

TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE

Thruway plans safer, direct link between Cuomo bridge path and RiverWalk, aqueduct

Peter D. Kramer New York State Team

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Key Points

Plan widens ramps at Exit 9, adds 2nd lane onto the southbound Thruway

Plan adds a traffic light at Paulding Avenue.

Plan adds an independent 14-foot-wide pedestrian-bike bridge over the Thruway, west of the current Broadway bridge.

The Thruway's not out of the bridge-building business.

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday announced a \$13.9 million plan for the New York State Thruway Authority and the state transportation department to provide a safe link from the popular bike-pedestrian path on the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge to three other Tarrytown attractions: Lyndhurst, RiverWalk and the Old Croton Aqueduct trail.

Currently, those wishing to head south from the bridge path must navigate a busy on-ramp to the northbound Thruway, the entrance to the jug-handle at Route 119, the intersection at Route 119 and then the narrow bridge South Broadway bridge over the Thruway. The project will give walkers and cyclists their own path over the Thruway, free from all that vehicle traffic and danger.

But it won't happen overnight. While construction work begins with brush-clearing this week, the bridge won't be open till sometime in 2024.

What's in the plan?

The two-year project will:

- Create a 270-foot-long pedestrian-bike bridge from the shared-use path on the Cuomo bridge's northern edge, across the Thruway, independent of the busy South Broadway (Route 9) bridge;
- Add a second turning lane onto the southbound Thruway on-ramp from southbound South Broadway;
- Widen the ramps at Exit 9 in Tarrytown; and
- Add a traffic light at Paulding Avenue, just south of the junction with Route 119.

Wider than the shared-use path

The new bridge will be on the river side of the South Broadway bridge. It will be 14 feet wide, two feet wider than the bright blue shared-use path across the Hudson on the Cuomo Bridge.

Like the 3-mile-long bridge that replaced the Tappan Zee, the new bridge across the Thruway will be built in pieces off-site — 11 sections constructed by Avon-based LMC Industrial Contractors, Inc. — and assembled on-site. That will limit the impact on local roads and residents.

Work will begin this week to prepare for the concrete footings to go in, and the bridge is expected to be placed later this year, though Thruway spokesman Khurram Saeed said the ribbon-cutting will have to wait until the entire project is complete, sometime in 2024, because the area will be an active construction zone.

Connections to Lyndhurst, RiverWalk, aqueduct

The project will extend the Cuomo bridge's path from 333 S. Broadway, where the shared-use-path makes landfall, to Lyndhurst Mansion at 635 S. Broadway. The Gothic Revival mansion, once home to railroad magnate Jay Gould, hosts events and summer concerts and provides access to the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail and the RiverWalk, two popular hiking and biking trails.

The aqueduct, a 26.2-mile ribbon of a park that goes from Croton to New York City line and was once Gotham's water supply, is a Westchester gem, an amenity that

will be opened to more cyclists and pedestrians through this new project. The RiverWalk hugs the Hudson on the river's edge.

The Thruway, in a release, said most of the work will take place during the day, while work that requires Thruway lane closures will be done at night to limit the impact on traffic and to protect construction crews.

Bike Tarrytown responds

Daniel Convissor, of the group Bike Tarrytown, thanked the Thruway for adopting his group's suggestion to link the bridge path to Lyndhurst and the Old Croton Aqueduct trail.

But he took issue with what he sees as an unaddressed pedestrian danger in the plan, at the southbound Thruway ramp at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel. Bike Tarrytown has called for an island to divide the southbound Thruway off-ramp and on-ramp at Exit 9 to give pedestrians a safe place to stop as they navigate the crosswalk. Convissor also questioned the need for a second turn lane onto the southbound Thruway.

"Wait times for getting onto the Thruway are modest during rush hour, and nearly non-existent at other times," he said in a statement. "The goal could have been affordably accomplished by converting one of the through lanes into a turn lane, instead of spending millions of dollars widening the road."