

Decision Making Framework

Introduction

The transportation decision making process is made up of many individual steps. Most of these steps are work activities or tasks that take place in a logical sequence leading to a point where key decisions need to be made. Key decisions are those relating to findings of the study and consensus on the next steps in the process. That is, they occur at places in the process where the general work activities need review and approval from higher levels of authority or where consensus needs to be reached among diverse decision makers before the project can advance further.

The FHI Team will assist UCTC with project decision-making and priority setting. Elements that will guide the decision-making framework include project goals, Federal Agency guidelines (FHWA, FTA, FRA), NYSDOT and municipal policies, stakeholder agency missions, common interests of stakeholders, divergent interests of stakeholders, funding criteria, and successful conflict mitigation strategies.

Project Organization

The project Organization includes the overall agency manager, UCTC, a project advisory committee to guide the process, and the project consultant who will perform the technical work. The Project Manager (PM) will be the Ulster County Planning Board Director or his designee. The PM will approve project deliverables, their distribution to the Project Advisory Committee (AC), approve scheduling of project events, grant initial approval of all invoices, handle any media inquiries and perform general project administration work. The PM is also responsible for final acceptance of project deliverables which will be made in writing to the FHI Team after consultation with the AC.

The AC includes elected officials from the City of Kingston (or their designees), New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) staff, Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) staff, and citizens appointed by the County Executive and the Mayor of the City of Kingston. The AC's role is to guide the overall study effort, monitor the FHI Team's activities and performance, and help the community reach a consensus on study recommendations for inclusion in the final Plan.

Advisory Committee Members

AC Member	Organization	Contact Information
Sue Cahill	City of Kingston Planning Department	planning@ci.kingston.ny.us
Alderman Tom Hoffay	City of Kingston Ward 2	thoffay160@gmail.com
K.J. McIntyre	Kingston Digital Corridor	KJMRealtor@hvc.rr.com
Lisa Mondello	NYSDOT Region 8	lmondello@dot.state.ny.us
Mark Morano	NYSDOT Traffic Division	mmorano@dot.state.ny.us
Kevin Quilty	Kingston Uptown Business Association	Quiltyk@aol.com

Jim Rapoli	NYSDOT Planning Division	jrapoli@dot.state.ny.us
Joe Rich	Federal Highway Administration	joseph.e.rich@fhwa.dot.gov
Charlie Schaller	UC Traffic Safety Board	334-5579 (no email address)
Ralph Swenson	City of Kingston Engineering Dept.	swenson@ci.kingston.ny.us
Dennis Doyle	UC Planning/UC Transportation Council	ddoy@co.ulster.ny.us

The FHI Team is comprised of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), AECOM Technical Services, Inc., Alternate Street Design, PA, and URS Corporation and. The FHI Team Manager (PTM) is Michael Morehouse, PE. The FHI Team will provide objective technical information and professional guidance to the UCTC PM and the AC in order for informed decision making to take place. The FHI Team may offer recommendation, but will not ultimately decide on a particular solution or set of solutions for the intersection.

Key Stakeholders and the general public will have the ability to influence project outcomes by participating in public workshops and meetings. Key stakeholders generally include business owners, residents, emergency responders, community groups, commuters, and other individuals or groups that might be impacted by the project. Interviews will be held with key project stakeholders to gain an understanding and perspective of issues from those most impacted by the intersection. Other interested citizens will be able to provide input to the study by offering comments on the study website, attending workshops and public meetings, or contacting a member of the study team.

Contact information:

Study Website: <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/planning/i587.html#doc>

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Project Initiation

At the start of the study, the FHI Team coordinated with the UCTC PM and key stakeholders, including NYSDOT and City of Kingston representatives, to identify goals and objectives for the project and establish the availability of information needed to complete the study. Several important activities relative to the decision-making framework were initiated, including:

- Development of a list of key stakeholders to involve in the study
- Discussion of broader publicity options and ideas to enhance the public outreach task
- Setting of goals and performance criteria for use in the evaluation of improvement alternatives – initial screening matrix
- Definition of critical factors that will determine project success
- Establishing the details of the study workshop

Key Stakeholders and Publicity Options

The UCTC maintains contact information for a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the City of Kingston. This list will be used to keep the public informed throughout the study process. Other potential stakeholder groups include:

- Uptown Business Association
- Main St. Manager's Association
- www.Kingstoncitizens.org
- Business Alliance of Kingston

Newspaper media covering the study includes the following:

- Kingston Daily Freeman
- Kingston Times
- Middletown Times Herald Record

Television media covering the study area includes the Hudson Valley YNN.

The UCTC will coordinate with media outlets if deemed appropriate for the study.

Project Goals and Performance Criteria

Several Project Goals were identified by the UCTC early in the project. These were presented in no particular order as follows:

- Reduce vehicle and pedestrian delays
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety
- Minimize impacts to area residents and businesses

- Preserve parking capacity
- Improve freight mobility
- Enhance economic vitality
- Incorporate energy efficiencies/green technologies
- Improve gateway appearance
- Visualize options using ground-level photographic simulation
- Protect the historical character of the area
- Keep the Public informed and involved

On April 1st, 2010, members of the Advisory Committee were asked to complete a survey ranking the Project Goals for most to least significant. The result of that survey was as follows:

Advisory Committee Survey Results of Project Goals (most to least significant)

1. Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety
2. Reduce vehicle and pedestrian delays
3. Keep the public informed and involved
4. Minimize impacts to area residents and businesses
5. Protect the historical character of the area
6. Improve freight mobility
7. Enhance economic vitality
8. Improve gateway appearance
9. Visualize options using ground-level photo simulation
10. Incorporate energy efficiencies/green technologies
11. Preserve parking capacity

Critical Factors for Project Success

Project success will rely on a general consensus on a preferred intersection alternative from study stakeholders. Consensus generally means that a majority of stakeholders agree with the project recommendations and those in the remainder may not consider the recommended actions ideal but find them acceptable.

During the public workshop, a wide variety of stakeholders will be interviewed and comments at the public meeting will be recorded. Additional input from the study website and other feedback mechanisms will also be considered when developing improvement concepts. All input received will be collected and organized in an open and transparent way, so that the Advisory Committee can consider and recommend a preferred alternative. The UCTC Project Manager will endorse the preferred alternative.

Details of the Public Workshop

A Public Workshop to be held in Kingston over a three-day period on September 28-30, 2010. The workshop will be a working “studio” for the study team to collect public input

and develop a community vision for the study area to guide the concept development process.

The study team will work together over the three-day workshop period in between other activities and meetings to assimilate data collection and analysis into a set of draft improvement alternatives. This work will include several opportunities to allow interested stakeholders the ability to meet with the study team to discuss ideas and share information.

The format for the workshop is as follows:

September 28 – Discovery Day

- Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting #2 to bring the AC up-to-date on study progress and receive input
- Stakeholder interviews – gather information
- Initial screening – take starter ideas and data to formulate initial draft concepts
- Public Meeting #1 in the evening to collect public input and conduct visioning exercises for the intersection

September 29 – Design Day

- Refine and focus concepts based on AC and public input from September 28th meetings
- Follow-up interviews with AC and key stakeholders
- Sketch and analyze draft concepts
- Public Open House in afternoon to receive comments on draft concepts

September 30 – Production Day

- Study team will further refine concept development and analyze operations and design options

Decision Matrix

A Decision Matrix was developed to aid in the screening of potential alternatives for the intersection. The matrix, which is included at the back of this document, considers the following eight evaluation categories, each consisting of sub-categories which address the primary Project Goals described previously. The evaluation categories are as follows:

1. Traffic Operations
2. Bike/Ped/Transit
3. Community Impact
4. Environmental Compatibility
5. Economic Vitality
6. Weighed Score
7. Compatibility w/Strategic Plans
8. Cost Effectiveness

As alternatives are developed, each will be input into the Decision Matrix and scores will be assigned based on the alternative's ability to satisfy the study criteria. Scores from 1 to 5 (Bad to Excellent) will be assigned to each criterion based on qualitative and quantitative information. The evaluation categories may optionally be assigned weightings to reflect the relative importance of the category – as determined by the AC.

Conflict Mitigation Strategies

As alternative improvements for the intersection are developed, some stakeholders may find that they possess divergent points of view which may become a challenge to reaching consensus. The following steps are techniques that will be used to overcome differences that may impede project buy-in.

1. Make sure that people understand that the conflict may be a mutual problem, which may be best resolved through discussion and negotiation. Use active listening skills to ensure you hear and understand other's positions and perceptions.
 - Restate
 - Paraphrase
 - Summarize
2. Identify the underlying interests, needs, and concerns. Ask for the each person's viewpoint and confirm that his or her opinion is respected and cooperation is required to solve the problem.
 - Identify issues clearly and concisely
 - Remain flexible
 - Clarify feelings
3. Agree on the problems that you are trying to solve before and look for a mutually acceptable solution. Sometimes different people will see different but interlocking problems - if you can't reach a common perception of the problem, then at the very least, you need to understand what the other person sees as the problem.
4. Brainstorm possible solutions, and be open to all ideas, including ones you never considered before.
5. Negotiate a Solution. By this stage, the conflict may be resolved. Both sides may better understand the position of the other, and a mutually satisfactory solution may be clear to all. However you may also have uncovered real differences between your positions. This is where a technique like win-win negotiation can be useful to find a solution that, at least to some extent, satisfies everyone.

Project Decision Matrix

Scores/Alternatives

1=Bad 2=Poor 3=Fair 4=Good 5=Excellent

Criteria	Description				
Traffic Operations		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Local Circulation	<i>Impacts on local and through traffic</i>				
Regional Mobility	<i>Impacts on traffic entering/exiting I-587</i>				
Freight Accessibility	<i>Impacts on freight traffic</i>				
Public safety	<i>Number and severity of crashes</i>				
<i>Average Score</i>		0	0	0	0
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Bike/Ped/Transit		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Pedestrian Accomodation	<i>Sidewalk connectivity, street crossings</i>				
ADA Compliance	<i>Street crossing safety, accessible features</i>				
Bicycle Accomodation	<i>Impact on existing riding, New facilities?</i>				
Transit Supportive	<i>Impact on bus routes, bus stops or shelters</i>				
<i>Average Score</i>		0	0	0	0
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Community Impact		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Maximize public realm	<i>Area reserved for non-automobile uses</i>				
Neighborhood Impact	<i>Impact on businesses, housing</i>				
Historical character	<i>Impact on historical character</i>				
Effective gateway to Kingston	<i>Offers safe and attractive transition from highway</i>				
<i>Average Score</i>		0	0	0	0
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Environmental Compatibility		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Open Space	<i>Amount of and access to open space</i>				
Noise/Lighting/Air Quality	<i>Impacts on local environment</i>				
Image and Aesthetics	<i>Gateway and Streetscape appearance</i>				
Green Technology	<i>Use of enviromentally friendly materials & tech.</i>				
<i>Average Score</i>		0	0	0	0
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Economic Vitality		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
On and off-street parking availability	<i>Quantity of parking gained or lost</i>				
Supportive of existing businesses	<i>Accessibility to existing businesses</i>				
Supportive of redevelopment	<i>New economic or development opportunities?</i>				
<i>Average Score</i>		0	0	0	0
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Compatibility w/Strategic Plans		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Ulster County Transportation Plan	<i>Compliance with plan</i>				
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Cost Effectiveness		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Cost Effectiveness	<i>Approx.cost of improvements relative to benefits</i>				
<i>Weighed Score (Weight=1)</i>		0	0	0	0
Composite Score		0	0	0	0