



# PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER TRANSCRIPT

## SIP AVENUE INTERSECTION SAFETLY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

**CITY OF JERSEY CITY, HUDSON COUNTY, NJ**



WSP USA

JULY 2021



## SLIDE 1 – TITLE SLIDE

Welcome to the presentation for the Sip Avenue Intersection Safety Improvements project. This project proposes safety improvements along the Sip Avenue corridor, which has a mix of commercial, residential and industrial uses.

This presentation will go over the project limits, existing safety issues that have been identified throughout the corridor, and the improvements being proposed as part of this project.

## SLIDE 2 – PROJECT SPONSOR AND FUNDING

The project is utilizing funds from the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Safety Improvement Program. These funds are being provided through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's Local Safety Program. To date, \$28 million in funding has been made available for design and construction for 14 projects sponsored by Jersey City.

## SLIDE 3 – PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to provide safety improvements for all road users including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists and to improve overall traffic operations that address the safety needs.

The NJTPA's Local Safety Program Network Screening List Sip Avenue as a high priority corridor. The Sip Avenue project was selected based on the crash data. The corridor ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the City of Jersey City for pedestrian safety.

## SLIDE 4 – PROJECT LIMITS

The project limits begin east of Route 1&9 and ends at Van Reypen Street, west of Bergen Avenue.

The corridor includes 13 intersections along Sip Avenue, 4 of which are signalized.

The intersection of Sip and JFK Boulevard is being improved under a separate contract led by Hudson County so this intersection is not included in the Sip Avenue project.

## SLIDE 5 – EXISTING CONDITIONS

Sip Avenue is a minor arterial road with a 25 mph speed. It connects the western side of Jersey City beginning at Route 1&9 to the eastern neighborhood of Journal Square ending at Summit Avenue. Sip Avenue has a single travel lane per direction with parking on both sides of the street.

The roadway sees high traffic volumes in the range of 12,500 vehicles per day. Visibility at the crosswalks between drivers and pedestrians is poor and a majority of curb ramps and pedestrian signals are substandard and do not meet current ADA requirements. The corridor has substandard signage and roadway markings.

Additionally, Sip Avenue does not provide any on street accommodations for bicycle users.



## SLIDE 6 – CRASH DATA

Between 2015 and 2019, there were 112 recorded crashes along the corridor with over 27 percent of crashes resulting in injuries. The majority of the crashes consisted of rear end, sideswipe, and right angle crashes and were attributed to vehicles making right or left turns, or following too closely in slowing or stopped conditions.

The data shown here is from the NJDOT database. Crashes are clustered and color coded to easily show areas of high crashes, such as Freeman Avenue to the west. A red circle indicates the highest number of crashes; yellow is a middle number of crashes; green indicates a lower number of crashes. Other high crash locations include several unsignalized intersections between West Side Avenue and JFK Boulevard. This area also saw 11 crashes involving pedestrians and 1 crash involving a cyclist.

## SLIDE 7 – DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following guidelines will be used in the development of the various design and safety improvements for this project.

Roadway improvements will be designed in accordance with NJDOT and AASHTO design guidelines.

Curb ramps and sidewalks will be designed to meet current ADAAG guidelines.

The MUTCD provides the principal design guidelines for all traffic control devices that regulate, warn, or guide traffic on public roadways.

NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide and the NJ Complete Street Design Guide will be used to introduce design elements that promote safe and easy access to Sip Avenue for all users - Pedestrian, Bicycle and vehicle.

## SLIDE 8 – CONCEPT PLAN (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

The concept plan has been developed for the corridor that involves a variety of safety and operational improvements.

Safety improvements include FHWA safety countermeasures such as retroreflective traffic signal backplates, yellow traffic signal time changes, and enhanced signing.

Milling and resurfacing will be performed throughout the project limits along Sip Avenue and new pavement markings will be installed, including high visibility crosswalks shared lane markings.

Sidewalks and curbing throughout will be evaluated and areas of disrepair will be fixed. Where appropriate, curb extensions will be added to help pedestrians navigate the intersections safely. New ADA compliant curb ramps. Traffic signal upgrades will include new push buttons and pedestrian countdown signals. In addition, the team will look for opportunities to provide green infrastructure within the current sidewalk limits and the proposed curb extensions.

Existing parking conditions along the corridor will be evaluated in order to improve user access and safety while maintaining the same capacity.



## SLIDE 9 – CONCEPT PLAN (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

A new signal will be installed at the Van Wagenen Avenue intersection and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon system is being proposed at the Garrison Avenue intersection.

The existing public transportation stop will be evaluated to improve accessibility and bus bulbs will be provided where appropriate.

Finally, the project team will look at the existing lighting conditions along Sip Avenue to determine if there are any sections that are in need of improvement.

## SLIDE 10 – DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

The following slides will go over a few of the design elements begin introduced to Sip Avenue. We will take a closer look at the following:

- Shared Lanes Markings and how they can improve bicyclists experience riding down Sip Avenue.
- Curb Extensions and how providing them at various intersections will improve the overall safety of pedestrians using crosswalks.
- Bus Bulbs and how they can improve bus operations along the corridor.
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons to inform drivers of pedestrians entering upcoming crosswalks

And finally, we will discuss how this project will look to incorporate Green Infrastructure to improve the overall drainage conditions on Sip Avenue as well as to provide a way to beautify the neighborhoods.

## SLIDE 11 – SHARED LANE MARKINGS (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

The existing travel lane widths and parking on Sip Avenue do not allow for conventional bike lanes.

In place of exclusive bike lanes, Shared Lane Markings, also known as "Sharrows" are proposed along the entire length of the roadway.

Sharrows are pavement markings that help create a safer environment for bicyclist by alerting automobile drivers to the presence of bicyclists on the roadway. They indicate to all roadway users that the travel lanes are shared between bicycles and vehicles.

## SLIDE 12 – SHARED LANE MARKINGS (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

Here is an example of Sharrows being used along Sip Avenue.

Sip Avenue has a pavement width that varies from 36 to 40', which is sufficient for two travel lanes and on-street parallel parking lanes but not enough to provide conventional bicycle lanes. The alternative is to provide sharrows.



## SLIDE 13 – CURB EXTENSIONS (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

Curb extensions physically narrow the roadway at intersections where pedestrians are crossing.

They are typically applied on roadways with on-street parking, with the sidewalk extension generally being a foot or two more narrow than the parking lane.

This makes pedestrians more visible to approaching vehicles and also shortens the overall length of the crosswalks.

The reduced roadway width at intersections also encourages reduced travel speeds, making curb extensions an effective traffic calming measure.

## SLIDE 14 – CURB EXTENSIONS (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

The intersection of Sip Avenue and Romaine Avenue is a typical location where curb extensions will be effective. The existing roadway width at the crosswalks is 36'. Adding 6' curb extensions on either side of the street will reduce the crossing distance to 24' and move pedestrians waiting to cross the street to a more visible location in front of parked vehicles.

The curb extensions proposed on Sip Avenue will not have any impacts to legal parking.

## SLIDE 15 – BUS BULBS (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

Bus bulbs are a widening of sidewalk along the length of a bus stop. They align the bus stop with the parking lane, allowing buses to board passengers without weaving in and out of the travel lane. This improves bus operations and reduces dwell times for transit vehicles.

Bus bulbs also shorten the required stop length by eliminating transition space required for buses to merge back into traffic. This creates more space for on-street parking and the additional sidewalk space can be used for amenities such as bus shelters and green infrastructure.

## SLIDE 16 – BUS BULBS (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

This is the intersection of Sip Avenue and Van Wagenen Avenue. Currently, the only bus stop serving this location is situated on the northeast corner of the intersection, in front of the active driveway of the AQUI Market.

Part of the design process includes looking at the existing bus stops along Sip Avenue and identifying potential improvements to their accessibility and operation.

At this intersection, the bus stop will be relocated to the far side of the intersection and away from the grocery store driveway to allow for the installation of a bus bulb without impacting the driveway.

Additionally, the current bus stop located at the southwest corner of Romaine (which is the next street east) will be relocated to the southeast corner of Van Wagenen Avenue.



## SLIDE 17 – PROPOSED NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL - VAN WAGENEN AVE

A new traffic signal is proposed at the intersection of Van Wagenen Avenue near the supermarket location. The signal is proposed due to the crash history, including pedestrian incidents along the corridor as well as traffic flow conditions.

The new traffic signal will provide a safer crossing location for pedestrians, allow gaps in traffic at unsignalized intersections, and allow for turning vehicles from side streets.

The traffic signal will include pedestrian signals, push buttons, and video detection of side streets to improve traffic operations.

## SLIDE 18 – RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACON (RRFB) (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

A Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon is a user-actuated LED that when used with other warning signs at an unsignalized intersection, increase driver yield rates. RRFB's are activated by pedestrians with a push-button prior to entering the crosswalk. The system uses an irregular flashing pattern similar to emergency flashers on police vehicles – this elicits a greater response from drivers than other traditional methods.

## SLIDE 19 – RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACON (RRFB) (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

The intersection of Sip Avenue and Garrison Avenue sees high pedestrian foot traffic and is an ideal location for an RRFB. Currently, vehicles approaching the intersection from the east are traveling at high speeds and moving downhill. This makes crossing Sip Avenue particularly difficult for pedestrians as vehicles are unlikely to see them and yield in time. In combination with curb extensions, RRFBs at this intersection will provide ample warning to oncoming vehicles that pedestrians are about to enter the crosswalks. With the improved visibility of pedestrians, and the advanced warning - vehicles will have more time to yield and allow for a safe crossing.

## SLIDE 20 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is a cost effective approach to managing stormwater that provides many community benefits. There are different types of green infrastructure –one type being considered for this project is the use of stormwater planters at targeted areas along Sip Avenue.

Stormwater planters are vegetated structures that provide storage of stormwater, quantity control, and infiltrate stormwater runoff. These systems are typically located close to runoff sources within residential, commercial, and industrial landscapes. The main treatment mechanism is reducing peak flows of stormwater by storing it before it enters the sewer system.

This type of green infrastructure is ideal for urban environments with limited space and serves both as a stormwater management tool and as a beautification streetscaping element.



## SLIDE 21 – PROJECT SCHEDULE

This phase of the project includes gathering input from the community to advance the design. Once public input is received, the design will be advanced and expected to be completed by late 2023 with construction to commence by mid 2024.

## SLIDE 22 – NEXT STEPS

This project is being provided for the benefit of your community. We encourage you to participate by providing your feedback. Questions and comments can be posted on-line on NJTPA's project webpage.

## SLIDE 23 – THANK YOU

Thank you for your time.