

Stakeholder Interviews

CENTRAL GATEWAY TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Meeting Report

Date: April 3, 2007
Time: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Location: Camden County Council on Economic Opportunity
538 Broadway
Camden, NJ 08103

<u>Time</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone / E-Mail</u>
8 a.m.	John P. Sheridan	Cooper Hospital	856-342-2953 Sheridan-john@cooperhealth.edu
9 a.m.	Anthony Perno	Cooper's Ferry Development Association	
10 a.m.	Andrew Levecchia	Camden County Improvement Authority	andrewl@camdencounty.com
10 a.m.	Ed Fox	Camden County Improvement Authority	edfox@camdencounty.com
11 a.m.	Anthony C. Ng	Latin American Economic Development	
1 p.m.	Valerie Bradford	DRPA, Ben Franklin Bridge Operations	856-968-3342 vpbradford@drpa.org
1 p.m.	Lt. Gary K. Smith	DRPA Police	856-968-3341 gksmith@drpa.org
2 p.m.	Bob Kelly	Camden County Department of Engineering	856-566-2970 rkelly@camdencounty.com
5 p.m.	Leona Tanker	Camden Co. Workforce Investment Board	856-931-9999 Tanker.ccwib@comens.com
	Veronica Murphy	NJDOT - DPPD	(609) 530-8142 / veronica.murphy@dot.state.nj.us
	Evens Marcellus	NJDOT - DPPD	(609) 530-2850 / evans.marcellus@dot.state.nj.us
	Meredith Hammond	NJDOT - DPPD	(609) 530-2859 / Meredith.hammond@dot.state.nj.us
	Patricia Feliciano	NJDOT - OCR	
	Leroy H. Gould	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

Summary of Interviews

A series of informational interviews were held over two days in April. The first series of interviews occurred on Tuesday, April 3 at the Camden County Council on Economic Opportunity located at 538 Broadway in Camden. This meeting location was chosen in order to accommodate stakeholders from the Lanning Square and Bergen Square neighborhoods, as well as from the Central Business District.

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.

8 a.m. -- John P. Sheridan, Cooper Hospital

Mr. Sheridan provided details on the hospital's expansion plans, employee travel patterns and access, parking issues, signage, and coordination activities with other organizations in the city. He stated that the hospital expansion is expected to be completed end of next year (2008).

- Cooper Hospital employs 5,500 people, 4,000 of which work in the City of Camden.
- NJ Transit has plans to eventually abandon its parking lot in the Central Gateway area. Cooper Hospital may acquire the lot to allow for additional parking garage in future (office, cancer, stem cell, med school).
- Change references from Mickle Boulevard to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the project mapping.
- A new pocket park would be constructed adjacent to one of Cooper Hospital's new buildings and leased by the city for 20 years.
- Two transit opportunities currently exist in the city: a new PATCO stop could be located in the Gateway neighborhood near Newton Avenue; the other station site could be in the Parkside neighborhood near Walnut Street and the Old Camden Cemetery.
- The Cooper Hospital expansion will be done at end of 2008, and would potentially bring several hundred new jobs to the city. The new parking garage is scheduled to open September 30, 2007. Cooper Hospital indicated they did a traffic study for the garage under construction which would contain about 1,600 traffic spaces. The hospital expansion would include about 300,000 additional square feet of medical space, and 9,600 square feet of retail space.
- Cooper Hospital is working with Pennoni consultants on streetscape improvements along Martin Luther King Boulevard. This project is partially funded through a grant from DVRPC.
- The Cooper Plaza area may be designated as a historic district and include infill residential construction under the redevelopment plan for the area.
- Bus service is sufficient, but wayfinding needs to be improved for westbound and eastbound travelers.
- Cooper Hospital would like additional signage and wayfinding outside of the City of Camden – especially along County routes and at major highway interchanges. Cooper Hospital would like additional signage for it's facilities from Philadelphia into the City of Camden as well as along the Admiral Wilson Boulevard.
- Safety is a concerns for pedestrians – especially along Haddon Avenue, Broadway and Martin Luther King Boulevard. Martin Luther King Boulevard streetscape improvements will also have safety measures (e.g.: narrowing of travel lanes) to enhance pedestrian safety.

9 a.m. Anthony Perno, Cooper's Ferry Development Association

Mr. Perno presented greenways planning and coordination Cooper's Ferry has had with different organizations in the area, including Campbell Soup Company. He indicated that pavement markings within the NJDOT Project Area – especially along 11th Street – may help delineate a future greenway trail.

- Cooper's Ferry indicated it would like to complete an independent recreational facility (bicycle trail) in the Central Gateway neighborhood. The trail would connect to the existing trail in Cooper Park and could eventually connect to the trail along Martin Luther King Boulevard in downtown Camden to the waterfront.
- Mr. Perno suggested the study team contact Jack Sworaski of the Camden County Division of Environmental Affairs or Doreen Morris of Camden Greenways to receive a copy of Master Plan.
- Cooper's Ferry indicated it would accommodate pavement striping to delineate a new greenway, but prefers an independent facility.
- Cooper's Ferry is currently seeking funding for improvements of a greenway trail in the area.
- He stated traffic currently has a weave problem along Admiral Wilson Boulevard adjacent to the Central Gateway neighborhood.

10 a.m. – Ed Fox and Andrew Levecchia, Camden County Improvement Authority

The Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA) suggested NJDOT take a more proactive role in protecting or preserving the Sears building through its transportation planning efforts. Mr. Fox stated the state may be “enabling” private companies to replace local historic amenities when they should be preserved. He suggested various infrastructure/circulation improvements to aid in city planning and redevelopment efforts. Mr. Fox also inquired about the Cramer Hill interchange.

- CCIA suggested speed management along the eastbound section of the Admiral Wilson Boulevard.
- CCIA would like the greenway to be an independent facility, However, if the greenway is not constructed as an independent facility, and will be striped within the local travel lanes, then it should be a different color from the pavement on the travel lanes.
- CCIA suggested including traffic calming measures on 11th Street to manage vehicular speed.
- CCIA suggested continuing Martin Luther King Boulevard through to 11th Street in the Central Gateway area on the mapping.
- CCIA stated that a 90-foot pedestrian bridge over the Admiral Wilson Boulevard should be considered for the Camden Greenways connections.
- Provide bus pull-off lanes in the Gateway area for NJ Transit buses so they don't block traffic.
- CCIA suggested that a traffic light be installed at the intersection of 11th Street and Federal Street.
- Ensure transportation improvements allow for a future greenways connection into Cramer Hill.
- Consider adding additional traffic signals on Federal Street.

- Consider traffic calming/traffic management on Flanders to reduce vehicular speed coming off the ramp from the Admiral Wilson Boulevard.
- Reuse the Sears Building. Reconfigure the roadway in front of the building so that the median shifts away from the building's entrance to allow a frontage road with sidewalks (e.g.: remove about two lane-widths of Pavement on Federal Street).
- Piers on 11th Street are problematic beneath the PATCO transit line. They offer only limited site-distance and can create a safety hazard for traffic.
- Consider working with the City of Camden's Public Works facility to locate its maintenance garage to an area more conducive to truck traffic.
- Create a new connection to Cramer Hill from 11th Street.

11 a.m. -- Anthony C. Ng and Raymond Lamboy, Latin American Economic Development

Mr. Ng indicated he maintains an extensive network of business owners engaged in business improvement efforts, including streetscape activities. He provided suggestions on improved signage and wayfinding for the City businesses.

- Mr. Ng commend the NJDOT on holding the stakeholder interviews for the study. He stated he appreciate transportation planners are taking "big picture perspective" on improvements for the area.
- LAEDA would like additional wayfinding for merchants off of Federal Street and Haddon Avenue, as well as signs for businesses on Mt. Ephraim and Broadway.
- Consider adding signage and a left turn onto Federal Street from Flanders.
- LAEDA is involved in designating special district corridors for business improvements (Business Improvement Districts).
- LAEDA partnered with Comcast Cable Corporation to encourage youth groups and business owners to clean up streets.
- About 300 business owners graduated from LAEDA's "alumni" program.
- LAEDA holds a quarterly business seminar for about 500 organizations – of which 350 are in the City of Camden.

1 p.m. -- Valerie Bradford & Lt. Gary K. Smith, Delaware River Port Authority

DRPA discussed incident management due to flooding on the Admiral Wilson Boulevard. Suggested new but minimal signage in and around the Gateway study area to help manage event traffic in the summer months.

- Boulevard flooding is DRPA's biggest concerns. Would like to see the flooding problems along Admiral Wilson Boulevard corrected.
- Accidents occur along the frontage road in front of the Sears Building where the curve brings Gateway traffic onto eastbound Admiral Wilson Boulevard. This area has seen a high number of rear-end accidents, as well as flooding problems and speed (not sight distance) as the cause for problems. DRPA suggested adding signs for safety (e.g.: chevrons on barrier or reflectors) in this location.
- There is a weave problem on Admiral Wilson Boulevard for Gateway traffic entering the eastbound lanes of the Admiral Wilson Boulevard.

- There is no traffic management/incident management for eastbound traffic existing the Ben Franklin Bridge. A incident management sign at the lightning statue at the foot of the bridge may help traffic management.
- Stated that NJDOT construction of the Central Gateway improvements could affect concert traffic. Would like to see how traffic will be managed in the area for waterfront events.
- Cooper's Ferry and Camden Waterfront Marketing (Judy London & Stacy Gordon) would be able to provide input in waterfront activities and potential impacts to traffic and circulation.
- DRPA stated that it prefers minimal signage in the area to limit potential confusion for travelers.
- There are many accidents at the ramp for traffic traveling eastbound onto Federal Street.

2 p.m. -- Bob Kelly, Camden County Department of Engineering

Camden County has issued an Request for Proposals (RFP) for streetscape improvements in the Cooper Hospital area (mainly along Martin Luther King Boulevard). Will also be circulating an RFP on the State Street bridge soon. Commented on establishing neighborhood identity, curb cuts at intersections for wheelchairs, parking issues, trucks utilizing Gateway, etc.

- The County will be circulating an RFP for streetscape improvements along Martin Luther King Boulevard. Improvements will include landscaping, traffic calming, pedestrian enhancements and a dedicated greenway.
- Underground infrastructure is in need of improvement.
- Federal Street and Market Street should be two-way streets again.
- The County is also sponsoring the replacement of the State Street Bridge. The existing bridge kept would be kept for a greenway trail; the new bridge will be located downstream.
- Contact Mr. Evans or Reverend Anderson (Pastor of St. Bartholomew's) to include the Kaighn Avenue Collaborative Enterprises (KACE) in the study outreach activities.
- Work should be done to establish neighborhood identity and safety – trees, eyes in the sky, improved housing stock (M&M / St. Joseph's developers).
- Consider adding handicap access at local intersections, both signalized and unsignalized
- Additional off-street parking should be provided for residential & commercial uses (pocket parking).
- Extend Delaware Avenue to State Street for truck traffic -- keep trucks near or on Route 30 and Route 130).
- There are traffic problem on Cooper at the Leap Academy. Add left arrows, and create safe zones so children don't have to be dropped off in the middle of the street.

4 p.m. -- Leona Tanker, Camden County Workforce Investment Board, Inc.

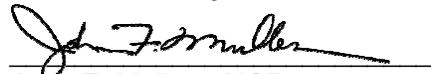
The Camden County Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (WIB) was recently award a \$400,000 grant to study transportation issues county-wide. Includes big focus on the city of Camden. For the NJDOT study, she wants to ensure there is adequate residential input during the planning process.

- The WIB was awarded \$413,000 transportation grant. The 15-month study begins May 1 and will be part of a County-wide transportation plan.
- The plan will include both transit & auto uses in the County.
- Consider changing one-way streets to two way streets to help improve circulation.

- Traffic lights timed longer to help disabled or elderly cross safely.
- Provide continued residential input to ensure long-term success in planning.

The meeting ended at 11:30 p.m.

Report prepared by:
McCormick Taylor, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Mullen", is written over a horizontal line.

John F. Mullen, AICP