

# **Route 20 Paterson Drainage Improvements MP 0.70-3.35 and Safety Improvements at Edward Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

## **Preliminary Engineering**

### **City of Paterson, Passaic County, NJ**

#### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN (PIAP)**

**Date: March 30, 2012**

This Public Involvement Action Plan (PIAP) is based on a variety of factors including the community, its context and the concerns within the community, the impacts to the community, as well as the complexity of the project, its needs, the proposed improvements, and technical aspects of the project. The plan includes a number of strategies intended to provide opportunities for the stakeholders, particularly those to be impacted by the project to have dialogue with the project team.

The plan described below will serve as a draft plan for the project. The plan will be based on the information known about the project at the time this document is drafted.

#### **Project Description**

##### **Existing Condition:**

Route 20 is a north/south urban principal arterial divided highway along the west bank of the Passaic River. The speed limit varies from 35 mph to 45 mph through the project limits. The project is located in a suburban area in the City of Paterson.

Flooding along Route 20 at various locations has been reported by representatives of NJDOT and the City of Paterson. Flooding occurs both as a result of runoff from storm events flowing directly onto the roadway and exceeding the capacity of the drainage system, and flooding of the Passaic River following prolonged periods of rainfall which is widespread over the Passaic River Basin. This flooding has resulted in traffic back-ups, road closures and increased accident rates. As late as March of 2010 and 2011 major storms caused roadway flooding during the initial phases of the storm. Days later the Passaic River crested resulting in prolonged roadway closures at Broadway (MP 1.92) and Fifth Avenue (MP 3.35). During storms in March of 2010 and 2011, the Passaic River and Route 20 “became one” at the Broadway (MP 1.92) and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (MP 3.35) intersections as the river overtopped the river bank and flooded Route 20. Just south of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the top of the median barrier was underwater. Prolonged roadway closures have occurred regularly due to Passaic River flooding. Comparison of the low point elevations at Broadway and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to stage-frequency curves developed from FEMA flood elevations indicate that the roadway is subject to Passaic River flooding by an approximate 3 year storm. The March storms were between a 10 and 15 recurrence intervals.

In addition to the flooding conditions along Route 20, there are safety issues for two locations along Route 20 in the City of Paterson. The locations include Route 20 at Edwards Avenue (MP 1.92) and Route 20 at 5th Avenue (County Route 652) (MP 3.35). Both intersections are ranked high on the State’s Safety and Congestion Management Systems list and at both intersections there are northbound left turn lanes with inadequate length that result in backups onto Route 20 Northbound.

### **Proposed Improvements:**

Drainage: The drainage PPA consists of installation of inlets and pipes at the following locations along Route 20: MP 0.85, MP 0.96, MP 1.4 to 1.55, MP 1.78, MP 1.86 to 1.92, MP 2.6 to 2.68, MP 3.1 to 3.35.

Edward Avenue: The proposed improvement calls for rerouting all Route 20 NB to Route 4 traffic to existing ramp from Route 20 NB to Route 4 EB and creating a new terminus to meet Route 4 at a right angle at new signalized intersection at Route 4 and E. 43rd Street. New signalized intersection and gap in Route 4 barrier will allow access to both directions of Route 4 from Route 20 NB. Under this alternative, Route 20 NB left turns at Edward Avenue signal will be eliminated.

5<sup>th</sup> Avenue: The proposed improvement calls for relocating 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue traffic to the vicinity of Ramp B and using existing 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue for U-turn movements; Providing left turn storage length of approximately 400 feet on Route 20 NB; Raising profile of Route 20 above the 2010 and 2011 flood levels (slightly above 10 year storm) which resulted in closing Route 20; Providing advanced warning signs in NB (Signal Ahead) direction; Replacing existing loop detectors with image detectors.

### **Project Limits:**

This project investigated drainage improvements on Route 20 from MP 0.70 to MP 3.35 in the City of Paterson, Passaic County, New Jersey.

This project also investigated safety improvements on Route 20 at the Edward Avenue intersection (MP 1.92) and the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection (MP 3.35) in the City of Paterson, Passaic County, New Jersey.

### **Project History:**

A Tier 2 screening along a four mile stretch of Route 20 in Paterson was completed by NJDOT in 2009 that resulted in the following breakout recommendations:

- Route 20 and Edward Avenue: Safety and geometric deficiencies need to be addressed at this location. It ranks high on the safety and congestion management systems. Proposed improvements include signage, lighting, signal timing and sight distance. Advance to Concept Development (CD) as a new start in the Study & Development Program
- Route 20 and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue: Safety and congestion management systems support improvements at this location. There are heavy backups on Route 20 NB left turns onto 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A new Home Depot at this location has added more traffic. Signal revisions and an extension of the left turn lane are needed. Advance to CD as a new start in the Study & Development Program.
- Drainage on Route 20: At least 19 drainage problems occurred in the past three years. These occurrences forced roadway closures. Cleaning of all the inlet and pipes on Route 20 will help to alleviate this situation, and Region North Operations will schedule this work.

As a result of the above Tier 2 and breakout recommendations, three (3) CD studies were initiated to investigate the drainage and safety issues.

### **Proposed PIAP for Current Project for PE Phase**

Developing a clear, cooperative message is a necessary pre-requisite to any public involvement program. Based on the project description, the complexity of the project and its history, it is anticipated that the project will include the following components:

- One (1) Local Officials Meeting (City of Paterson and Passaic County)
- Two (2) Local Officials Briefings (City of Paterson and Passaic County)
- One (1) Public Information Center prior to finalizing NEPA document

### **Local Officials Meeting**

This meeting will be held for NJDOT to present improvements and discuss any design issues. Participants will include NJDOT, Designer, Paterson Engineering, Paterson DPW, Paterson Police and Fire, and Passaic County Engineering.

### **Local Officials Briefing**

Following the preliminary design development, the Local Officials Briefing (LOB) will be scheduled so that NJDOT can formally present the recommended improvement to City of Paterson and Passaic County officials in order to gain endorsement of a preliminary design plans and construction staging option. Different staging options will be presented together with detours and construction durations for approval from local officials prior to progressing design. Depending on the breadth and depth of comments received, a second LOB may be appropriate after changes are made.

#### **Notes:**

- Handouts will be developed with OCR input and distributed prior to the briefing. The handout is usually printed on an 11" x 17" sheet. The handouts shall include project location map, construction plans, construction staging plans and photographs.
- Due to the length of project, information will be presented mainly in Powerpoint™ format. Display boards will be prepared as required for the briefing.

### **Public Information Center**

When the project nears completion of preliminary design and prior to finalizing NEPA documentation (CED), a Public Information Center (PIC) will be held to formally present the project and progress to date, and to solicit comments from the public. The PIC will present a refined design of the preferred approach, where the stakeholders can gain a better understanding of the degree of impact required, major benefits provided and potential trade-offs required.

The results of the PIC will be documented by identifying the comments, evaluating them and providing responses/solutions for them.

#### **Notes:**

- A project information handout will be developed with OCR input and distributed prior to the PIC. The handout is usually printed on an 11" x 17" sheet. One side should contain the purpose of the PIC, a brief description of the existing conditions, the proposed project, estimated cost, tentative schedule and NJDOT-OCR contact information. The reverse side should have a graphic of the selected Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).
- The mailing list will comprise local residents, technical & elected officials, public interest groups, etc. OCR will provide guidance on the extent of the geographic range of property owners and other stakeholders included on the mailing list.
- 1 set of display boards will be prepared for the PIC. The displays shall include aerial of the study area, display of the design plans, existing and proposed sections, and right-of-way matrix showing the amount of each property impact, and construction staging.