

MINUTES OF MEETING OF Public Information Center – July 15, 2020

NJTPA FY 2019 Hudson County Local Concept Development Study
JFK (Kennedy) Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and St Paul's Avenue
Jersey City, Hudson County
NJX-2019678.02

DATE PREPARED: August 3, 2020

LOCATION: Online; open format from 5:00 to 7:00 PM; formal presentation at 5:30 PM

ATTENDEES:

NJTPA, Hudson County, NJDOT, GPI and Stokes representatives:

Thomas Malavasi	Hudson County Engineer	201 369-4340
Jose Sieira	Hudson County Engineering Department	201 369-4340
Sean Keating	Hudson County Engineering Department	201 369-4340
Byron Nicholas	Hudson County Engineering Department	201 369-4340
Sascha Frimpong	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)	973 639-8400
Patricia Newton	NJTPA	973 877-8128
Sarbjit Kahlon	NJTPA	973 639-8419
Pamela Garrett	NJDOT – Bureau of Environmental Resource Programs	609-693-2063
Bernie Boerchers	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI)	908 236-9001
Julia Steponanko	GPI	908 236-9001
Nicole Pace-Addeo	Stokes Creative Group, Inc. (Stokes)	732 232-3835

PURPOSE: Solicit comments and/or concerns from the public on the existing conditions in support of the Purpose and Need.

DISCUSSION: After a brief summary of the meeting format by Ms. Pace-Addeo, Mr. Boerchers presented via PowerPoint the Project Team, project delivery process, existing conditions, crash and traffic data and analyses, the 2015 Road Safety Audit, stakeholder survey results, work completed to date and next steps. The following summarizes the key points of discussion (grouped by topic):

Pedestrians

1. It was inquired if the JFK Boulevard intersections with Pavonia Avenue and Newark Avenue have all pedestrian phases, and if so, can they receive pedestrian scramble treatments such as diagonal crosswalks. The Project Team confirmed that these intersections do have all pedestrian phases, i.e. a scramble, whereby pedestrians can cross diagonally through the intersection. The Project Team added that diagonal crosswalks can be investigated as part of the alternatives analysis.
2. It was stated that pedestrians need to wait a long time to cross Kennedy Boulevard at Pavonia Avenue. It was inquired if wait times to cross Kennedy Boulevard were measured as part of the field investigation. The Project Team stated that pedestrians wait at most three signal phases (*phasing: JFK Boulevard lead left, JFK Boulevard right of way and Pavonia Avenue right of way*) to cross under an all pedestrian phase. They are then given approximately 30 seconds to perform their crossing which is in conformance with the MUTCD. The attendee did not feel that the existing crossing time was sufficient. It was agreed that the Project Team would evaluate the crossing time during Concept Development.
3. It was inquired if the traffic signals at the intersections of Kennedy Boulevard and Tonelle Avenue Ramp and Kennedy Boulevard and St. Paul's Avenue operate on pedestrian recall.

The Project Team stated that the traffic signal at Kennedy Boulevard and St. Paul's Avenue should be on pedestrian recall but that it will be confirmed. They added that the intersection of Kennedy Boulevard and Tonnelle Avenue Ramp is under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

4. It was inquired if the Walk signals along the corridor require actuation via a pushbutton or if they are on pedestrian recall. The Project Team stated the Walks signals along Kennedy Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and St. Paul's Avenue are on pedestrian recall.

Bicyclists

5. It was inquired if it was possible to extend the existing protected bike lane along Bergen Avenue, which currently ends at Sip Avenue, onto Kennedy Boulevard through the project limits. The Project Team stated that a protected bike lane would be considered as part of the alternatives analysis. They also stated that there would be trade-offs between the bike lane(s), parking, turning lanes, travel lanes, curb extensions, etc. that will need to be evaluated based on stakeholder and public input along with engineering considerations.
6. It was stated that bicyclists currently ride on the sidewalks due to the lack of bicycle lanes and the dangerous conditions for bicyclists on Kennedy Boulevard.
7. Some of the attendees stated that Kennedy Boulevard, as it is currently configured, caters to motorists at the detriment of pedestrians and bicyclists. It was also stated that many of the households in Jersey City do not own a vehicle and therefore walk, bike, or use transit to travel within and through the corridor for a multitude of non-recreational reasons.
8. It was noted that removal of parking in front of businesses would have a negative impact on the same, especially spaces reserved for handicap parking.

Vehicles

9. It was noted that excessive speed, especially along this section of Kennedy Boulevard, is an ongoing concern. It was inquired why reducing speed is not a goal or objective, and if the project would consider traffic calming. The Project Team stated that traffic calming would be investigated along Kennedy Boulevard including rumble strips, curb extensions, etc. The Project Team also noted that this is also an enforcement issue. The Project Team will direct this concern to the Hudson County Sheriff's Office.
10. It was inquired if this project would address the food trucks that park along this section of Kennedy Boulevard. It was stated that food trucks are permitted to park for up to two (2) hours in one spot before needing to relocate, but JCPD does not enforce this rule. It was added that as a result of the food trucks occupying parking spaces, there is double and triple parking along Kennedy Boulevard. It was also noted that JCPD does not have much presence in this area. The Project Team noted that the food truck parking is an enforcement issue and will direct this concern and the concern regarding police presence to the Hudson County Sheriff's Office.
11. It was stated that the White Castle, which is located along Kennedy Boulevard between Newark Avenue and Van Winkle Avenue / Brooks Place, has a 24-hour drive-thru that frequently queues onto Kennedy Boulevard. It was also noted that White Castle is planning to redevelop their site which will be discussed during the Journal Square Community Association CAP meeting on August 5, 2020.
12. A concern was raised that a redesign of Kennedy Boulevard would shift traffic from Kennedy Boulevard onto Tonnelle Avenue which is predominantly residential. It was added that truck traffic between Charlotte Circle (Route 1&9) and Kennedy Boulevard is prohibited but is still a huge problem. It was inquired what can be done with this redesign to discourage truck traffic on residential streets? The Project Team noted that while they cannot control all diverting traffic, traffic calming could be investigated as noted in Item 9.

Transit/PATH

13. The following concerns were expressed for the intersection of Kennedy Boulevard and Pavonia Avenue: (1) lack of signage at PATH designating passenger pickup and drop-off areas, (2) persistent, chronic double parking on both sides of Pavonia Avenue for passenger pickup and drop-off, and (3) poor lighting on the west side of the intersection. The Project Team stated that they would investigate the lighting concern, but that the PATH signing will need to be addressed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ).
14. It was inquired if a dedicated bus lane is within the scope of this project since Journal Square is one of the largest NJ Transit bus terminals in New Jersey. The Project Team stated that it could be considered as part of the alternatives analysis.
15. It was requested that the Project Team coordinate with PANYNJ regarding the redesign of the PATH station. The Project Team noted that they will coordinate with the PANYNJ on any proposed improvements to the PATH station.

Drainage / Streetscape / Green Infrastructure

16. Drainage issues were noted especially at the intersection of Kennedy Boulevard and St. Paul's Avenue. It was noted that many residents in this area experience flooding in their homes due in part to excess surface runoff. The Project Team stated that the study is not focused on stormwater management, but isolated drainage issues could be addressed as part of the study.
17. It was inquired if the County plans to work with the City to plant more trees along Kennedy Boulevard as well as build green infrastructure such as landscaped curb extensions and bioswales to help mitigate threats posed by climate change. The Project Team replied that these upgrades could be investigated during Concept Development but that it should be noted that the County would not maintain these types of facilities and that a jurisdictional agreement with the City or others would be necessary regarding all future maintenance.
18. It was inquired if the County or the Project Team coordinated with the Journal Square Special Improvement District (SID) about bioswale maintenance. The Project Team stated that public / private maintenance is a consideration of the County.

General / Other

19. It was inquired if the Project Team is coordinating with the utility companies. Residents noted ongoing utility work along this section of Kennedy Boulevard. The Project Team stated that the current utility work is not for this project and that the Project Team coordinates with the utility companies during Concept Development. Mr. Dwyer from PSE&G added that meeting participants with PSE&G related inquiries can contact him at richard.dwyer@pseg.com and (551) 233-3257. He added that he will keep the County advised of any communications.
20. It was stated that the sidewalk areas along this section of Kennedy Boulevard are dark at night. The Project Team stated that current illumination levels and solutions will be investigated during Concept Development.
21. It was inquired how long the survey is open for responses and the deadline for official comments. The Project Team responded that the survey will remain open throughout Concept Development and requested any comments on the project area by August 31, 2020 so input can be included in the process and alternatives.

This memorandum of record is believed to be an accurate record of the discussions at this meeting. If any of the attendees disagree with the documented discussion, please contact Bernie Boerchers at (908) 236-9001 within 10 days of receipt of minutes. If no comments are received, then this memorandum will be considered a true and accurate record of this meeting.