

Meeting Summary

Project Name: Main Avenue Local Concept Development Study
Date/Time: December 10, 2019, 1:30 PM
Location: Passaic City Council Chambers
Prepared by: Andrew Lappitt, PP, AICP
Subject: Stakeholder Meeting #1
Participants: See final page of meeting summary

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

Project team representatives from NJTPA, Passaic County, City of Passaic, Arterial LLC (Arterial), and Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC (Sam Schwartz) were in attendance for this meeting. Attendees were asked to sign in as they entered the Council Chambers. A list of meeting attendees is provided at the conclusion of this meeting summary. Rick Fernandez, Business Administrator of Passaic City and Main Avenue LCD Study project team member welcomed everyone to the meeting along with Passaic City Council President Gary Schaar. Councilman Schaar mentioned that Passaic Mayor Lora was unable to attend the meeting due to an emergency situation in Jersey City.

29 people were in attendance for this meeting, including project team members. The meeting attendees were given project information sheets and were provided paper copies of the powerpoint presentation upon request. A Spanish translator from Sam Schwartz was available along with a presentation in Spanish if any attendees preferred Spanish.

The purpose of this meeting was to present existing conditions and solicit feedback to develop the project purpose and need statement.

II. Presentation

The presentation began with NJTPA and Sam Schwartz providing an overview of how NJTPA is administering the study and how the concept development and local capital project delivery processes function. Sam Schwartz and NJTPA mentioned the Interagency Review Committee, consisting of NJTPA, FHWA, NJDOT Local Aid, NJDOT-BEPR, and subject matter experts, and how this committee is required to review the completed study to confirm compliance with the Local Concept Development process and that the Preliminary Preferred Alternative satisfies the Purpose & Need Statement. NJTPA and Sam Schwartz explained how any transportation project receiving federal funding must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

a. Previous Studies

Sam Schwartz discussed the previous conceptual study titled "Main Avenue Corridor Study: A Vision for a Vibrant Commercial Corridor" completed by Arterial in 2015, and mentioned that the previous concept included the relocation of the NJ TRANSIT bus depot to the median at Main Avenue and Passaic Street, and a proposed parking structure at Passaic Street and St. Francis Way.

b. Existing Conditions

Sam Schwartz discussed the data collection and public outreach efforts thus far. Sam Schwartz reviewed the traffic volume and pedestrian and bicycle data collected, along with Average Daily Traffic numbers. Sam Schwartz reviewed crash data that was collected over the most recent three years, and the most recent five years for pedestrian and bicycle crashes. The intersections of Main Ave and Passaic St, and Main Ave and Monroe St were noted as crash “hot spots” along the corridor. A parking utilization study was performed for the parking median of Main Avenue on a weekday and weekend day in September 2019 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM in 15 minute intervals, which found that parking utilization averaged between 78-98% on a typical weekday and 98-99% on a typical weekend day.

Sam Schwartz explained the environmental process, which must be followed for funding transportation improvements using federal money. An Environmental Screening was conducted for this study, with the purpose of identifying any fatal flaws that would prevent the study from advancing to future phases, and to identify resources for which impacts should be considered as part of the alternatives analysis. Sam Schwartz mentioned that per the screening report, several permits are not anticipated, but some regulated resources will require authorizations and approvals from regulatory agencies.

- The following permits are not anticipated for this study:
 - Wetlands Permits
 - Coastal Area Facility Review Act Permit
 - Mitigation Permits
- For this study, regulated resources will require authorizations and approvals from the following agencies:
 - NJDEP
 - Certification from the Hudson-Essex-Passaic Soil Conservation District of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
 - NJ State Historic Preservation Office
 - NJ Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Stormwater Permit for Construction (if the project exceeds 1 acre of ground disturbance)

Sam Schwartz also provided information on the cultural and historic resources in the study area, which are mapped in the environmental constraints map.

c. High Performance Streets

Arterial touched on High Performance Streets and how the elements of Main Avenue determine performance in terms of functionality, safety, place branding, health and environment, economic vitality, and design quality, which determine its performance as a street. Several photos documenting existing conditions along the corridor were shown, focusing on sidewalk conditions, crossings and intersections, transit stops (including the bus terminal), parking, and parks and open space. Arterial highlighted the issues and concerns in each photo, and what could be done to improve the High Performance Streets score of Main Avenue.

d. Public Outreach Efforts

Sam Schwartz discussed the Pedestrian Road Safety Audit that was held with a class of students at Passaic Academy of Science & Engineering on November 15th and students were provided a hands-on learning experience in traffic engineering and urban planning, and how the project team gathered input from the students about the pedestrian conditions of Main Avenue. Some examples of issues and concerns along the corridor were shown in the presentation. Sam Schwartz also discussed how a second Pedestrian

Road Safety Audit is going to be held with parents at Sallie Gamble School 16 to understand perspectives of parents who walk their children to school and use or cross Main Avenue.

Sam Schwartz discussed additional public outreach tasks completed to date, including a Community Profile of the study area, a Public Involvement Action Plan which lists public outreach efforts to be completed throughout the study, an Environmental Justice screening that was conducted to find out if the study area contains populations that could disproportionately suffer potential project-induced effects, and the Local Officials Meeting that was held on October 1, 2019. Additionally, Sam Schwartz discussed the project website and a crowdsourcing map that is anticipated to allow the public to pinpoint their issues and concerns along Main Avenue from the convenience of their computer or mobile device. Lastly, Sam Schwartz explained the Temporary Demonstration Project that is anticipated in the Spring of 2020, which will allow the public to experience a temporary demonstration along Main Avenue in the right-of-way, such as a parklet or a bike lane for the public to stop by and use/experience.

e. Purpose & Need Statement

Sam Schwartz explained that the Project Purpose and Need Statement is crucial to this study and the Local Concept Development phase as it will be used to develop and evaluate potential alternatives to the existing Main Avenue corridor. Sam Schwartz mentioned that comments received from stakeholders will allow the project team to gain insight into the development of the Purpose and Need Statement.

III. Closing Comments and Feedback

Sam Schwartz and Arterial will continue remaining data collection tasks including a geometric review of Main Avenue and the development of the draft Purpose and Need Statement.

The meeting was opened for questions and comments to identify the issues and interests along Main Avenue. It was mentioned that the comments will contribute to developing the project purpose and need statement. The following items were noted:

Question/Comment #1: There is a Safe Routes to School infrastructure grant coming up, which the City and/or County could apply for to improve infrastructure around schools in Passaic.

Question/Comment #2: Please be sure to provide parking that will accommodate Passaic school employees.

Question/Comment #3: How would businesses be affected by the potential removal of parking?

Response: The project team mentioned that there are proposed parking structures very close to the Main Avenue corridor, adding parking to the area.

Question/Comment #4: If you need location data for students to help this study, we can provide that information to the project team.

IV. Final Comments and Next Steps

Next steps for Community Outreach

- Conduct Pedestrian Road Safety Audit #2 at School 16 – December 17, 2019
- Project team will seek out location to hold Public Information Center #1 – location and date TBD.

Key Action Items

- Sam Schwartz and Arterial will hold Pedestrian Road Safety Audit #2 at School 16 on December 17, 2019
- Sam Schwartz and Arterial will continue data collection and public outreach efforts in coordination with NJTPA, NJDOT, Passaic County, and the City of Passaic.
- Sam Schwartz and Arterial will begin coordination of Public Information Center #1.
- Attendees and stakeholders will provide local insight to the project team via email, if applicable.
- Sam Schwartz will provide a meeting summary of Stakeholder Meeting No. 1.

Next Meeting

Public Information Center #1 – Date and Location TBD.

Meeting Attendees

Mark Auerbach - Passaic City Historian

Stacey Bruce – Passaic Public Schools

Steven Cruz – Passaic Public Schools

Paul Drake – PSE&G

Omar Garcia – City of Passaic – Finance

Rachel Goldberg – Passaic Public Schools

Mario Gonzalez – Passaic Public Library

Lisa Lee – EZ-Ride

Megan Massey – NJ TRANSIT

John Mellody – Passaic Public Schools

Bryant Mirnaya – Jefe Restaurant

Sonal Patel – City of Passaic

Miriam Perez – City of Passaic

Jauhara Pressey – NJ TRANSIT

Alejandra Restrepo – Zoni Language

Gary Schaer – City of Passaic

Domingo Severino – Jefe Group

Project Team Members in Attendance

Aimee Jefferson – NJTPA

Sascha Frimpong – NJTPA

Nordan Murphy – Passaic County

Michael Lysicatos – Passaic County

Sal Presti – Passaic County

Dennis Harrington – City of Passaic

Ricardo Fernandez – City of Passaic

Joe Buga – City of Passaic

Jason Gonzalez – Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC

Andrew Lappitt – Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC

Lou Luglio – Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC

David Lustberg, Arterial LLC