

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**Route 21 Newark Needs Analysis
Murray Street to Edison Place, Newark
Essex County**

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) values your opinion and welcomes your suggestions and comments in making decisions about the improvements to Route 21 from Murray Street to Edison Place in Newark.

- What improvements would you like to see along this section of Route 21?
- What existing elements do you feel are important?

NJDOT has scheduled a series of public meetings with various stakeholder groups, developed project-specific questionnaires and established a website, www.njdot.gov/transportation/works/studies/rte21newark/, to obtain your input and feedback on the proposed improvement concepts currently under consideration.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides the public with an opportunity to examine the effects of the preferred concept on the surrounding environment. After an Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement is reviewed by the public and approved by federal agencies, the design and construction of the preferred highway improvement alternative will be possible.

The Project

NJDOT is evaluating ways of improving the safety and operation of Route 21 (McCarter Highway) along the one-mile section between Murray Street and Edison Place in Newark. It proposes to balance better traffic operations with traffic calming measures that will increase pedestrian safety.

To identify and refine improvement concepts, data is being collected through on-site investigations, reviews and interviews with local officials,

residents and business owners. Both man-made and natural environmental conditions along the Route 21 corridor will be identified and evaluated.

NJDOT has reconstructed Route 21 north and south of the study area and now seeks to address the existing safety and operational deficiencies on this section of Route 21. No construction will be undertaken until environmental factors and the concerns of area residents, business owners and local officials have been addressed.



February 3, 2006 Community Information Forum held at Gray Charter School, Newark

The Corridor

Route 21 is one of the most heavily traveled north-south routes in northern New Jersey. For most of its length, it is accessed by entrance and exit ramps. In the area being studied, however, Route 21 is tied into Newark’s street network. North of the study area, through downtown Newark, Route 21 was recently widened, with new sidewalks, curbs, medians and improved intersections to

Governor Jon S. Corzine



Commissioner Kris Kolluri, Esq.

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accommodate the needs of the Central Business District, NJPAC and the new NJ TRANSIT Newark City Subway Extension. It also provides connections to I-280, Market Street and Raymond Boulevard, all important east-west routes through Newark.

Driving the Corridor

In the 1.05-mile project study area, Route 21 has four 12-foot wide lanes (two northbound and two southbound) and a 12-foot center left-turn lane. There are 12 traffic signals along this segment, including those at Murray Street and Edison Place.



Northbound Route 21 near Cottage Street, Newark

The elevated Northeast Corridor Railroad runs along the northbound side of Route 21. Along the southbound lanes, commercial and industrial businesses front the corridor, many of which have access driveways onto Route 21.

The accident rate along this section of Route 21 is higher than the average for a road of this type in New Jersey. A large proportion of these accidents are rear-end collisions that occur when motorists rush to clear an intersection before the signal changes to red.

Proposed Concepts

Two corridorwide concepts are being considered in this stage of the study. The first one involves replacing the existing highway from Murray Street to Edison Place with a new four-lane highway with intermittent center left turn lanes (see typical cross section illustration at top right).

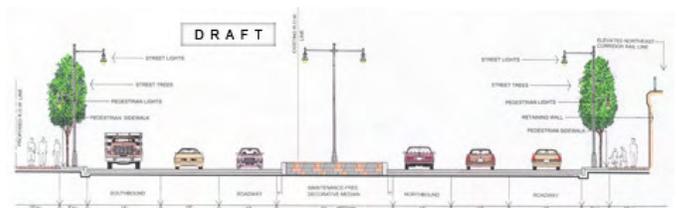
Four-lane Concept. The four-lane concept would provide the following:



- New pavement surface;
- New sidewalk, curbs and accessible crosswalks;
- New street lights, signs, traffic signals and signal systems;
- Improved traffic flow through modern traffic signals;
- Raised, decorative median in areas where no left turn lanes are necessary;
- Wider sidewalk along the southbound curb of Route 21 for pedestrian safety; and,
- Little or no right of way acquisition.

The northbound curb would remain approximately two feet from the Northeast Corridor Railroad wall.

Six-lane Concept. The six-lane concept (see typical section illustration below) would provide the following:



- Reconstructed roadbed and pavement, including all new roadway on the southbound side;
- Bicycle-compatible outside lanes in both directions;
- New sidewalk along northbound Route 21;
- Widened sidewalk along southbound Route 21, with urban- and landscaped amenities for pedestrian safety;
- New curbs and accessible crosswalks;
- New street lights, signs, traffic signals and signal systems;
- Six through lanes for increased vehicle-carrying capacity, improved vehicle safety and reduced travel time;

- Raised, decorative median throughout the corridor, narrowed in areas with left turn lanes;
- Pedestrian bridges over Route 21.

For this concept, right of way would need to be acquired along the southbound side of Route 21, affecting approximately 34 businesses and a baseball field.

The Process

To help NJDOT select a preferred concept, an extensive public outreach program has been launched to engage the local community regarding their concerns and needs.



Consultant to NJDOT presenting the Route 21 project at a Government Agency Stakeholder Meeting in Newark

A NEPA environmental document will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration. It will include:

- Residents' concerns
- Traffic and circulation
- Property acquisition
- Travel safety
- Property access
- Archaeological and historical resource impacts
- Construction impacts
- Air quality
- Pedestrian safety
- Noise
- Flooding
- Economic issues
- Total cost vs. overall benefit

Upcoming Community Meetings

NJDOT has scheduled Community Information Forums to be held in Newark on June 1, June 13, and June 22, 2006.

The Next Step

This process refines the ideas and concepts that are important to residents, property owners, stakeholders and users of Route 21.

Ultimately, one concept that best suits the needs of the community will be selected for further analysis and review.

Additional information on this project can be found on the NJDOT website,

www.njdot.nj.us/transportation/works/studies/rte21newark/

For Further Information, Please Contact:

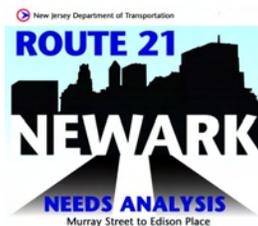
Thomas P. Johnson
 Regional Manager of Community Relations
 New Jersey Department of Transportation
 1035 Parkway Avenue, P.O. Box 600
 Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600
 609.530.2110
tom.johnson@dot.state.nj.us

NJDOT
Office of Community Relations
P.O. Box 600
Trenton, NJ 08625

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**Route 21 looking South near
Hamilton Street, Newark**



Get Involved!

Here's How You Can Contact Us:

Call

Thomas Johnson, NJDOT Office of Community Relations
(609) 530-2110

Write

NJDOT – Office of Community Relations
P.O. Box 600, Trenton, NJ 08625

Visit Us on the Web

www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/studies/rte21newark