological park capable of adapting to higher sea levels.
E-20	Commenters mentioned natural resources, in particular water quality .
E-21	Commenters mentioned construction , suggesting that public health should be protected during construction process and asking how traffic would impact the city of Rensselaer during construction and when it would be complete.
E-22	Commenters mentioned stormwater and suggested reducing combined sewer overflows using stormwater management systems.
E-23	Commenter mentioned hazardous materials , specifically the effect of vehicle air pollution on water and soil.
E-24	Commenters mentioned hazardous materials on trains , with concerns about oil tanker train cars being left near parks and homes (in the Port of Albany area, in particular, these are minority communities) and presenting a significant danger to residents. One suggestion was to park the trains in unpopulated areas.
E-25	Commenters mentioned resilience and stressed the need to plan with climate change in mind. Suggestions included designing multi-use, semi-permanent infrastructure that is resilient to flooding.
M-1	Miscellaneous comments included support for moving the project forward, the suggestion to improve the gateway to Rensselaer city and change the PEL study area to include municipal jurisdictions besides Albany—e.g., Cohoes, North Albany, Menands, Watervliet—and Rensselaer County, and the entire Capital region; making public the total costs and benefits of the different proposals, including expected new tax revenue and maintenance costs; advocating for less car-culture-oriented design to improve the city and attract residents; providing portable toilets on pedestrian and biking paths; planting native fruit-bearing trees, and connecting people with nature.
O-1	Commenters wrote about outreach and engagement with the public for input on the study. <u>Who:</u> Connect w/ local/grass roots organizations/universities/local activists/service providers/clergy and religious groups/other community leaders/state and federal agencies during the planning process. <u>How:</u> Conduct and advertise community forums (that meet the time constraints of most neighbors), open houses, tabling events, meetings at libraries, webinars; send informational emails and information via U.S. mail; use QR codes; do not use QR codes (ineffective way to reach the LEP community); post on social media; enlist the help of neighborhood specialists to reach EJ and LEP communities; go door-knocking; hold meetings in the neighborhoods that could be most affected by the potential project. <u>Where:</u> In neighborhoods where the potential project may affect residents, local public institutions, and local stores, hair salons, barbershops; online; and at home (via mail or door-knocking).

Table 5-6
Summary of Comments Generally Received after May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
C-1	Commenters advocated for a canal . Commenters considered the "canal bridges" an exciting addition to an already exciting proposal and stated that it is time to connect to the river and bring the history of the Erie Canal to life; were supportive of the Albany Waterway project and how it encompasses many of the proposed objectives of a reimagined 787 corridor.
C-2	Commenters were against a Canal , saying that they don't understand bringing canals back to Albany when we filled them in 100 years ago; opining that the addition of a canal in the city does not make sense as it seems it would only serve to divide neighborhood; voicing concern that a canal would force too many buildings (historic ones at that) to build seawalls, and the associated maintenance of these with rising sea levels in our tidal estuary would be an expensive project.
C-3	Commenters' views regarding Dunn Memorial Bridge/Dunn Memorial Park included the suggestion that it be a lift bridge at street grade to provide better pedestrian access to Rensselaer.
C-4	Commenters advocated for a boulevard , reasoning that they're cheaper, more pedestrian friendly, and visually appealing than elevated interstates. Commenters expressed support for three lanes, not three lanes and "fewer" lanes in each direction.
C-5	Commenters advocated that I-787 stay where it is (No Build) , with one commenting that Albany would live to regret demolishing the South Mall interchange: With its perfect circle constructed of ramps on multiple levels (visible from above) and its soaring view of the city while approaching from north, south, or east, it can only be called engineering poetry; another stated that the No Build option needs to be seriously considered: 787 does what it was meant to do, and gets people into and out of downtown Albany and the Empire State Plaza.
C-6	Commenters advocated for I-787 to be replaced in kind , noting that rehabilitation would be the best option considering cost and the lack of need to do anything more than that.
C-7	The commenter advocated for an at grade expressway
C-10	Commenters advocated for a tunnel , with one stating it was the way to go, reasoning that Boston is much improved after the burying of I-93 and establishment of a greenway; suggesting there be tunnel entrances and exits at the capital and at the port and use I-90 elevated highway as tunnel entrance on/off ramps to 787.
C-11	Making I-787 a depressed highway stating that this concept would allow for positive space and public access points which are accessible and enjoyable.
C-12	Commenters advocated for more transit options. One suggested restoring the original street grid, with park and ride lots to the south and north of downtown, and light rail connecting them with frequent, preferably free, service to downtown. Another suggestion was to eliminate I 787 from I 90 to McCarty Avenue and replace it with a rail shuttle similar to that found in big U.S. airports, with a large, covered parking lot at each terminus; instead of I-787, a surface road carrying only commercial truck traffic would parallel the rail line.
C-13	Commenters advocated for capping the highway , suggesting capping is definitely needed with B-3, over the parking garage; voicing the preference for the North Coast connector in Cleveland because of beach access but any capping is fine; stating that capping the roadway would create a safer and more comfortable way to experience the city of Albany by disabled folks and families; noting that capping the highway is a great idea for beautification and overall community development; mentioning that a monorail could connect the new bus stations (we need a new one), the train station, Empire State Plaza, SUNYA in East Greenbush, Rensselaer, North Pearl Street, and should be free and a stop at education building and at Capitol Park (back of Capitol); noting that car traffic will not be mitigated until there is passenger rail accessibility in downtown Albany or a direct connection to Rensselaer; advocating for dedicated bus lanes on the bridge so CDTA's BRT rapid transit lines, the Red and Purple lines can take passengers from the Albany bus station to the Rensselaer train station.
C-14	Commenters advocated for installation of a gondola , suggesting that one from the train station to the plaza should be reconsidered with a middle connection on top of the new bus station/parking garage/transit hub to let pedestrians easily move from train station to bus station to the Capital and provide more links between neighborhoods.
C-15	Commenters advocated for removal of I-787 because maintaining the highway would be too expensive and would just "kick the can" down the road.
C-20	Other. Commenters suggested relocating the bridge in all cases; voiced opposition to all proposals that move the entrance and exit of a new bridge structure to Exit 2; expressed dislike of I-2, saying it defeats the purpose; and that Tunnel concept is good but lacks the extending of the city grid as with B-3; wrote in support of Concept I-1 or I-2; wrote in support of Proposal I-2—Reconstruction of I-787 with relocated Dunn Memorial Bridge,

Table 5-6
Summary of Comments Generally Received after May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
	Opposed Option I-2 and welcomed designs such as B-1, B-2, B-3, and B-4, with a preference for B-3; the underground concepts are appealing but worrisome. Voiced support for Lock Option 1.
C-21	Boulevard (B-1) For , commenters stated that B-1 seemed to be a good middle ground and is not too costly, while keeping direct access to the train station; expressed support for B-1 and B-2 in order to re-establish the street grid and reinforce the community's interaction with the river and open space that come along with this redevelopment.
C-22	B-1 Against , commenter expressed dislike of curved highway interchanges (jug-handle) in Concept B-1.
C-23	B-2 For , commenter advised not to move Dunn Memorial Bridge too far from its current location; as B-1 and B-2 are the best options because they would re-establish the street grid and reinforce the community's interaction with the river and open space that come along with this redevelopment.
C-24	B-2 Against , commenter expressed dislike of curved highway interchanges (jug-handle) in concept B-2.
C-25	B-3 For , commenters suggested the consideration of passenger rail options, making traffic direction flow by time of day; stated that B-3 might make it easier for pedestrians to reach the waterfront as long as the boulevards have enough traffic calming to slow cars down moving through; advocated for B-3 as it closely resembles the existing city grid and connects the southern neighborhoods to downtown; said Concept B-3 is the best option, but only if the railroad could be relocated.
C-27	B-4 For , commenters suggested all the Railroad Relocation options should be investigated; stated Concept B-4 is an intriguing idea that resonates—the idea of freeing up so much land at both ends of the Old Dunn is something that opens up so many opportunities for recreational, gathering, and dining options; voiced support for the relocated Dunn in B-4 as it would potentially open up more of Riverfront Park in Rensselaer for programming and other improvements; voiced support of B-4 as a two-way boulevard west of the railroad with relocated Dunn Memorial Bridge because the slower speed would be safer to all drivers, and the repositioned Dunn Memorial Bridge would make navigating on- and off-ramps from the bridge less hazardous during a winter storm with snow and ice accumulations that might happen.
C-28	B-4 Against , commenters suggested Dunn Memorial Bridge should be a lift bridge at street grade; said “no” to B-4 because having 6 lanes total near the riverfront defeats the idea.
C-29	Relocate CPKC Railroad , commenter stated that the relocation for the railroad option A makes the most sense, and that Options B, C, and D would all limit access to the waterfront.
C-30	Rehab I-787 For , commenter stated rehabilitation would be the best option considering cost and the lack of need to do anything more than that.
C-34	Lock/Canal Options , commenters preferred Lock 1 Option 3; preferred Lock 1 Option 3 with the marina if capping does not provide direct water.
T-1	Commenters advocated for increased and safer biking opportunities, stating the need to separate bike paths along boulevards from traffic; inquiring whether bikes would be allowed on the path from Hudson Shores Park to the street labeled “boardwalk”; and advocating for bike access everywhere in the city.
T-2	Commenters advocated for increased and safer pedestrian opportunities, prioritizing accessibility for disabled folks and families by making a safer, and comfortable way to experience the city of Albany; emphasizing the need to connect pedestrians between Albany and Rensselaer and within Albany; suggesting the use of public escalators, which would be faster and easier to use than elevators; showing support for a depressed highway with a pedestrian zone over the road; writing in support of boulevard concepts that keep the road at grade and as accessible to pedestrian and other users as possible.
T-3	Commenters advocated for increased and safer bike and pedestrian opportunities, emphasizing the need to prioritize bike and pedestrian connections, concluding with PEOPLE NOT CARS; stating bicycle and pedestrian across Livingston Avenue Bridge is definitely needed; suggesting DOT think more about bike and walking infrastructure; observing that even with a boulevard, if there are steep ramps to a bridge, it will not feel safe or accessible to bikes or pedestrians; advocating for a stacked bridge where one level is for bikes and pedestrians with cars below for any of the options to create a safer and more open experience for the public; keeping pedestrian bridges; including parallel but separate bike and pedestrian lanes on the boulevard.
T-4	Commenters mentioned traffic congestion , saying that increased travel times were a big concern; suggesting the prioritization of quick, convenient access for all to the train station possibly through the use of pedestrian bridges; emphasizing the need to speed up bus trip time and cycling time; and leveling Dunn Memorial Bridge with dedicated bus lanes to improve travel times for non-automobile traffic.

Table 5-6
Summary of Comments Generally Received after May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
T-5	Commenters advocated for better transportation connectivity within Albany and regionally, including commenting that the ending of I-787 where it meets Hoffman and McCarty Ave also needs reimagining, e.g., updating the intersection to a roundabout connecting all streets together; adding a bike lane to connect McCarty Ave would connect the Hoffman Ave park area with the waterfront and existing bike trails; inquiring about how people will access the Little River area; suggesting the prioritization of the reconnection of the South End and downtown; noting that what is lacking in all these plans is a connection to the redevelopment of the CDTA bus station/parking lot district; suggesting better connections with the suburbs; and noting the importance of opening up the river and to connecting it to residents and institutions.
T-6	Commenters mentioned traffic safety as a concern, advocating for the use of roundabouts to slow traffic speeds while facilitating through-put and pedestrian access; suggesting slowing vehicle speed on the boulevard to 30 miles per hour through the use of raised traffic features and other traffic-calming measures to make the space more human-centered; writing in support of providing the disabled and families a safer way to experience the city of Albany; suggesting mirrors around the sharp bends and more reflectors for electric vehicles, wider paths and making the bike lane less isolated, and desiring a much safer commute via affordable vehicles like a scooter, writing in favor or slowing the traffic in our community areas to allow for greater safety to all. The options of adding lights and bike/pedestrian lanes are overdue.
T-7	Commenters advocated for waterfront access , suggesting it should be located near neighborhoods (Arbor Hill/North Albany and South End); stating that Albany and New York State's roots are with the water and residents need to connect to the water; noting that the best options seems to be B-1 and B-2, since they reinforce the community's interaction with the river; suggesting removing the railroad, which is a major barrier to the waterfront; emphasizing the importance of better waterfront access that will provide more opportunity for development and a vibrant community; stressing the need to tie low-income housing residents to access to the river.
T-10	Commenters mentioned parking , with one asking for more parking to be built in the downtown to encourage people to visit.
T-11	Traffic study , commenter asking since there have been smaller office populations due to work from home and tech trends, is the plan considering less commuter traffic models?
E-1	Commenters mentioned general environmental concerns, with one inquiring about the environmental risks of a boulevard.
E-2	Environmental justice (EJ) issues raised by commenters included requesting that the residents of the South End of Albany be privy to these proposals, as they have been underrepresented at meetings and hearings due to income limitations and lack of vehicle access. Another asked, how will these neighborhoods be meaningfully connected to the Hudson Riverfront? How will these infrastructure changes improve the quality of life in neighborhoods nearby? One commenter suggested the Project provide low-income housing residents river access to improve their overall living environment in downtown Albany. Another commented that the railroad should not go through city neighborhoods.
E-6	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns, specifically regarding gentrification . One commenter wondered if people are encouraged to move into downtown Albany, how best to prevent poorer residents from being squeezed out?
E-7	Commenters mentioned socioeconomic concerns about the potential project's potential effects on health , wondering whether evacuation access would change with the new design/would it be slowed. Would other evacuation routes be opened up? Another appealed for prioritization of protecting vulnerable populations during construction.
E-9	Commenters mentioned economic development as a way the project would benefit the City. One commenter asked whether each of the plans could be updated to provides ranges of acres that could be repurposed for development. Another opined that the Broadway canal concept would bring business into the area and others voiced support for the waterway paired this with commercial development for shopping, eating, and residential.
E-10	Commenters mentioned community character , writing that the study's purpose, needs, and objectives need to go beyond the transportation/connectivity lens to focus on quality of life, using human-scale livable spaces, and emphasizing environmental quality, economic justice, and economic opportunity.
E-11	Commenters mentioned concerns regarding relocation and displacement , with commenters noting that the Lock 1 - Canal option appears to be displacing a longtime family business, Modern Press. It is hoped that any development would fairly compensate this business and not take unfair advantage of this little family-owned business.
E-12	Commenters mentioned cultural resources . Suggestions included that with a restored Erie Canal basin, Lock 1, could be unearthed, as perhaps could the Albany weigh lock (its whereabouts are known) or other historic sites such as a restored Fort Orange. These can draw tourists and anchor future development.

Table 5-6
Summary of Comments Generally Received after May 1, 2024

Comment No.	Comments
E-13	Commenters called for more parks , suggesting that the whole area be turned into an urban greenscape with minimal road incursion; and that green space be along the entire riverfront.
E-15	Commenters mentioned visual resources with the following suggestions: (1) do not include pedestrian bridges; (2) bridges should be integrated into the park and nearly invisible, using very wide and gentle slopes; (3) use walls, trees, and berms to block noises and unsightly traffic; (4) preserve views of water but hide traffic if possible; and (4) relocate the railroad, which is a huge eyesore. Another suggested that a boulevard be picturesque and lined with trees, include wide sidewalks and ample bike facilities.
E-16	Commenter mentioned air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions concerns, in particular asking whether the Boulevard would result in higher per-mile emission rates.
E-17	Commenters mentioned traffic noise , with one commenter requesting noise barriers.
E-18	Commenters mentioned natural resources in general . Comments included a question about whether birds may have higher crash rates with 3+ lanes in each direction and a request to make sure that all landscaping trees, shrubs, and grasses are native plants.
E-19	Commenter mentioned natural resources, in particular the Hudson River and area waterways . One commenter cited the destruction of the waterways and asked that remediation of our waterways begin.
E-21	Commenter mentioned construction , appealing for prioritization of protecting vulnerable populations during construction.
E-24	Commenters mentioned hazardous materials on trains , with commenters suggesting re-routing the train tracks around Albany because of the obvious safety concerns.
E-25	Commenter mentioned resilience and stressed flooding concerns: During heavy rains Albany experiences flooding. What can be done to expand the wetlands/make them more effective at flooding mitigation? Little River and Canal 1 seem like they would become necessary. The highway in a trench seems to be asking for flooding to occur.
M-1	Miscellaneous comments included expressions of support for and against the concepts and comments that were not specifically about the study. Two commenters expressed concern about the cost of the concepts, with one inquiring about its ongoing maintenance costs, noting that at-grade facilities may save DOT a lot over their service life; and wondering whether the tunnel or other applied concepts cost more or less to maintain than an elevated facility? One commenter asked why the Dunn study did not consider a lift or swing bridge. Another suggested considering self-driving vehicles' impact on the concepts. Another wondered how long each part of the concept would take, and how much native land would be used for it?
O-1	Commenters wrote about outreach and engagement with the public for input on the study. Citing the need for greater involvement from indigenous groups and tribal governments that were identified as stakeholders and giving them a seat at the table; it doesn't seem like these cultural groups are allowed much say in what happens to their land. The project should look to coordinate with other projects in the area (Rensselaer BOA, Menands Little River feasibility study etc.) to coordinate planned improvements within the study area. Emphasizing equitable community engagement, without which it feels very disingenuous to have a board [at a public outreach meeting] about environmental justice, equity, and inclusion. Suggesting engaging the residents next to the Port of Albany who are essential to the effort; outreach would be incomplete without several meetings scheduled in their neighborhood. Making suggestions to improve the DOT presentation: The Albany waterway poster notes conjunction with 1-2 concept, so the info should be incorporated in the 1-2 concept presentation. It will be an important draw for people to downtown. If the Albany waterway can be incorporated in all scenarios it should be presented with each demonstration board. Stressing the need to engage with the center for disability services, the NYS Disability Service Council and/or the offer for people with developmental disabilities as stakeholders in this plan.