



MEETING NOTES

APROJECT NAME	FY 2018 LSEAP – Jersey City Sip Avenue Safety Improvements
WSP PROJECT NUMBER	19606D
DATE	19 August 2021
VENUE	Teams Meeting
SUBJECT	Public Information Center
PRESENT	Christine Mittman (NJTPA), Andrew Vischio (Jersey City), Jennifer Cato (Jersey City), Elias Guzman, Athanasios Georgiadis (WSP), Thomas Pagani (WSP), Edgardo Perez (WSP), Debbie Hartman (WSP). Community Attendance: Gail Waltz, Dietmar, Dennis Lindabury, Christina, Anna L, Adam Cohen, Jay DiDomenico, John Waltz, Joseph Capazzoli, Michael Flinck, Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey, Raphael Wakefield, Renee Tirella Cassidy, Tony Borelli, Ya-Ting Liu
DISTRIBUTION	n/a

PURPOSE: Present the conceptual plan to residents, businesses, community groups and all impacted stakeholders and solicit their comments and/or concerns.

Discussion: A PowerPoint presentation of the Sip Avenue Safety Improvements project was conducted by the City of Jersey City, NJTPA and WSP USA, Inc.

The following is a summary of the questions and comments provided in advance of the presentation and by the attendees. Responses are provided below in italics:

Questions and comments submitted on-line prior to the presentation:

1. Question by Imtiaz Syed: While I appreciate the upgradation of the Sip Ave, it is necessary and timely. However, I would like to emphasize on the Drainage issue, the intersection of the SIP and Westside has been a nightmare for the resident and the businesses of the westside Ave over 20 years. Every slight rain or a minor storm the entire two blocks get flooded and impassible, it is owing to the drainage system that the rainwater backs up to the basements of residents and the businesses on the west side Ave resulting in a huge amount of money. I hope your mild mention in the to do the project, takes this issue seriously before any potential accident happens, like the firemen had to rescue the elderly ladies from the drowning car few months ago.

Tom Pagani and Andrew Vischio explained that the City is aware of this drainage problem. Drainage improvements under this project will be investigated to help alleviate -some drainage issues related to grading and inlet conditions

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including inlet modifications and green infrastructure but major drainage improvements that could alleviate substantial flooding due to underground capacity issues will need be addressed in the future by the Jersey City Municipal Utility Authority (JCMUA).

Question by Ashley C Swiggett: Why doesn't this extend all the way to Summit? The section of Sip from Summit to Bergen is a highly pedestrian zone and it's dangerous with all the busses making illegal rights on red and there are no bike lanes even though the most heavily used citi-bike dock is right at the corner of Sip.

Andrew Vischio explained that this section was excluded since there are already planned improvements by private developers as well as more extensive improvements by PANYNJ which are more complex and beyond the typical safety countermeasure improvements that the Local Safety grant program funds. Therefore, it was decided not to include this section since it would likely slow down the Sip Avenue Improvements project with studies that would be required

2. Question by Keri: Will anything be done about the flooding at Sip and West Side Aves?

See response to Question 1 above.

3. Question by Dietmar: It says the road improvements are planned to start in Spring 2024, but there is already a lot of road work being done right now. Is this the same project or is there more work being planned for 2024?

Andrew Vischio clarified that this is not the same project. The project currently underway includes public service improvements to underground gas and electric utilities. The City prefers completing any proposed underground work now and prior to the Sip Avenue project to avoid re-disturbing Sip Avenue later.

Questions and comments submitted during Live Q&A

4. Jeff (to Everyone): 6:22 PM: Are those 12' traffic lanes? That's too wide if you actually want to slow down cars.

Tom Pagani explained that the existing roadway width which varies from 36 to 40' is being maintained. With 8' wide on-street parking on both sides of the roadway, lane widths will vary from 10' to 12'.

5. Dietmar (to Everyone): 6:25 PM: I am wondering if the curb extensions doesn't create a hazard for bikes, because they have to swirl into the center where a car may come from behind. Has that been considered?

Tom Pagani explained that the curb extensions are as wide as the on-street parking. Andrew Vischio stated that the intent of the sharrows is for cyclists to ride in the travel lane so curb extensions will not impact the cyclists.

6. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:27 PM: If the goal of the project is intended to improve safety "for all road users," why are sharrows being proposed? Several studies have found that they do not improve safety for cyclists.
7. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 6:27 PM: I must echo Dietmar's concern. curb extensions are great for pedestrians but combined with sharrows they create pinch points for bicyclists. this corridor has a lot of heavy truck traffic and I believe we need physically separated bike lanes in order to prevent deaths. please eliminate parking storage space and instead utilize it for physically separated bicycle lanes.
8. Tony Borelli (to Everyone): 6:30 PM: Frankly at this point to propose a comprehensive safety redesign that includes sharrows instead of protected, separated bike lanes is a step backward, locking in outdated infrastructure.
9. Raphael Wakefield (to Everyone): 6:31 PM: I concur with Ms. Cohen and Flinck and Borrelli. Let's make it safe now and sacrifice parking for protected bike lanes. Sharrows are an insult.

Response for 6-9:

Safety improvements that can be made are limited due to the narrow roadway width of 36'-40'. Andrew indicated that this project is intended to provide mostly short term safety improvements including curb extensions as well as FHWA proven safety countermeasures. The inclusion of protected bicycle lanes would require the removal of on-street parking on one side of the road. This request can be brought before the City Council for consideration. Christine Mittman added that this project was selected for inclusion in the Local Safety Program based on crash history and the safety improvements proposed in the City's application which were based on a Road Safety Audit performed in 2014. Protected bike lanes were not included in the application are currently not part of the design. Bike lanes are currently being considered on another roadway in the

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City, but through a different federally funded Concept Development Program which explores alternatives and is intended to address more extensive improvements.

10. Renee Tirella Cassidy (to Everyone): 6:32 PM: There is also a major MUA project underway now replacing sewer lines
Christine Mittman indicated that while some drainage improvements can be made in this project, but that major drainage capacity improvements - cannot be funded with Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds by FHWA.
11. Dietmar (to Everyone): 6:32 PM: Yes, I think curb extensions need to be reconsidered.
Tom Pagani indicated that the curb extension widths can be re-evaluated.
12. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:32 PM: I would add that given the recent UN report on climate change, to attempt to maintain the status quo on single-occupancy vehicles seems incredibly backwards.
13. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 6:33 PM: 2' is not wide enough for a biker, especially with heavy trucks. Sharrows will not work here
14. Christina (to Everyone): 6:34 PM: will the firetrucks be able to make turns without any issues since this is a Main Street for them.
Thanasi Georgiadis indicated that WSP ran truck turning templates for all corners to ensure that trucks can maneuver turns.
15. Ya-Ting Liu (to Everyone): 6:34 PM: Thanks for the presentation. It's nice to see efforts underway to improve street safety for pedestrians and cyclists. I just want to echo the other comments that sharrows are an inadequate form of protection for bicyclists. This is a heavy truck route. If the goal is to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, we need protected bike lanes.
16. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:36 PM: I don't believe my question was answered. You are maintaining parking for single-occupancy vehicles over creating protected bike lanes, which would make the road safer "for all road users".
17. Tony Borelli (to Everyone): 6:36 PM: OK, then eliminate all parking on one side of the street.
18. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 6:36 PM: yes, we have to eliminate the parking on one side of the street. this is a street to move vehicles, not store vehicles
19. Christina (to Everyone): 6:37 PM: cars double park around here to begin with because there isn't enough parking around here
Andrew Vischio indicated that an on-street parking analysis can be performed. It can be done as a one-block case study to extrapolate results for the entire corridor. This can then be presented to the City Council for consideration
20. Dietmar (to Everyone): 6:39 PM: Thanks for explaining your reasons for the design. But just looking at the upper left picture on slide 10 again, with the curb extension, I still have to say this will create a hazard for bikes and scooters. The road narrows and bikes have to swirl into the center.
21. Sumit (to Everyone): 6:41 PM: We can't keep appeasing car owners when a significant portion of this community does not own cars. Whether it's this road or others in JSQ we keep prioritizing car owners. It shows city is not serious about mitigating threats from climate change. We must build the city we wish to see.
22. Renee Tirella Cassidy (to Everyone): 6:42 PM: there were sinkholes and sewer collapses all along Sip Avenue.
23. Christina (to Everyone): 6:42 PM: the project currently going is because of the storm in the beginning of July caused the sewer line to collapse causing sink holes all along Sip.
24. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 6:43 PM: by 2024 when this is completed, an even smaller percentage of people in this neighborhood will own cars due to the large number of buildings with low parking ratios or zero parking. a large portion of the community will get around by bicycle.
Andrew Vischio indicated that this will be considered.
25. Sumit (to Everyone): 6:48 PM: can someone share how many Protected Bike Lanes (PBLs) there are in Journal Square?
Andrew indicated that Bergen Avenue currently has PBLs and that the City has future plans for PBLs along Baldwin Avenue and Summit Avenue.
26. Dietmar (to Everyone): 6:48 PM: On the double parking topic...it is frustrating to see that Police is usually only chasing double-parkers away instead of giving them a ticket. Just chasing them away will not encourage the offenders to stop

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double parking.

27. Christina (to Everyone): 6:49 PM: do you take into account large snow piles on the corners as well?

Christine Mittman and Tom Pagani indicated that this is not part of the design. On-street parking areas would be used.

28. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:49 PM: Will the project entail the planting of trees beyond the green infrastructure that was mentioned during the video? Given that the neighborhoods that Sip Avenue passes through are sorely lacking in tree canopy cover, it would be great if that could be included if allowed under the grant terms.

Christine Mittman indicated that street trees can be included in this project.

29. Anna L (to Everyone): 6:50 PM: will the presentation be sent to attendees or posted anywhere for those of us who missed Andrew Vischio (to Everyone): 6:51 PM: The presentation is available at this website:

<https://www.njtpa.org/SipAvenue.aspx>

30. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: Would love to see new tree pits added

31. Sumit (to Everyone): 6:55 PM: Is Councilperson for Ward C here?

Andrew Vischio introduced Councilperson Mira Prinz-Arey who shared her positive sentiments for the project and to indicate that the project will be shared with other groups.

32. Sumit (to Everyone): 6:57 PM: thanks for joining, Mira. Appreciate your presence. Shame that Councilperson Boggiano is absent.

33. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 6:59 PM: Would be great to have street lights at all corners of intersections. This treatment is included in NYC's Vision Zero plan and creates a lot more visibility for pedestrians.

34. Question by Joe Cappazoli: If any thought was given for a new traffic signal at Sip Avenue and Emerson. Plus, there is a bus stop but no signage. Any thought given for increased lighting.

Christine Mittman indicated that WSP will perform a lighting analysis to identify potential lighting upgrades. Pedestrian and street lighting improvements are included in this project. Edgardo Perez explained the traffic signal warrant analysis which includes 8-potential warrants. WSP will perform a traffic signal warrant analysis at this location.

35. Dietmar (to Everyone): 7:01 PM: With this improvement project starting in 2024, does that mean we will not see repaving done between JFK Blvd. and West Side Ave. before 2025 or so?

36. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 7:03 PM: The intersection at Garrison Ave is also near St Elizabeth's school. I know that a traffic light at Garrison and Sip would have greatly helped me and my kids cross there.

Tom Pagani indicated that a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) will be installed at this location. This is the only RRFB in the project but WSP will investigate if further are warranted.

37. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 7:03 PM: How many RRFBs are planned to be installed? It has been my experience in Jersey City that most motorists do not stop for pedestrians.

38. Dietmar (to Everyone): 7:03 PM: Ok, thanks. Good to hear that.

39. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 7:04 PM: ok thank you.

42. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 7:04 PM: Even with RRFBs activated, I would add.

43. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 7:04 PM: Perhaps a HAWK Signal outside of the school would be better?

Andrew Vischio indicated that the compliance for a HAWK Signal as well as the cost is not much different than that of a traffic signal and the City would prefer a traditional traffic signal. Christine Mittman indicated that a traffic signal warrant analysis can be performed at this location.

44. Christina (to Everyone): 7:05 PM: maybe a crossing guard would work instead of a light.

Andrew Vischio indicated that a crossing guard can be requested and indicated that he would submit the request for a cross guard.

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45. Renee Tirella Cassidy (to Everyone): 7:05 PM: It's also the corner where the firehouse is.
46. Michael Flinck (to Everyone): 7:05 PM: I believe a traffic signal would be better at Garrison. Cars also struggle to cross at that location and traffic backs up on Garrison.
47. Christina (to Everyone): 7:07 PM: is the traffic light being put on Van Wagenen anything to do with the 40-story building proposal for the location of the supermarket.

Andrew Vischio and Edgardo Perez indicated that the 40-story building development was not a factor for providing traffic signal at this location.

48. Sumit (to Everyone): 7:09 PM: Thank you so much for hosting this meeting. Truly appreciate the remote option and hope we can continue remote participation options such as this in future. Many thanks to all the organizers and folks working on this.
49. Adam Cohen (to Everyone): 7:09 PM: Thank you again to the consultants and city staff who worked to put this together. We would love to see concerns about cyclist safety addressed but we appreciate all of your work and time put into this project to date.
50. Andrew Vischio (to Everyone): 7:10 PM: <https://www.njtpa.org/SipAvenue.aspx>

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 Thomas Pagani at (973) 353-7698 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.