

Moving Mindfully Monmouth/Mercer

Public Involvement Meeting #2

Location: Newell Elementary School, 27 High Street (CR 539), Allentown, NJ 08501

Date: 1/30/2019

Time: 7:30 PM

Attendees: See Appendix A

Meeting Notes

The project team conducted the second of three interactive public meetings slated for the Moving Mindfully Monmouth/Mercer Study. This meeting sought to share with the public the initial data collection effort by the project team. Over 35 participants attended the meeting. The sign-in sheet is attached as Appendix A.

The meeting began with a presentation conducted by WSP. The presentation, which is currently available on the Movingmindfully.net website, discussed the following topics:

- Summarized all public and focus group input collected up to January 30th
- Land uses in the study area and future growth areas
- Environmental Justice evaluation
- An inventory of infrastructure in the study area, including weight limits and clearances, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a signage condition and location inventory, and an evaluation of truck turning radii at study area intersections
- Traffic volumes and level of service data
- Crash data
- Truck origin and destination data

The presentation was followed by a 15-minute Q&A session during which the project team addressed general questions and concerns from the public. During the Q&A, the following questions and concerns were raised:

- Directional and truck signage along I-195 should be re-evaluated and improved to mitigate confusion and missed exits by trucks, resulting in unplanned trips through the heart of Allentown.
- School traffic was cited as a major concern, particularly the bottleneck at High Street and Main Street.

- It was suggested that an additional exit at Sharon Station Road onto I-195 should be a consideration to alleviate regional traffic flows from the south/east to the west through Allentown.
- A few questions were raised about the initial origin-destination percentages presented by the project team. The project team clarified the findings. Specifically, left turn percentages from Church Street were questioned, in addition to the truck percentages along CR 526. Questions were also raised related to the year of this data. The project team noted that all of 2017 was evaluated. When asked why 2018 data was not used, the project team clarified that the 2018 data is not yet available.
- Increased weight restriction enforcement is necessary along Sharon Station Road, particularly due to the high number of gravel trucks.
- A review of destination signage should be conducted at exits 7 and 8 along I-195. Reevaluate the need for Allentown designation at exit 7.
- NJTP/I-195/I-95 directional signs were recommended along the eastern bypass to mitigate confusion.
- Signs at Exit 11, Exit 8 and 7 on I-195 should be evaluated. Those along I-195 are too small, especially for truck drivers, who are positioned much higher than regular drivers. The eastbound sign directing truck drivers to exit 8 is located on the acceleration lane from the NJ Turnpike, a location where many drivers may miss the sign altogether.
- Many county highway shields are obscured by parked vehicles in Allentown, particularly along Main St.
- Several attendees voiced support for the construction of a driveway to Ellisdale Road to establish a second entrance/exit to the high school. This improved circulation may help mitigate congestion, particularly left turns, at High Street and Main Street.
- Some attendees requested no traffic light be installed at Church Street & Main Street as they felt it would contribute to more delays at the intersection.
- Trucks speeds on Sharon Station Road are perceived to be excessive.
- There are numerous concerns regarding historical building structural impacts from truck traffic. In tandem, a comment was made about truck weight restrictions in designated historic districts around the country, and the feasibility of this being implemented in Allentown to not only preserve the physical structures, but to maintain the character of the Borough. The project team indicated that this would be investigated as we move into the concept phase of work.

The Q&A session was followed by an interactive session comprised of several stations headed by the project team. Maps depicting the initial data collection effort described above were displayed on easels for the public to comment on. Participants were encouraged to cycle through all the boards and provide

input for each one. In addition to the input received during the Q&A session, the following input was received during this exercise:

- New developments are slated near Six Flags Great Adventure.
- Engine braking sign is faded and not visible on Allentown Lakewood Road (CR 526) WB approaching the Easterly bypass. Trucks frequently engine break slowing down for the bypass.
- An additional crosswalk is needed on Main St, north of Broad Street and at Ellisdale Road
- An attendee asked if truck and car speeds were reviewed in the study area. This was followed up with a comment to investigate implementing traffic calming measures to reduce speeds.
- Left turns are difficult to make from Main Street to High St. The crossing guard parks on Main Street and through cars cannot bypass vehicles making a left-turn.
- It was noted that the calculated Level of Service at CR 524 @ High Street does not reflect delays experienced by residents during peak hours. Vehicles sit in queues along CR 524 waiting to make left or right turns for more than 10 minutes due to school drop off.
- Level of Service should be conducted for other roadways outside the Allentown Downtown periphery.
- The design of the intersection of CR 539 and Sharon Station Road is difficult to maneuver. There are safety concerns of geometrics and traffic patterns at this intersection.
- An additional exit at Sharon Station Road onto I-195 should be a consideration to alleviate regional traffic flows from the south/east to the west through Allentown.
- All left turns to CR 539 between Allentown Davis Station Road and CR 537 are difficult to make due to speeds and volumes.
- Some attendees expressed serious concern about building the westerly bypass in its originally proposed alignment because the bypass would run directly past the high school. Residents mentioned the safety issues this would create being so close to the schools and fields. It was noted that the fields in which the township students utilize are immediately adjacent to the proposed roadway. In addition, much development has taken place since the original plans for the westerly bypass, and these developments are along or adjacent to the would-be bypass.
- Bruno's Bike shop in Allentown is a great place to get input from the local bike/ped community.
- A bike lane should be considered between Allentown and the Union Transportation Trail.
- Many cyclists ride along Main St, often 2-3 abreast, particularly in the summer months
- Kids cycle on the sidewalk in the vicinity of the high school.
- Pedestrian paths were recently completed from Ellisdale Road to the High School.

- A question was asked regarding whether the origin-destination data collected for the study includes the general area of the FedEx facility recently built in Robbinsville near Route 130 at Crosswicks-Hamilton Square Road. The response of the project team is that data was not collected at the FedEx facility due to its location outside the study area.
- Consider NJ Turnpike ramps as additional Origins/Destinations (zones) in the Origin and Destination analysis.

Additional comments provided from attendees in writing are located in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A

Sign-in Sheet



SIGN-IN SHEET



PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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January 30, 2019

SIGN-IN SHEET

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APPENDIX B

Comment Sheet & Additional Public
Comment



Your feedback is important to this study.

Let us know of any comments, concerns, or questions you may have regarding freight related transportation within the study area.

It is important to not build a
Western Bypass. IT is a dangerous
proposition in a place where all kids
in the District gather.

You can mail your comments to:

David Schmetterer
C/O: Moving Mindfully
Monmouth County Division of Planning
One East Main Street 2nd Floor
Freehold, NJ 07728

<http://MovingMindfully.net>

Talking points Allentown traffic Meeting 1-30-19

1. Rt 539 Daily traffic and especially in the summer months. Traveling

north just past the Cream Ridge Golf Course in Upper Freehold, there's a sign – 539 ALT that was placed there last year or so by the County. That was a good start but if you go that way there are no more signs anywhere that say 539 ALT North and not a sign for NJTP or I-195 until the next traffic light. When, and if, you make a left the very first sign says you are on 526 West. Going back, traffic that ignores that 539 ALT sign, and makes a left at that intersection, has to eventually pass the schools and then winds up at stop sign and in a backup on the busy corner of Main Street. I would suggest to put a sign along with that 539 ALT sign showing the way to NJTP & I-195 then the traffic would not go through Allentown. That's where the pass-through traffic wants to go, anyway, and we should help them.

2. I-195 Traveling East- At end of the acceleration ramp from NJTP onto

I-195E, a sign says "All trucks and buses use Exit 8". That sign does not get read by drivers of cars, trucks, or buses that are merging into 195 traffic. That is a busy and heavy merge. No one reads that sign. Move it further east and right before exit 7. If not done, traffic will exit at the first Allentown sign (exit 7) which goes right to the stop sign on Main St. That traffic cannot use the expensive by-pass that is only accessible at Exit 8. Those drivers probably don't even know that the Easterly By-Pass exists. At exit 7 the interstate sign should just say - Exit 7, Robbinsville (and not Allentown). Then, traveling WEST on I-195, there are 3 signs saying RT 539 Exit 8. However, upon exiting, the signs say RT 524 East and West. No 539 sign to be found. Put some signs for 539 at the end of that exit ramp. And then, if you keep going west on I-195 you see another sign for Allentown ?? which you already have passed.

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