

Stakeholder Interviews

CENTRAL GATEWAY TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Meeting Report

Date: April 5, 2007
Time: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Location: Parkside United Methodist Church
1420 Kaighn Avenue
Camden, NJ 08103

<u>Time</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone / E-Mail</u>
9 a.m.	Delbert Nelson	PBCIP	
	Bridget Phifer	PBCIP	
	Ronald Thomas	PBCIP	
10 a.m.	James Wallace	Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center	
10 a.m.	Robert Britz	Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center	
11 a.m.	Tom Jones	UMDNJ	jonestr@umdnj.edu
3 p.m.	Corrine Powers	Corrine's Restaurant	
4 p.m.	Milford Liss	Boys and Girls Club	mliss@bandgccc.org
	Veronica Murphy	NJDOT - DPPD	(609) 530-8142 / veronica.murphy@dot.state.nj.us
	Patricia Feliciano	NJDOT - OCR	
	Leroy H. Gould	NJDOT - DPPD	
	Tony Davis	NJDOT - DPPD	
	John Mullen	McCormick Taylor, Inc.	(215) 592-4200
	Ken Deats	McCormick Taylor, Inc.	(215) 592-4200
	Jonathan Wetstein	McCormick Taylor, Inc.	(215) 592-4200
	Maggie Mund	McCormick Taylor, Inc.	(215) 592-4200

Summary of Interviews

A series of informational interviews were held over two days in April. The second series of interviews occurred on Thursday, April 5 at the Parkside United Methodist Church located at 1420 Kaighn Avenue in Camden. This meeting location was chosen in order to accommodate stakeholders from the Parkside and Gateway neighborhoods.

The informational interviews were held in a one-on-one format, with specific time slots provided to interviewees for discussion. The project team provided an overview of the study to each attending stakeholder and solicited comments and feedback regarding the study. The following talking points were used to facilitate discussion:

- Issues concerning road infrastructure (pavement conditions, sidewalks, pavement markings).
- Issues with Public Transportation (locations, access, timing).
- Streets and intersections affected by flooding (storm sewers, ponding, drainage).
- Streets and intersections affected by speeding traffic.
- Streets and intersections in need of signs (traffic, wayfinding) or traffic signals.
- Streets affected by cut-through traffic or truck traffic.

A summary of comments received from the interview attendees is described below.

9 a.m. -- Bridget Phifer, Parkside Business & Community in Partnership (PBCIP), Ronald Thomas, Parkside Block Captains, Delbert Nelson, Democratic Committee Rep.

Members of the PBCIP provided an overview of safety concerns at different intersections – both traffic and pedestrian. Talked about lighting, flooding, greenways. Wants more traffic calming in the city – elevated crosswalks or speed tables with texture pavement. They are working with WRT on intersection streetscape planning. They indicated they do not want added traffic concerns in Parkside resulting from the expansion of the Campbell Soup Company's headquarters in the Central Gateway neighborhood, and inquired if traffic impacts to adjacent neighborhoods have been studied.

Topics of Discussion

- Haddon Avenue, Kaighn Avenue and Baird Boulevard offer the only entrances and exits in and out of Parkside to major roadways.
- There are missing left-turn signs at Baird Boulevard and Park Boulevard, resulting in unsafe conditions for pedestrians and motorists. Accidents have often occurred at this intersection.
- Crosswalks not as visible at various intersections.
- Would like to install pedestrian push buttons as long as it doesn't cause traffic back-ups.
- Should consider speed tables as a traffic calming measure along Park Boulevard.
- School children often make mid-block crossings risking injury from motorists.
- Buses line Park Boulevard, there are no places for buses to pull out of the traffic lanes.
- Safety improvements for students going to and from the Boys and Girls Club should be included in the planning efforts.
- The Kaighn Avenue - Haddon Avenue intersection could be the most dangerous in the city.
- WRT is the design consultant working in the Kaighn Avenue and Haddon Avenue intersections. PBCIP will send a copy of the plan to NJDOT.
- Would like a left turn from Kaighn Avenue onto Haddon Avenue.
- A neighborhood plan was also prepared for Parkside; PBCIP will send a copy to NJDOT.
- Motorists can't make safe left onto Haddon Avenue at the Pine Street School.
- There is a flashing light at Haddon Avenue and Walnut Street would should be changed into full signal.
- The pavement on Kenwood Avenue, Empire Street and Magnolia Street is in poor condition.
- There is a truck route on Walnut Street, Empire Street and Pine Street. Trucks should be kept out of residential areas and on major roadways.
- The intersection of Kaighn Avenue and 9th Street near Liberty Park should be evaluated for improvements.
- PBCIP is involved in scattered site rehab developments, including 51 unit senior rentals across from the Camden High School; a new 25-30 residential and commercial mixed-use development in Parkside; business improvement districts and main street designation efforts are occurring throughout the neighborhood; and the Trust for Public Land, Cooper's Ferry and PBCIP are working together for the restoration of Farnam Park.
- Would like to see better communication from Campbell's Soup regarding its expansion/development plans. Residents don't want more traffic congestion due to the Campbell's expansion.

10 a.m. -- James Wallace & Robert Britz, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center

Mr. Wallace and Mr. Britz discussed hospital expansion plans, including impacts these plans may have on Haddon Avenue. Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center (Lourdes) is working with DRPA to design a transit-oriented site between the medical center and the Ferry Avenue PATCO station.

Topics of Discussion

- Most people access the hospital off of Route 130. Traffic flows north and east near the hospital, and a median bisects the hospital's side street.
- Emergency services opened in March of 2005
- A shuttle service exists for employees from the Ferry Avenue station.
- Students working at the hospital utilize transit from Drexel and Rutgers universities.
- The far side of Haddon Avenue has parking for employees and visitors.
- Due to the location of existing parking lots, pedestrians need to cross Haddon to reach the hospital. This includes visitors, patients and employees.
- The speed of traffic on Haddon Avenue is a concern.
- The striped area of the intersection at Vesper and Haddon Avenue is intended as pedestrian section.
- Lourdes is working with DRPA on station area design plans for a transit-oriented development site. The site would be book-ended by the hospital and PATCO's Ferry Avenue station.
- The site would cater to employees, physicians, seniors (55+) and professionals (aged 25-35).
- Plans are early in development – began four months ago.
- There is also an study to see if an elevated and unusable portion of the cemetery could be used for underground parking.
- Lourdes endeavors to keep access to its facilities as simple as possible.
- Of the 2,600 total employees at Lourdes, about 330 are city residents.
- Lourdes and PBCIP are working together on an employer-sponsored housing program as a way to encourage employees to locate in area. Lourdes is required to go through Parkside's housing program.

11 a.m. -- Tom Jones, UMDNJ

Mr. Jones indicated safety is his biggest concern regarding Camden's infrastructure.

Topics of Discussion

- Cooper not surrounded by amenities that support its visitors and employees.
- Safety is the biggest concern throughout much of Camden.
- A barrier runs the length of Broadway, creating a barrier for pedestrians trying to cross. As a result, pedestrians cross Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.
- Local businesses do not have adequate parking.
- Wayfinding is a problem once you get in the city.
- NJ Transit needs to come up with a coordinated transit system.
- There needs to be a coordinated public safety initiative among different law enforcement agencies in the city, including major transportation providers and employers with safety officers.
- Make the Walter Rand Transportation Center inviting. Provide safety officers, clean facilities, lighting/access improvements and courteous staff.
- Make the Walter Rand Transportation Center a Visitor's Center for the city.

- Three of the 17 police powers in the city (the local ones) should coordinate staffing of transportation center. It would be a great investment.
- Bring back street vendors to Broadway and other commercial corridors.
- The Cooper Hospital, courthouse, UMDNJ area could serve as hub for getting around the city.
- Broadway is part of the Main Street corridor initiative. Sheila Roberts is contact person for this effort, and Cooper's Ferry may be lead agency.

3 p.m. -- Corrine Powers, Corrine's Restaurant

Ms. Powers stated that safety is a continuous issues for both motorists and pedestrians. Her concerns included poor signage or lack of signage, bus stops are neglected, speeding traffic is a concern and sidewalks are in disrepair. She added that four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) often damage pavement.

Topics of Discussion

- Parking on streets is a problem. It's not marked or it's not adequate for local businesses.
- Haddon Avenue is a crime area, and has been since last summer (2006).
- The Wheels of Soul motorcycle gang is causing problems for local residents.
- Haddon Avenue can have speeding traffic
- All-terrain vehicles are a problem. They are illegal on streets, yet many of the city's youth ride them on the streets and on the sidewalk. It's hard for law enforcement to do anything since it could be a liability issue.
- Kaighn Avenue near the Pub at the Airport Circle has lighting problems.
- Buses are regular. However, there need to be more bus shelters and adequate bus stops – especially for seniors.
- LAEDA is interested in designating Haddon Avenue as a historic district.
- Sidewalks on Haddon Avenue are falling in disrepair.
- Emergency vehicles cannot access the rear part of Corrine's Restaurant due to large trash bins that block the way.
- Building across the street (1307 Haddon Ave) is vacant and an eyesore. Should tear it down and use it for parking for local businesses.

4 p.m. -- Milford Liss, Boys and Girls Club

Mr. Liss spoke mainly about Park Boulevard and traffic cutting through Gateway. He mentioned there is a lot of pedestrian activity due to the proximity of local schools (hundred of kids an hour crossing mid-block, etc.). He would like to see geometric changes to the median to allow for the loading/unloading of students safely.

Topics of Discussion

- There is new lighting on Park Boulevard and Kaighn Avenue.
- The median on Park Boulevard is an obstruction to geometric improvements (vehicular management and safety are affected).
- Frontage along Farnam Park could provide an extra lane (or a bus loading lane) on Park Boulevard if the median is shifted.
- Parkside roads are used as an unofficial detour route when flooding occurs on Admiral Wilson Boulevard.

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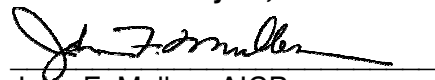
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- He suggested conducting a traffic circulation study to determine how shifting the median on Park Boulevard could help traffic and pedestrians.
- The intersection of Kaighn Avenue and Haddon Avenue should be improved.
- 55% of Camden residents are under age of 25
- There were 6-7 pedestrian crashes on Park Boulevard in the past year.
- The line of sight near Forrest Hill is bad; and the problem is exacerbated when children make mid-block crossings between parked cars.
- ATVs are a problem for local residents. Unfortunately, police can't chase them since it would be a liability issue and a safety issue on the part of the police department.
- Camden has enough affordable housing. It needs more market rate housing.

The meeting ended at 5 p.m.

Report prepared by:

McCormick Taylor, Inc.



John F. Mullen, AICP