



# PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

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## Local Concept Development Study JFK (Kennedy) Boulevard from Pavonia Avenue to St Paul's Avenue Jersey City, Hudson County

### PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to enhance safety and mobility along with reducing congestion along JFK (Kennedy) Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and St Paul's Avenue.

### PROJECT NEED

This section of JFK (Kennedy) Boulevard, herein referred to as JFK Boulevard, is a 0.32 mile stretch of roadway under the jurisdiction of Hudson County located in Jersey City beginning at Pavonia Avenue adjacent to Journal Square and ending at a point approximately 650 feet north of St. Paul's Avenue. The project was initiated via a Road Safety Audit (RSA), which provided an assessment of the existing safety and operational concerns along with potential solutions, conducted along JFK Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and St. Paul's Avenue by a multidisciplinary team of engineers, planners, law enforcement officials and key stakeholders on April 28, 2015. The Audit identified the following general issues – note that the project area was recently resurfaced, so some items are no longer applicable:

- A history of same direction, left turn / U-turn and pedestrian crashes (additional detail below);
- Maintenance deficiencies, such as faded pavement markings and abandoned foundations which were addressed subsequent to the RSA via the resurfacing project;
- Lack of consistent ADA facilities, such as tactile pads and curb ramps, missing or substandard at nearly every intersection which were also addressed subsequent to the RSA in the resurfacing project;
- Lack of bicyclist facilities;
- Concerns were raised by the public (and in the RSA) that the pedestrian crossing time is insufficient even though it means MUTCD minimum requirements;
- Illegal on-street parking (in travel lanes, double parking, etc.); and
- Aggressive driving

This section of JFK Boulevard is an undivided, four-lane roadway located in a highly urban, transit-oriented environment that encompasses a portion of the NJTPA region's highest ranked pedestrian corridor. The limits of this project also include two high-ranking pedestrian intersection hot spot crash locations –JFK Boulevard and Newark Avenue (Ranked 11th) and JFK Boulevard and St. Paul's Avenue (Ranked 27th). Of note, the intersection of JFK Boulevard and St. Paul's Avenue also ranks high on the Hudson County Intersection List (Ranked 10th). Vehicular and bicyclist/pedestrian crash data was collected for the three-year period between January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018 and the five-year period between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2018, respectively, with a total number of crashes of 256 vehicular and 18 bicyclist/pedestrian crashes. The crash rate for the three-year period was 30.67 crashes/mvm. Crash overrepresentations included same direction sideswipe, parked vehicle, left turn/U-turn, backing, pedestrian/pedalcyclist, and at signalized intersection.

A traffic analysis was performed for the five (5) signalized intersections and one (1) unsignalized intersection along JFK Boulevard between and including Pavonia Avenue and St Paul's Avenue using count data collected in 2019 and the existing timing directives. As expected, the analysis indicated congestion throughout the corridor. Of note, multiple movements at the intersections of Pavonia Avenue, Newark Avenue and St Paul's

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Avenue operate at a level of service 'F' which indicates forced or breakdown flow where demand exceeds capacity. The 2019 traffic volumes were projected to the design year of 2045 and the traffic analysis of the projected volumes indicates that the level of service will only worsen along the corridor, as expected, if no mitigation measures are implemented to increase capacity.

Land use along JFK Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and Van Winkle Avenue / Brooks Place is primarily high-density office space and commercial / business with the Jersey City Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses Church and Port Authority PATH entrance located in the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection of JFK Boulevard and Pavonia Avenue, respectively. The last block of the project limits from Van Winkle Avenue / Brooks Place north to St. Paul's Avenue is more of a mixed-use neighborhood of small retail, housing, schools and churches. Two historic properties including St. John the Baptist Church and the Golden Door Charter School are located on the west side of JFK Boulevard between Van Winkle Avenue and St. Paul's Avenue.

The Pavonia Avenue intersection is especially busy with pedestrians and transit users given its proximity to the Journal Square Transportation Center and PATH Plaza. Bicycle use is also prevalent as evidenced by the numerous bicycles parked at the Port Authority's Journal Square Transportation Center. Citi Bike has multiple stations in the project area including one on Van Reipen Avenue near JFK Boulevard, another on Newark Avenue near Summit Avenue and a third one on Sip Avenue east of Bergen Avenue.

The project area is a heavily used public transportation hub providing access to the PATH station and several bus lines. As nearly half of the residents of Jersey City use public transportation this is a critical component of the overall transportation usage in the project area. Three (3) NJ Transit buses run the length of the corridor (Routes 2, 88 and 125), while routes 80 and 84 travel JFK Boulevard between Pavonia Avenue and Newark Avenue and then head eastbound on Newark Avenue. Many other bus lines, including NJ Transit, Academy, Coach, and A&C Bus Corporation loop around JFK Boulevard, Pavonia Avenue, and Sip Avenue to access the Journal Square Transportation Center.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In addressing the Purpose and Need, the design of the project will also consider additional goals and objectives obtained via stakeholder and public outreach. While the project may not be able to fully satisfy all these additional goals and objectives, as many as possible should be addressed. The identified goals and objectives are as follows:

- Improve bicycle, pedestrian and transit user access.
  - Avoid or minimize social, economic and environmental impacts.
  - Minimize impacts to all road users during construction.
  - Consider the context of the project area and identify opportunities for aesthetic enhancements.
  - Address safety and operational concerns associated with buses and emergency vehicles.
  - Address safety and operational concerns regarding loading and unloading deliveries for local businesses.
  - Address safety and operational concerns regarding funeral services for St John's Church.
  - Maximize congestion relief to the extent possible for all modes of mobility.
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