

Walkable Community Workshop Report

Held: March 25th, 2010

Phillipsburg,
Warren County



Sponsored by: NJTPA

Table of Contents

- I. Purpose of Workshop
- II. Workshop Methodology
- III. Findings & Recommendations
 - a. Summary of Existing Conditions
 - 1. Local Insights
 - 2. Needs/Issues/Opportunities
 - Corliss Avenue to Route 22 along Roseberry Street
 - Intersection of Route 22 and Roseberry Street
 - Route 22
 - Route 22 to Heckman Street along Roseberry Street
 - b. Next Steps

Appendices

Agenda
Workshop Attendee

Walkable Community Workshop Report

Phillipsburg, Warren County

I. Purpose of the Workshop

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) conducts half-day walkable community workshops in municipalities throughout the NJTPA region designed to educate stakeholders and to identify barriers to walking and improve pedestrian safety in each of the identified communities. Each workshop coordinates with local representatives to include a broad range of stakeholders including local leaders, planners, engineers, business owners and residents.

Each workshop consists of four parts: 1) an introduction of local stakeholders; 2) a presentation by a NJTPA facilitator on best practices of walkable communities; 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 to identify and prioritize 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.

Participants of the Phillipsburg Walkable Community Workshop investigated the walking condition of the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection and the blocks leading up to this congested intersection. During the workshop, participants paid close attention to the safety, comfort, convenience, and accessibility of Roseberry Street, Route 22, and the intersection of the two. The decision to select the workshop area was aided by the NJTPA's 2008 Regional Priority Update Study's listing of aggregate high crash segments within the NJTPA region. Roseberry Street is listed as a high crash segment within the study.

In addition, the workshop was also selected based on the presence of multiple land uses that complement the state's Complete Streets initiative. This walking audit area has a residential community, public library, health services, municipal administrative services, grocery store, and retail within walking distance of the intersection and has the potential to grow as a multi-modal community. This report cites many recommendations for improvements in the study area. These include: the need for adding or improving the condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, vehicular no-right-on-red signs, countdown pedestrian signal heads, ADA compliance measures, and road calming techniques.

Walkable Community Workshop Report

Phillipsburg, Warren County

II. Workshop Methodology

On March 25th, 2010 a Walkable Community Workshop was held to investigate conditions at and near the intersection of Roseberry Street and Route 22 in the Town of Phillipsburg, Warren County. The workshop facilitator for this event was Elizabeth Thompson of the NJTPA. The workshop group convened at the Phillipsburg Administrative Building. The agenda for the workshop and the listing of workshop participants is included as an Appendix on Page 13 and 14.

The workshop opened with an initial welcome by Phillipsburg Mayor Harry L. Wyant, Warren County Freeholder Angelo Accetturo, and County Planner Brian Appezzato. Ms. Thompson followed with an approximately half-hour presentation that stressed the need for comfort, convenience, safety, and accessibility when designing pedestrian facilities. The presentation provided potential design improvements to promote these walkable community workshop goals with design ideas sensitive to the context of the area to be looked at in the day's walking audit. Lead pedestrian intervals, countdown signals, ADA compliance, the radii of intersection corners, crosswalks, and motorist speed were a few of the many topics discussed in the presentation. Sheree Davis, Coordinator for the Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs at the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) briefly talked about the NJDOT's recently adopted Complete Streets Policy. Also discussed during the presentation were the public health rationale for increasing physical activity, the economic benefits to the individual and the community for becoming more walkable, 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 1. The purpose of the audit is 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 make observations and suggest remedies. 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 a sensitivity to strollers and wheelchairs, and connectivity between destinations.

Participants walked two blocks south from Corliss Avenue to Route 22 along Roseberry Street, noting conditions at the intersection of Route 22 and Roseberry Street, and then continued further south for an additional two blocks to Heckman Street. This route was chosen based on the need for pedestrian connectivity between low-income housing south and north of Route 22 and neighboring local convenient stores, a grocery store, entertainment, schools, and medical and municipal services.

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.

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

III. Findings & Recommendations

a. Summary of Existing Conditions

1. Local Insights

The intersection of Roseberry Street and Route 22 in Phillipsburg is located along a heavily-travelled and often congested roadway corridor that provides vehicle access to and from Phillipsburg and Pennsylvania from nearby roadways including Route 78 and Route 57 Memorial Parkway. Many commercial uses are located directly along Route 22 with frontage parking lots and numerous entrance and exit driveways.

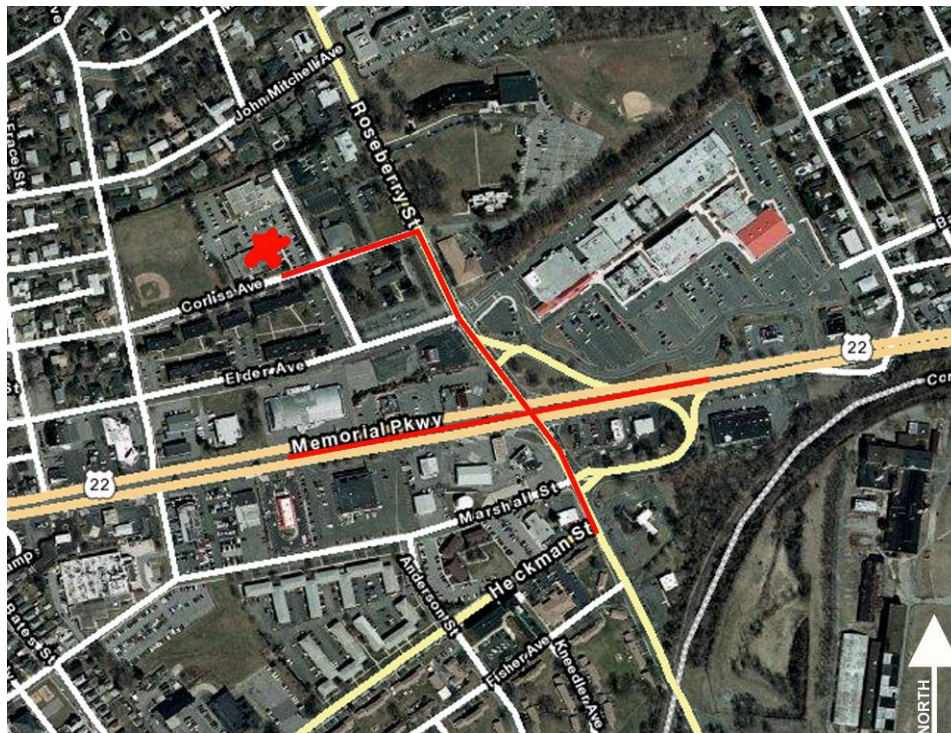


Figure 1: Walking Audit Area of Phillipsburg Walkable Community Workshop

Roseberry Street is a municipal roadway that facilitates access to local commercial, community and residential land areas near the corridor including several convenience stores, the municipal library, the Phillipsburg Administrative Building, and Warren Hospital. The street follows the west-east boundary line between the Borough of Phillipsburg and Township of Lopatcong.

Although there are numerous destinations within walking distance of residents, several obstacles impede the comfort, convenience and safety of pedestrians within this environment. These include missing or inadequately maintained sections of sidewalk, high vehicle speeds along Route 22 and busy and sometimes confusing vehicle travel paths within and through ramps related to the Route 22 / Roseberry St. intersection.

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

2. Needs/Issues/Opportunities

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

- The location, availability and condition of existing sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Locations without sidewalks showing frequent pedestrian use or demand (e.g., worn pathways through grass areas, etc.).
- Known pedestrian access patterns between area residences and destinations
- 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 Walkable Community Workshops. 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 to walk as well. 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.

The findings of the walking audit are as follows:

Corliss Avenue to Route 22 along Roseberry Street:



Sidewalk Condition from Corliss Ave. to Route 22 along West-Side of Roseberry St.

Issue Area: Comfort

- Where possible, increase set-back of the sidewalk from the street and widen to a minimum width of 5 feet to allow pedestrians to walk side-by-side and comfortably pass each other.

Issue Area: Safety

- Resurface sidewalk and delineate sidewalk between Elder Avenue and Route 22. The sidewalk is cracked and may cause pedestrians to trip if they are not paying close

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

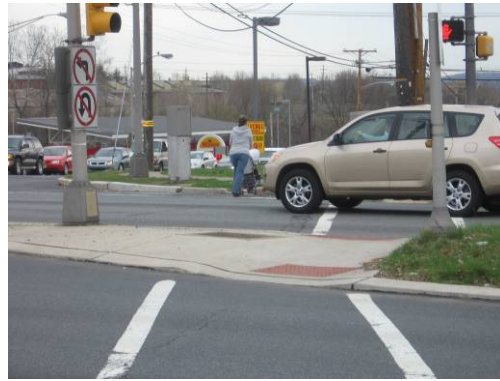
attention to the sidewalk surface. In addition, the sidewalk surfacing does not extend/continue across a rather wide gas station entrance leaving the pedestrian path entirely unmarked. Asphalt in this location is cracked as well.

- The striping at the Elder Avenue and Roseberry Street intersection crosswalks need to be restriped with attention to ADA compliance at the intersection's corners. The north-western portion of the intersection has a lip that is not conducive to strollers and wheelchairs.
- Count-down signal heads and curb ramps with textured surfacing are recommended for the Roseberry Street and Elder Avenue intersection.

Intersection of Route 22 and Roseberry Street:



(A)



(B)

(A) Utility poles narrow ramp at South-West Side of Route 22 & Roseberry St. Intersection

(B) Looking South from Western Side of Route 22 & Roseberry St. Intersection



Walking Audit Discussion at Route 22 & Roseberry St. Intersection

This intersection was of primary concern to county and municipal officials and residents. Even with pedestrian signal heads, curb ramps, and striped crosswalks, a main obstacle for pedestrians at this intersection is navigating a wide intersection with heavy traffic, on-coming traffic from right and left turning vehicles, and straight on vehicles. As a result, observations and information from participants suggests that pedestrians are not comfortable crossing at

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

the light and try to cross further down the road on Route 22 near the local bowling alley and grocery store along a non-signalized crossing with a median. Mayor Wyant of Phillipsburg informed workshop participants that a pedestrian fatality occurred at this crossing. The following is a list of recommendations to improve the comfort and safety at this intersection:

Issue Area: Safety

- Eliminate the right-on-red option for vehicles making a right-turn from Roseberry Street west to Route 22, and from Route 22 south to Roseberry Street.
- Improve street lighting, particularly near the crosswalk.
- Relocate utility poles located at the south-west corner of the intersection. These utility poles narrow the curb ramp and obstruct visibility of the pedestrian head.
- Replace existing pedestrian signal heads with new countdown signal heads and push buttons for easy visibility and access on both the north and south sides of Route 22. Explore possibility of increasing crossing time allotted for pedestrians, and placing pedestrian push buttons within the pedestrian refuge in the median of Route 22.
- Realign the western side of the intersection's crosswalk and curb ramps to straighten out the crosswalk from its present angle. This will reduce the length of the crosswalk and crossing time.
- Prepare educational materials that highlight the use of the pedestrian push button. These materials should be available in a language other than English.

Issue Area: Access & Design

- The current intersection design incorporates a series of forward, reverse and slip ramps that facilitate smooth and higher speed vehicle movements over conflicting pedestrian movements. While some accommodations for pedestrian movement are incorporated into the design of some of these ramps, the heavy flow of turning vehicles presents challenges to pedestrians who must observe vehicle movements coming from more than one direction before crossing.

Route 22:



(A)



(B)

(A) Route 22 View West Along South-Side of Route

(B) Route 22 West of the Roseberry St. & Route 22 Intersection

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

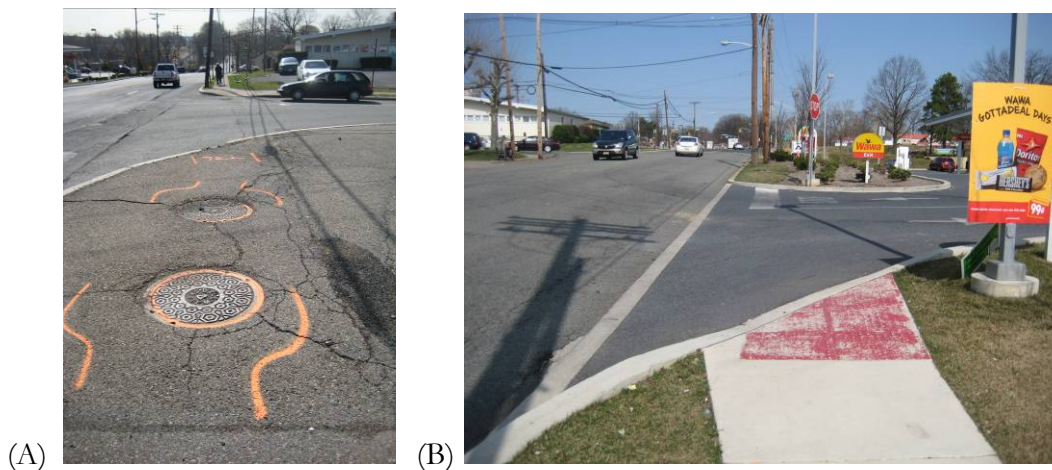
Issue Area: Safety

- Add sidewalks along this state corridor within the vicinity of the intersection of Route 22 and Roseberry Street.
- Provide a barrier along the Route 22 median west of the intersection to discourage jaywalking at unsafe, unsignalized points.
- Investigate local municipal codes to determine whether they mandate the installation of sidewalks with all new development.

Route 22 to Heckman Street along Roseberry Street:



East side of Roseberry St., South of Roseberry St. & Route 22 Intersection



South of Roseberry St. & Route 22 Intersection:

- (A) Sidewalk Condition and Lack of Crosswalk on West side of Roseberry St.
(B) Missing Sidewalk Link in Front of Wawa on East Side of Roseberry St.

Issue Area: Safety

- Add sidewalk and crosswalk from corner of Route 22 to Marshall Street, and a crosswalk at Heckman Street.
- Add striped crosswalks across Roseberry Street at Marshall Street and Heckman Street. Many residents on the west side of Roseberry Street cross this municipal road to access

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

the Wawa and 7 Eleven on the east side of Roseberry. Pedestrian accidents have occurred at this location.

- Complete sidewalks on the east side of Roseberry Street to connect the Wawa and 7-Eleven convenience stores with the crosswalks at Marshall and/or Heckman Streets.
- Consider installation of traffic calming devices and/or edge striping and lane striping to keep vehicles in appropriately defined driving lanes, reduce the speed of motorists and enhance their ability to see and react to crossing pedestrians. Explore whether ROW width in this area would allow a left-turn only lane into the Wawa.
- Add amenities, signage and striping delineation for NJ TRANSIT bus stop in front of Wawa convenience store.

Access between Residential Areas and Destinations Separated by Route 22:



Route 22 Sidewalk Condition West of Roseberry St & Route 22 Intersection:
(A) Southern Side
(B) Northern Side

Issue Area: Convenience

- Low and moderate income housing is present along several streets both south and north of Route 22 including Marshall Street, Heckman Street and Elder Avenue. There are numerous retail and commercial establishments bordering along or in proximity to Route 22. Residents appear to prefer to use front and back access driveways of businesses located along Route 22 as a more direct path to reach their destinations via mid-block crossings of Route 22.

b. Next Steps

The focus of Warren County and Phillipsburg's recommendations initially began with the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection. As a result of the Walkable Community Workshop, their focus has now expanded to include ancillary roads as well. The key priority favored by Warren County and Phillipsburg is the need for additional sidewalks and sidewalk replacements along pedestrian paths south of the Roseberry Street and

Walkable Community Workshop Report Phillipsburg, Warren County

Route 22 intersection, along Roseberry Street from the 7 Eleven, Wawa, and Section 8 housing, and north of the intersection to the Warren Hospital and Phillipsburg Municipal Building.

Route 22 currently has no sidewalk facilities and is in need of them as well. This sidewalk link would extend from Phillipsburg to its neighboring Township of Lopatcong east of the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection. A development is proposed for an abandoned lot on the south-east corner of the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection. Currently the intersection's crosswalk leads to this abandoned lot with overgrown vegetation and no sidewalks. Warren County is working with the Township of Lopatcong to emphasize the need for a sidewalk at this corner and the need for the developer to include this in development plans.

A second key priority for Warren County and Phillipsburg is developing enhancements to the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection's crosswalks, and pedestrian signal heads which were recently installed by NJDOT. Township engineers are investigating the feasibility of eliminating the right-on-red for motorists turning from Roseberry Street west to Route 22, and from Route 22 south to Roseberry Street. In addition, there is presently an engineering conflict at the south-west corner of the intersection. Utility poles at this corner make the curb-ramp narrow and obstruct the view of the pedestrian signal head for pedestrians from the south-east corner of the intersection. This provides for a unique challenge for the town and the NJDOT in achieving an ideal curb ramp design.

In addition to these design recommendations, an educational component would be highly advised. The educational program would complement the workshop's goals and emphasize pedestrian safety outreach for crossing the Roseberry Street and Route 22 intersection.

Warren County is actively seeking financial support and planning assistance to implement the recommendations developed in this Walkable Community Workshop.

APPENDICES

AGENDA

**North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
Phillipsburg Township
Walkable Community Workshop**

**March 25, 2010
10:00-12:30**

1. Welcome by Mayor Wyant and Freeholder Angelo Accetturo
2. Walkable Community and Complete Streets Presentation
 - Complete Streets Policy
 - Walkability and Safety
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

Phillipsburg Walkable Community Workshop Participants

Participant	Participant's Title
Freeholder Angelo Accetturo	Warren County Freeholder
Harry Wyant	Mayor of Phillipsburg
Garrett Van Vliet	Chairman, Planning Board
Virgilio S. Tan	Senior Engineer, NJDOT
Sheree Davis	Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator, NJDOT
David Dech	Warren County Planning
Stan Schrok	Phillipsburg Engineer, VanCleaf Engineers
JanMarie McDyer	Warren County Dept. of Human Services
Shelly McGregor	Phillipsburg Engineer, VanCleaf Engineers
Andy Kaplan	Traffic Engineer, Rutgers/TSRC NJDOT
Bill Wichert	Reporter, Express-Times
Jim Mengucci	Director of Facilities, Phillipsburg School District
Brian Appezzato	Senior Planner, Warren County
Neal Leitner	Senior Planner, Sussex County
Amy Magnuson	Principal Planner, NJTPA
Jeffrey Vernick	Manager Transportation Systems Analysis, NJTPA
Anthony Durante	Staff, NJTPA
Elizabeth Thompson	Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner, NJTPA