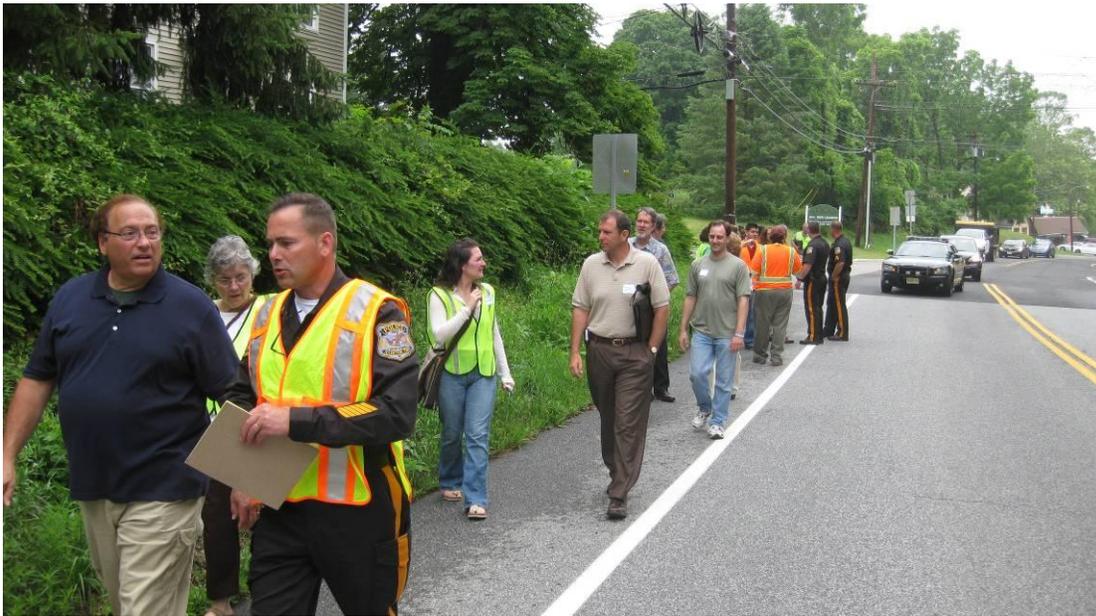


Walkable Community Workshop Report

Annandale Historic District,
Clinton Township, Hunterdon County
June 14th, 2010



**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 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.



The Annandale Walkable Community Workshop was held at the community room of the Annandale Reformed Church on the corner of CR626/Beaver Avenue and CR641/West Street. The Annandale Historic District lies within Clinton Township, Hunterdon County. Annandale residents, along with state, county, and local representatives investigated the walking conditions of the immediate area

of CR626/Beaver Avenue and the local streets leading up to the Annandale NJ TRANSIT Commuter Rail Station. In addition to CR626/Beaver Avenue, workshop participants walked Center, Main, Washington, and CR641/West Street.

The decision to select the workshop area was aided by the District's traditional walkability, its proximity to the Annandale NJ TRANSIT train station along the Raritan Valley Line (providing access to Newark and New York City), and a nearby park and ride/bus stop for commuters to New York City. The Annandale station is the most heavily-used station in Hunterdon County, with the largest free parking lot on the entire Raritan Valley Line and easy access from Interstate 78. Commuters from west, north, and south of the village use the station on a daily basis. The train station is not located on the main traffic corridor (626/Beaver Avenue), but is tucked back into the District with station access from East, Center, and Main Street.

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Neighborhood residents expressed concern with speeding commuters coming to and leaving the Annandale NJ TRANSIT train station on these local streets.

Annandale residents sought out the support of Hunterdon County and the NJTPA to develop a workshop that addressed the impact of motorist traffic speed and volume on safe walkability, and the poor condition and lack of a sidewalk network within the District. The goal of the workshop was to document village issues and prioritize recommendations, helping to consolidate professional advice and community input into a single planning report. The recommendations discussed in this report include traffic calming techniques, intersection improvements, sidewalk replacement, and upgraded signage.

II. Workshop Methodology

On June 14th, 2010 the Annandale Walkable Community Workshop was held at the Annandale Reformed Church in the Annandale Historic District of Clinton Township. The agenda for the workshop and the listing of workshop participants is included as an Appendix on Page 15 and 16.

The workshop opened with an initial welcome by Hunterdon County Freeholder Matthew Holt, member of the NJTPA Board of Trustees and Chairman of the



Planning and Economic Development Committee, as well as Clinton Township Council President, Dawn Apgar. Ms. Thompson followed with a presentation stressing the need for comfort, convenience, safety, and accessibility when designing pedestrian facilities. The NJDOT's Complete Streets Policy to provide mobility for all users of all ages and abilities, including the bicyclist and pedestrian, was discussed. To complement this discussion, visuals of potential pedestrian design improvements sensitive to the walking audit area were presented. Improvements such as sidewalk widths, the variation in crosswalks, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), curb extensions, and motorist speed were talked about during the presentation.



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

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Following the presentation, attendees participated in a walking audit of the area shown in *Figure 1*. 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.

Figure 1: Walking Audit Area of Annandale Walkable Community Workshop



Participants walked along West Street and then east along Beaver Ave, north along Center Street to the NJ TRANSIT train station, and then east and west along Main Street.

The third part of the workshop was devoted to generating recommendations for the walking audit area and was conducted at the church. Participants gathered around street maps of the study area, denoted the location of specific walkability problems and developed 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 prioritized.

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III. Findings & Recommendations

a. Summary of Existing Conditions

1. Local Insights

The Annandale Historic District is adjacent to the intersection of Interstate 78, NJ 31, and US 22, which is the major highway junction in the region. The community relied on the railroad to transport lumber and agricultural products in the 19th and early 20th century; it now transports commuters traveling east to Newark and New York City. The District is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites with many homes dating from the mid-19th century, the oldest home dates as far back as the Pre-Revolutionary War period. This old housing stock is accompanied by a new high-density housing development of 222 units on the eastern border of the Village called “The Mews” with a single access point at Hidden Valley Road and East Street. More than 60% of Clinton Township’s current housing stock was built after 1980, and its population nearly doubled over this period with profound transportation impacts on the District, particularly traffic volumes.

There is currently no traffic signalization within the Annandale Historic District. Beaver Avenue is a two-lane, east-west through route from exit 18 off of Interstate 78 to NJ 31. The speed limit of Beaver Avenue within Annandale Historic District is 35 miles per hour (mph), with a 25 mph limit on local roadways such as Center and Main Streets. These streets are predominately residential with an auto repair shop, salon, and other limited retail within the District. Plan4Safety crash data analysis from Rutgers University’s Transportation Resource Center lists no pedestrian-involved crashes from 2003 to 2009. A pedestrian fatality and injury did occur in 1993 and 1997, respectively, on Beaver Avenue, which resulted in a reduction of the speed limit from 40 mph to the current 35 mph and the striping of crosswalks on Beaver Avenue. A key barrier to the village’s walkability is the lack of and condition of sidewalks and night illumination.

The sidewalks on both sides of West Street are in good condition. However, the sidewalks on Beaver Avenue and Main, Washington, and Center Streets are in poor condition and have several segments missing. The lack of sidewalks on Beaver Avenue makes safety a key concern because of traffic volume and speed. New sidewalks on Beaver Avenue would provide connectivity with two public schools and the Town of Clinton. The sidewalks on Main and Center Street suffer from cracks, heaves, and gaps in connectivity, which discourages walking activity in Annandale.

It was difficult to assess the lighting situation of the District because the workshop was conducted during the day. Workshop participants indicated a lack of illumination throughout the District, including streets audited during the workshop walk.

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2. Needs/Issues/Opportunities

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

- The condition of existing sidewalks and lack of sidewalks and crosswalks
- The safety of pedestrian crossings at all intersections
- Vehicle travel patterns and speeds in relation to observed pedestrian access patterns

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

Making recommendations for motorist and pedestrian safety is a primary goal of a Walkable Community Workshop. More specifically, the program seeks to ensure that pedestrian crossings are safe and well-marked and that motor vehicles are traveling at appropriate speeds.

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.

Findings of the walking audit are as follows:

Please note that implementation of the following recommendations should be sensitive to the historic nature of the Annandale Historic District.

CR626/Beaver Avenue and CR641/West Street:



CR641/West Street facing north



CR626/Beaver Avenue intersection with CR641/West Street facing east

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CR626/Beaver Avenue and CR641/West Street:



CR626/Beaver Avenue facing east towards the Interstate 78 Exit 18 connection

Issue Area: Accessibility

- Assess the feasibility of bicycle lanes on Beaver Avenue and West Street.

Issue Area: Comfort

- Provide improved illumination along sidewalks and at pedestrian crossings. Lighting should complement the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Add in-street “Stop for pedestrian in the crosswalk” signage at the CR641/West Street crosswalk.
- Develop gateway signage on Beaver Avenue approaching the intersection of East Street to alert motorists exiting from Interstate 78 that they are entering a Annandale Historic District neighborhood with pedestrian activity. This will aid in reducing vehicular speeds. The signage should be in the middle of the street as a small island with landscaping that discourages speeding.
- Provide flags on lighting poles to promote the Historic District and alert motorists they are in a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly neighborhood.

Issue Area: Safety

- Add sidewalks at a minimum width of 5 feet on the northern side of Beaver Avenue that would connect East Street with Center and West Streets. No sidewalks exist at this location (as seen in the photos on the top of this page 8).
- Provide a crosswalk on Beaver Avenue that connects the existing curb ramp with Beaver Avenue and East Street. The current design has a curb ramp that leads into the street with no signage or striping to alert motorists of a pedestrian crossing. Beaver Avenue curves to the east past this location and makes it difficult for the pedestrian and motorist to see each other and requires the aid of signage and striping.

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Figure 2: Example of a raised crosswalk in Princeton, N.J.

- Assess feasibility of rumble strips and/or raised pavement crosswalks on Beaver Avenue as seen in *Figure 2: Example of a Raised Crosswalk in Princeton, N.J.* Clinton Township engineer recommended starting with a “test” phase to assess the success of these traffic calming measures before permanent implementation.
- Paint “25 mph” on Beaver Avenue pavement.
- Accompany speed limit signage that indicates driver speed is “strictly enforced”.
- Enlarge signage of roadway name at the intersection of West Street and Beaver Avenue to aid in distinguishing intersection.

Center and Washington Street:



Center St. facing north



Center St. facing north



Corner of
Washington and
Center Street

Issue Area: Comfort & Accessibility

- Upgrade sidewalks along Center Street. Sidewalks are in poor condition and do not connect on Center Street between Beaver Avenue and Main Street. Sidewalks should be at a 5-foot width minimum.
- Improve maintenance of vegetation that blocks street signage [i.e. stop sign at Washington and Center Street, noted on page 9].
- Provide sidewalks along Washington Street.

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Main Street at Annandale NJTRANSIT Train Station:



Main Street facing west towards intersection of CR641/West Street (Commuter Connection to and from NJTRANSIT Annandale Train Station):



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Main Street facing west towards intersection of CR641/West Street (Commuter Connection to and from NJTRANSIT Annandale Train Station):



Main Street facing west towards intersection of CR641/West Street

Issue Area: Accessibility

- Provide sidewalks connecting East Street with Main Street through the NJ TRANSIT parking lot. Parked vehicles and congestion at this parking lot makes safe pedestrian access to the train station difficult.
- Assess the feasibility of a pedestrian and bicycle path from the Mews residential development east of East Street to the train station.

Issue Area: Comfort

- Upgrade sidewalks along Main Street at a 5 feet width minimum. These sidewalks are currently in poor condition.
- Assess feasibility of a landscaped median to reduce motorist speeds on a residential roadway with a large number of children playing in the neighborhood.

Issue Area: Safety

- Implement a street design technique that reduces motorist speed at the intersection of Main and West Street (i.e. “stop for pedestrian in the crosswalk” signage in the street, and/or extending the curb to increase the radii and reduce speed of turning vehicles). Workshop participants spoke of the presence of children on this street and concern for their safety in the absence of good sidewalks and vehicles that speed down this local street.
- Assess feasibility of a raised crosswalk at the Main and West Street intersection.
- Provide illumination on Main Street.
- Add edge striping on Main Street to distinguish the pedestrian zone from the street and to decrease speeding on Main Street.



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- Integrate an education component, such as a handout to be passed out to NJTRANSIT commuters at the Annandale Train Station, to alert them to the Annandale's speed limit, the presence of pedestrian activity within the village, and the need to use caution when driving through Annandale to access the train station.

Old Allerton Road and CR626/Beaver Avenue West

The intersection of Old Allerton Road and CR626/Beaver Avenue, and CR626/Beaver Avenue west of CR641/West Street was not included in the walking audit, but was a concern among participants. Pedestrian activity is discouraged in this area and village residents expressed the feeling that added pedestrian facilities at this location would benefit the community. The intersection has heavy motorist traffic due to Old Allerton Road's connection with NJ 31. There are no pedestrian facilities at this intersection and no sidewalks leading up to this intersection. Workshop participants recommended crosswalks, sidewalks, and intersection signalization at the intersection of CR626/Beaver Avenue and Old Allerton Road to reduce vehicular crashes. Workshop participants recommended sidewalks west of CR641/West Street along CR626/Beaver Avenue in the direction of the local public schools that village children attend. Sidewalks along CR626/Beaver Avenue to the middle school and elementary school would have the benefit of promoting Safe Routes to School. The sidewalk would also provide pedestrian connections to retail on CR626/Beaver Avenue as well.

b. Next Steps

The Annandale Walkable Community Workshop had strong support from Hunterdon County and the Annandale Citizens Advisory Committee. The combination of input from Hunterdon County Freeholder Holt, residents of Annandale, and transportation professionals, created a successful workshop that encouraged a number of ideas to decrease motorist speed and increase pedestrian and bicycle activity within the village. The main recurring theme throughout the workshop was the lack of sidewalks and/or current sidewalks in poor condition. Upgrading and adding sidewalks at locations noted in this report is a key step in developing the Annandale Historic District as a walkable community and reinforces the state's efforts to promote safe routes to transit. Adding illumination, crosswalks, "gateway" signage, "stop-for-pedestrian-in-the-crosswalk signage", enhancements to speed limit signage, maintenance of signage, in addition to an educational component, would benefit the community.

Overall increased development over the past three decades on the perimeter of the Annandale Historic District has challenged the District's ability to retain its unique identity and sense of place. The District believes improvements to safety, accessibility, convenience and comfort of the walking environment will enhance Annandale's overall identity. The recommendations in this report support the Annandale workshop participant's efforts to develop a plan for pedestrian facility improvements to aid in developing Annandale's identity for both residents and

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commuters. The District's residents and civic leaders are committed to improving the sidewalk network, and hope to seek grant funding from various sources as well as consider implementing improvements using local resources.

APPENDICES

AGENDA

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Annandale
Walkable Community Workshop
June 14th, 2010
9:30AM – 12:30PM

1. Welcome.....9:30
2. Walkable Community and Complete Streets Presentation.....9:45
 - Complete Streets Policy
 - Walking Environment
3. Walking Audit.....10:15
 - In field assessments
4. Design Solutions (Breakout Session).....11:15
 - Small team working groups
5. Presentation of Recommendations
6. Priorities, Action Plan and Funding
7. Next Steps, Questions and Wrap up
8. Adjourn.....12:30

Annandale Walkable Community Workshop Participants

Participant	Participant's Title
Freeholder Matthew Holt	Hunterdon County Freeholder
Crystal Barnes	Hunterdon County Senior Planner
Dawn Apgar	Clinton Twp. Council
Cathleen Marcell	Clinton Twp. Engineer
Marvin Joss	Clinton Twp. Administrator
Michael Sullivan	Clinton Twp. Planner
Tom DeRosa	Clinton Twp. Police, Sergeant
John Kuczynski	Clinton Twp. Police
Jeff Glennon	Clinton Twp. Police, Traffic Safety
John Lazarus	Annandale Advisory Committee
Maureen Barron	Annandale Resident
Charles Lonircz	Annandale Resident
Jason Kiefer	Annandale Resident
Kate Barron	Annandale Village Community Member
Tera Lunger	Annandale Resident
Barbara Vogel, PE, PP	Annandale Resident
William Riviere	NJDOT Bike/Pedestrian
Carlos Lopez	NJDOT/Rutgers CAIT
KeeRyder Talasan	NJDOT/Rutgers CAIT
Jikitsa Patel	NJDOT Traffic Engineer
Andy Kaplan	NJDOT/Rutgers Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT), Traffic Engineer
Tara Shepherd	Executive Director, HART Commuter Information Services
Ted Ritter	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Principal Planner
Elizabeth Thompson	NJTPA Senior Planner

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Image Resources:
www.pedbikeimages.com



Traffic Calming Design



Intersection Treatment



Median Design



Bike Lane



ADA Compliant Curb Ramps



Curb Extensions