

Senior Mobility Workshop Report

May 25th, 2010

Historic Harsimus Cove District
Jersey City, Hudson County



Sponsored by: NJTPA

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I. Purpose of the Workshop

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) conducts half-day Walkable Community and Senior Mobility Workshops in municipalities throughout the NJTPA region designed to educate stakeholders, identify barriers to walking, and improve pedestrian safety in the identified communities. For each workshop, NJTPA central staff coordinates with local representatives to include a broad range of stakeholders including local leaders, planners, engineers, and residents.

Each workshop consists of four parts: 1) an introduction of local stakeholders; 2) a presentation by an NJTPA facilitator on age-related change and best practices in a walkable community; 3) a guided walking audit of a study area identified by the local hosts; and 4) small group sessions where recommendations for improvements are discussed and prioritized. The outcome of each workshop is the identification and prioritization of specific improvements that will increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians. The workshop also serves as a catalyst for local communities and county representatives to implement the improvements themselves and to further refine these recommendations for implementation by other agencies.

Following the success of a fall 2009 Senior Mobility Workshop at the Berry Gardens Senior Center, the city and the NJTPA decided to hold another Senior Mobility Workshop (as opposed to a broader Walkable Community Workshop) at the Grace Church Senior Center in the municipal, state, and national historic district of Harsimus Cove. Participating seniors, along with state, county, and local representatives, investigated the walking conditions of the immediate area surrounding the Grace Church Senior Center along Third Street, Erie Street, Newark Avenue, Bay Street, and Jersey Avenue. During the workshop, participants paid close attention to the safety, comfort, convenience, and accessibility of these local roadways. Some of the participants at the workshop were from the Harsimus Cove neighborhood as well as senior residences in other neighborhoods. Not only will the recommendations in this report address the walking vicinity of the Grace Church Senior Center, it will also touch on pedestrian safety concerns that the participating seniors had within their residential senior center at 463 Pacific Avenue, the Jersey City Medical Center on 355 Grand Street, and the Superior Court House at the five corners of Summit (CR 617), Newark and Hoboken (CR 644) Avenues.

The decision to select the workshop area was aided by the 2008 NJTPA Regional Priority Update Study's listing of aggregate high crash segments within the NJTPA region, which identified Newark Avenue as a high crash segment within the study. Rutgers University's Transportation Safety Resource Center's Plan4Safety was used to identify and map pedestrian involved crashes within this workshop vicinity as noted in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*. No pedestrian fatalities occurred from 2003-2008 within the walking audit area. However, twenty pedestrian injuries did occur within the walking audit area during 2003-2008.

The workshop area features a residential community, public library, municipal services, C-Town and Shop-Rite grocery store, and retail within walking distance of the Grace Senior Center Church and has a number of transit options. This report cites many recommendations for improvements in the study area. These include traffic calming measures, prohibiting illegal parking that affects sight distances, and pedestrian safety improvements at street crossings.

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Figure 1: Number of Pedestrian Injury Crashes in proximity to the Grace Church Senior Center

Location	Number of Pedestrian Crash Injuries
Corner of Jersey Ave & Newark Ave	7
Newark Ave, Bay St., & Erie St. "Triangle"	7
Third St. & Jersey Ave Intersection	3
Jersey Ave & First St.	1
Erie St. & First St.	1
Erie St. & Second St.	1

Source: 2003-2008 NJDOT Crash Data, Plan4Safety

Figure 2: Pedestrian Injury Crashes in proximity to the Grace Church Senior Center



Source: 2003-2008 NJDOT Crash Data, Plan4Safety

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II. Workshop Methodology

On May 25th, 2010 the Senior Mobility Workshop was held at the Grace Church Senior Center in Harsimus Cove, Jersey City, Hudson County. The agenda for the workshop and the listing of workshop participants is included as an Appendix on Page 16 and 17.

The workshop opened with an initial welcome by Jersey City Senior Planner Naomi Hsu. NJTPA staff followed with a presentation that started with a brief discussion on age-related change and its effect on an individual's hearing, vision, and motor ability. The presentation



stressed the need for comfort, convenience, safety, and accessibility when designing pedestrian facilities. It also discussed the potential design improvements with engineering concepts sensitive to the context of the walking audit area and the need to accommodate all ages and abilities.

Improvements such as lead pedestrian intervals, countdown signals, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), curb extensions, crosswalks, and motorist speed were discussed during the presentation. Additional topics of

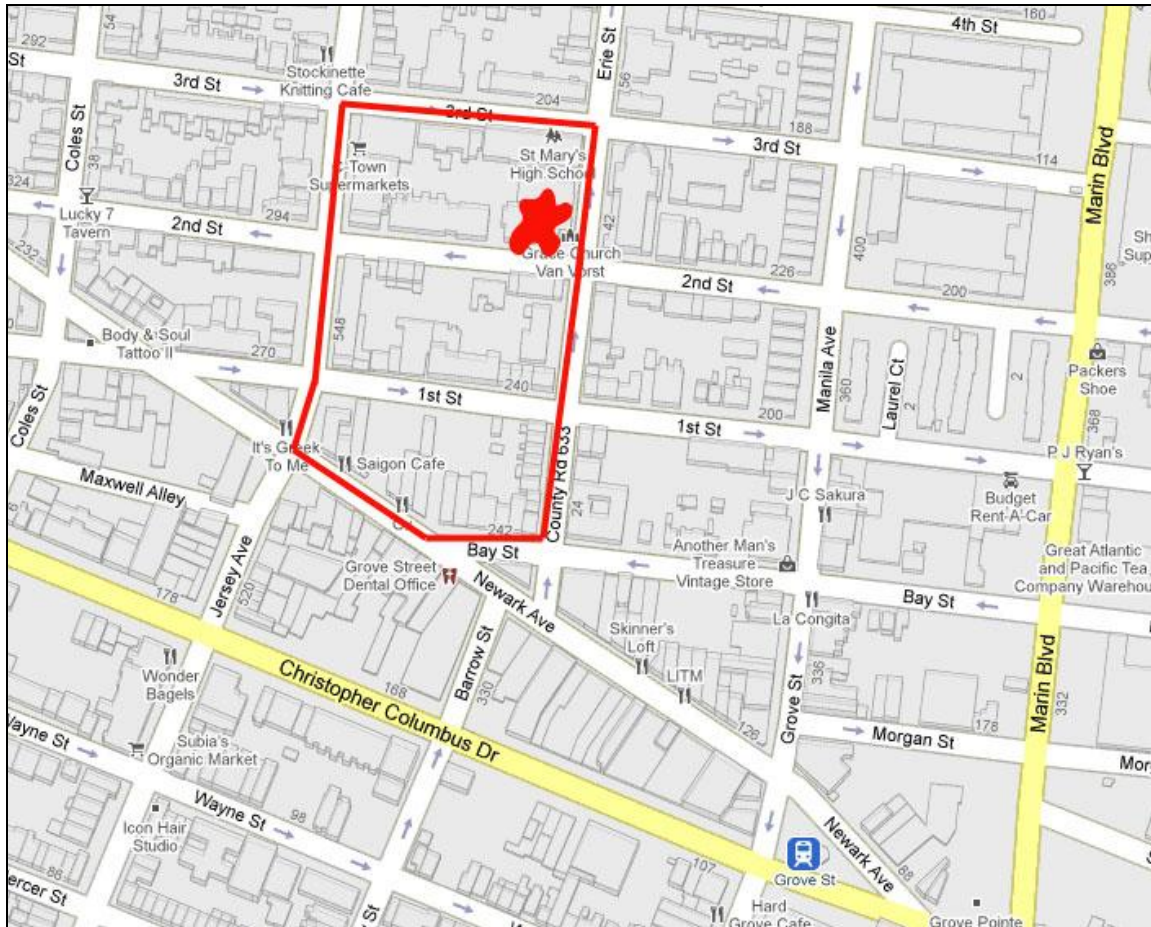
discussion included the public health rationale for increasing physical activity, and the relationship between walkability and improved quality-of-life.

Following the presentation, attendees participated in a walking audit of the area shown in *Figure 3*. The purpose of the audit was to observe specific problem spots along the route, as well as to point out features of the study area that are pedestrian-friendly. The facilitator stopped at various points along the route and asked the group to discuss what they liked and disliked about the walking environment of that section. Attention was paid to the ease of crossing the roads for pedestrians of all ages and abilities, the quality of the walking experience, driver behavior, ADA compliance with sensitivity to strollers and wheelchairs, and connectivity between destinations.



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Figure 3: Walking Audit Area of Jersey City Senior Mobility Workshop



Participants walked three blocks south along Eric Street from Third to Bay Street, west on the retail centric Newark Avenue, north along Jersey Avenue towards the C-Town grocery store, and then east at Third Street to return to the Grace Church Senior Center. This route was chosen based on input from Ms. Hsu and the Grace Church Senior Center administrator, Joyce Davison. Ms. Davison was largely concerned with motorist speed on Eric Street, upon which the Grace Church Senior Center is located.

The third part of the workshop was devoted to generating recommendations for the walking audit area. Participants gathered around street maps of the study area, denoted the location of specific walkability problems and potential solutions. The group was not constrained by jurisdiction or cost of improvements in the scope of their suggestions. Lastly, the recommendations were discussed and priorities suggested.

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III. Findings & Recommendations

a. Summary of Existing Conditions

1. Local Insights



(A)



(B)

- (A) Workshop participants along Jersey Avenue walking away from Newark Avenue
(B) Workshop participants walking west on Newark Avenue

Jersey City has the advantage of being an urban, transit-oriented city. Harsimus Cove's downtown location promotes a wealth of services and shopping in walking distance to residences. The combination of this land use pattern with the PATH, NJTRANSIT, and private transit carrier opportunities makes for a very walkable community with little to no immediate need for a private car. As a result, pedestrian convenience and accessibility were seen less of a focus than pedestrian safety and comfort.

Erie Street:

Erie Street is a residential one-way through street that carries traffic from Newark Avenue and Christopher Columbus Drive to Interstate 78 with connections to the Holland Tunnel. This one-way street is narrow, with parking on both sides of the street and pedestrian crossings at every block. A pedestrian-injury crash occurred on each block of Erie Street leading up to the Grace Church Senior Center from Newark Avenue between 2003 and 2008. The portion of Erie Street between First Street and Newark Avenue has a mix of residential, retail, and a police department. Closer to the Grace Church Senior Center, Erie Street is mostly residential. Workshop participants were very interested in promoting motorist speed calming techniques and observed illegal parking that obscures motorist and pedestrian sight distances when crossing Erie Street.

Newark Avenue:

Newark Avenue's crosswalks, sidewalks, and roadway have been recently upgraded within the last year. The avenue has a mix of retail, restaurants, and residential with frequent pedestrian activity and car traffic. Workshop participants generally felt that the pedestrian environment was adequate at this section. The intersection of Newark and Jersey Avenue was identified as an example of a well done intersection with new crosswalks, and ADA compliant curb ramps by workshop participants. Illegal parking is a concern along Newark Avenue and a recommendation was made for better police enforcement, and color designations along the street curb to delineate where motorists can and cannot park. One

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workshop participant voiced concern about motorists who park at the bus stop and make it difficult for passengers to board and alight from the bus. Increased police enforcement prohibiting parked cars at bus stops could alleviate this problem and ensure the pedestrians' safety, comfort, convenience, and accessibility.

Jersey Avenue and Third Street:

Jersey Avenue and Third Street are predominately residential. The crosswalks at these locations were in generally good condition. Illegal parking in the crosswalk was noticed and pedestrians were forced to walk around the hood of the car, making it very difficult for someone in a wheelchair to cross at the curb ramps. There is a C-Town grocery store at the corner of Jersey Avenue and Third Street. Open dumpsters are located on the Third Street sidewalk.

Jersey City is unique in its wealth of historic brownstones and diversity in architecture. Neighborhood residents benefit from generous sidewalk widths and recent upgrades to pedestrian crossings and sidewalks on various streets. Due to the age of Harsimus Cove and its mix of buildings with different development periods, the sidewalks are not consistent in surface level and material. Grey slate sidewalks are intermingled with the concrete sidewalks along these streets and are more likely to encourage pedestrian falls and make wheelchair accessibility difficult. In addition, the concrete sidewalk in several areas is heaved from the neighborhood's impressive sidewalk trees and lack of sidewalk upgrades over the years. Upgrading these sidewalks while also maintaining the character of the neighborhood's streetscape is highly recommended.

2. Needs/Issues/Opportunities

During the walking audit, specific attention was paid to the following:

- The condition of existing sidewalks and crosswalks
- The safety of pedestrian crossings at all intersections
- Vehicle travel patterns and speeds in relation to observed pedestrian access patterns
- Parking and its impact on motorist and pedestrian safety

Issue Areas: Safety, Comfort, Convenience, Access and Design

Making recommendations for pedestrian safety is a primary goal of a Senior Mobility Workshop. Aesthetics and sidewalk conditions are an important determinant in the decision of whether or not to walk. A well-designed pedestrian space encourages more walking. In addition, direct routes and short distances between destinations encourage trips by foot and on bicycle. Lastly, the pedestrian space must reflect the various levels of mobility. Proper design benefits all users, and allows all to participate in the community.

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The findings of the walking audit are as follows:

Erie Street from Third Street to Bay Street:



(C)



(D)

(C) Corner of Erie and Bay Street looking south

(D) Erie Street looking north towards the intersection of Erie and Bay Street



(E)



(F)

(E) Sidewalk condition along Erie Street

(F) Intersection of Erie and First Street looking north

Issue Area: Comfort

- Explore an upgrade of signage. Many of the street signs by Grace Church Senior Center are old. Though they may have historic value, they are small and difficult to read.

Issue Area: Safety

- Improve visibility of stop signs at cross streets of Erie Street. Stop signs at Erie Street are often obstructed by overgrown vegetation and trees. Improving their visibility while also preserving the greenery of the street is vital to the neighborhood's aesthetics.
- Provide consistent sidewalk surfaces. Level heaved sidewalks and protruding objects in the sidewalk that can cause a pedestrian to trip or fall.
- Upgrade the pedestrian accommodations at the intersections of Erie and First Streets and Erie and Second Streets by installing textured ramps (truncated domes), high-visibility crosswalks, and appropriate traffic calming measures. Workshop participants were in favor of brick paving at crosswalks and raised crosswalks (see

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Figure 4) to provide greater differentiation between the street and the pedestrian crossing, and to reduce motorist speed. Traffic calming must be context-sensitive, as Erie Street is in a historic district.

- Investigate bump-out techniques that are sensitive to the historic context of the neighborhood, especially at the corner of Erie Street and First Street. Certain curb extensions may not be allowed in this historic neighborhood. Workshop participants were very interested in the use of planters as a curb extension to prohibit illegal parking at corners and to narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians. This idea arose from existing traffic calming techniques seen in Manhattan.

Figure 4: Example of a raised crosswalk in Princeton, N.J.



Newark Avenue from Bay Street to Jersey Avenue:



(G) Intersection of Newark Avenue and Erie Street looking east

(H) Intersection of Newark and Jersey Avenue looking west

The Bay Street, Newark Avenue, and Erie Street “triangle” has had seven pedestrian injury crashes from 2003 to 2008. Infrastructure was installed at the intersection of Newark Avenue, Barrow Street, and Erie Street (“triangle”) to allow for signalization. The City considered prohibiting vehicular traffic at the section of Newark Avenue from the “triangle” to Grove Street to support a “restaurant row”. A few workshop participants voiced interest in this idea.

Due to the upgrades to Newark Avenue’s sidewalk and crosswalks overall, recommendations along this street were few.

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Issue Area: Safety

- Re-evaluate pedestrian crossing time at the Jersey and Newark Avenue intersection. Workshop participants voiced frustration in not having enough crossing time at this intersection. Seven pedestrian crashes have occurred in and near this intersection from 2003-2008. Upgrades to this intersection were completed this year and hope to improve the pedestrian environment of this area.
- Explore raised crosswalks at Newark Avenue intersections. Pedestrian activity along Newark Avenue is high. A raised crosswalk would help to slow vehicles and alert the driver of pedestrian presence.
- Support educational materials that promote pedestrian safety and discourage jaywalking.
- Paint sidewalk curbs according to a color code to emphasize legal vs. illegal parking spaces.
- Look into implementing striped bike lanes, which has an added bonus of serving as a traffic calming technique.

Jersey Avenue and Third Street:



- (I) C-Town grocery store dumpsters on Third Street
- (J) Intersection of Jersey Avenue and First Street looking north
- (K) Intersection of Erie and Third Street looking south
- (L) Sidewalk condition along Jersey Avenue

Issue Area: Comfort

- Enclose dumpsters behind the C-Town supermarket on the Third Street sidewalk.

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Issue Area: Safety

- Provide consistent sidewalk surfaces. Heaved sidewalks and protruding objects in the sidewalk can cause a pedestrian to trip or fall. Grey slate along Third Street is not conducive to safe walkability.
- Add a stop bar on Third Street 24 inches from the crosswalk at the Third Street and Erie Street intersection (*see photo (K) pg. 11*). This line alerts the driver to stop before the crosswalk to allow room for pedestrians to cross in the crosswalk.
- Enforce parking policy to discourage motorists from parking in the pedestrian crosswalk.

Pedestrian Safety Concerns:

Several of the participating seniors and the Injury Prevention Coordinator from the Jersey City Medical Hospital pointed out pedestrian safety concerns in other areas of Jersey City that they frequently walk. The walking audit did not include these locations due to distance and may need additional analysis to make recommendations and priority needs at these locations. The seniors were generally concerned about their safety when crossing the street at the following locations:

- ***463 Pacific Avenue Senior Center Residence***
Workshop participants were concerned with crossing the street to access the senior center's bus stop and recommended a signalization or stop sign to alert motorists of pedestrian crossing.
- ***3060 Kennedy Boulevard***
Workshop participants voiced concern that motorists do not stop for the crosswalk at this location. Workshop participants recommended a pedestrian signal head and or rectangular rapid-flashing beacon.
- ***Five Corners at Summit (CR 617), Newark Ave, and Hoboken (CR 644)***
Workshop participants discussed the difficulty of crossing at the Five Corners. Further analysis at this Five Corners intersection may be helpful in addressing this pedestrian safety concern. Of note, Newark Avenue between Coles Street and Five Corners will undergo improvements similar to those implemented on Newark Avenue between Coles and Grove Streets.

The Injury Prevention Coordinator of Jersey City Medical Hospital was concerned with the crossings at the hospital, located at ***355 Grand Street***. The closest intersection to the hospital's entrance is at Grand Street and Jersey Avenue. This intersection is wide and can be daunting to a pedestrian trying to cross, given the added confusion of traffic from left- and right-turn motorists. In addition, an NJTRANSIT bus stop is at the hospital's entrance but there is no crosswalk serving pedestrians alighting from buses at this location. The location of the bus stop may encourage jaywalking across Grand Street, a heavily-traveled east-west street that carries traffic from Jersey City's interior to its waterfront. *Figure 5* is an example of a pedestrian crosswalk at a bus stop location and may be helpful in addressing this problem. The Senior Mobility Workshop did not walk this area due to its distance from the Grace Church Senior Center. Recommendations and priority needs would need to be assessed through another method.

Figure 5: Pedestrian crosswalk at a bus stop



b. Next Steps

The Jersey City Senior Mobility Workshop originally began as a Walkable Community Workshop and transformed into a Senior Mobility Workshop due to its focus on senior participation and the success of a previous Senior Mobility Workshop held in the fall of 2009. Sixteen seniors were present at the workshop and voiced their concerns with the neighborhood's pedestrian environment. The key priorities favored by workshop participants were improvements to the pedestrian environment along Erie Street.

The speed of traffic on Erie Street and through its intersections provides a challenge for pedestrian safety and comfort. Erie Street is a through street with no stop signs, except for motorists on cross streets. The intersections at Erie and First Streets, and Erie and Second Streets demand improvements to pedestrian curbs and crosswalks with special attention to the need for a stop bar 24 inches from the pedestrian crosswalk to alert the driver to stop before the crosswalk and to allow room for pedestrians to cross. Improvements to Erie Street for consideration include curb bump outs with plantings, brick-style and/or raised pedestrian crosswalks, and edge striping to slow motorist speed.

Parking is an additional concern. Parking illegally close to, or within intersections makes it difficult for motorists and pedestrians to see on-coming traffic and may factor in the large number of crashes at some of these locations. In addition, illegal parking at bus stops is a concern and frustration among Jersey City bus riders.

Lastly, the workshop provided a forum for pedestrian safety, comfort, convenience, and accessibility concerns to which the seniors were exposed in other Jersey City neighborhoods. Several additional areas were discussed to which the workshop participants are exposed on a daily basis, whether a location near a senior center, employment, and or shopping opportunity. These locations are noted in this report and are recommended for further analysis:

- 463 Pacific Avenue Senior Center Residence
- Five Corners at Summit (CR 617), Newark, and Hoboken (CR 644) Avenues

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- 3060 Kennedy Boulevard
- 355 Grand Street/Jersey City Medical Hospital

This report will be forwarded to appropriate agencies for project advancement and serves to aid in promoting walkability within Jersey City's Harsimus Cove and surrounding areas.

APPENDICES

AGENDA

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Jersey City
Senior Mobility Workshop

May 25, 2010
10:00-12:30

1. Welcome by Jersey City Senior Planner, Naomi Hsu
2. Walkable Community and Complete Streets Presentation
 - Complete Streets Policy
 - Age Related Change
 - Sidewalks, Skills, and Safe Walking
 - Walking Environment
3. Walking Audit
 - In field assessments
4. Design Solutions (Breakout Session)
 - Small team working groups
5. Presentation of Recommendations
6. Priorities, Action Plan and Funding
7. Next Steps, Questions and Wrap up
8. Adjourn

Jersey City Senior Mobility Workshop Participants

Participant	Participant's Title
Pam Andes	Aid to Councilman Steven Fulop
Naomi Hsu	Jersey City Planning
William Riviere	NJDOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs
Ashley Machado	Rutgers – TSRC, Engineer
Marissa Fisher	Jersey City Medical Center
John Mucha	Jersey City Division of Engineering
Andy Kaplan	Rutgers – TSRC, Engineer
Josefina Palacios	Hudson County, TMA
Scott Rowe	NJTPA
Josh Schneider	NJTPA
Elizabeth Thompson	NJTPA
Mary Aiken	Grace Church Senior Center
Florentino Angeler	Grace Church Senior Center
Charlie Beckett	Grace Church Senior Center
Zita Beckett	Grace Church Senior Center
Juana Colen	Grace Church Senior Center
Joyce Davison	Grace Church Senior Center
Yolanda Diveit	Grace Church Senior Center
May Labib	Grace Church Senior Center
Thelma McKinnon	Grace Church Senior Center
Arlene Parker	Grace Church Senior Center
Purita Rodriguez	Grace Church Senior Center
Helen Rogers	Grace Church Senior Center
Jorge Rojas	Grace Church Senior Center
Tom Sullivan	Grace Church Senior Center
Irene Thomas	Grace Church Senior Center
Doris Walker	Grace Church Senior Center

Image Resource:

www.pedbikeimages.org

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Edge Striping for Parking



Curb Extensions



High Visibility Crosswalk



Bulb Out



Bulb Out with Parking