

PENN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 4, 2021 @ 11:00 a.m.

Virtual On-Line Meeting

MEETING MINS

Attendees: Nina Gibbs, Terence Olesniewicz, Eric Setzler, Kyle Potter, Everett Morrow Benjamin Weaver, Sam Spearing, Rania Ashaban, Phillip Wu, Amber Epps, Vault Art Studio (Ben L.), Anna Tang, Jennifer Haven, Chris Harrison, Adam Goldman, Marlee Gallagher, David Kolodziej, Heather McElwee, and L. Criswel.

Nina Gibbs called to order at 11:00 A.M. The meeting was recorded.

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Previous Meeting Minutes

Benjamin Weaver approves the meeting minutes and Anna Tang seconds to approve. Terence Olesniewicz from Trans Associates compiled the meeting minutes from previous PARC meeting.

III. Preliminary Engineering Update/Review Prelim. Engineering Schedule

a. Preliminary Engineering

Eric S. gave a brief update on the project status. The Design Field View submission was submitted in December and is under review by the various City Departments. Comments are anticipated to be provided in the next week or two. Trans Associates will address the comments then PennDOT will review the submission. Once PennDOT has approved the project will move into Final Design. There is currently a delay in starting Final Design as the scope and budget is being prepared. There is also an issue with incorporating the City Art Feature requirement into the job. The City has proposed language for this scope of work but PennDOT is questioning if this is an eligible use of Federal funding. The City has requested a meeting with PennDOT and FHWA, however, this has not been scheduled yet. The Final Design scope cannot be finalized without this issue being resolved. The City feels that Art is an important requirement for the City and the Community. It is unclear how much this issue may delay the project. Nina asked if we were potentially in the range of 3 to 6 months and Eric S. indicated that is possible. The next public meeting will most likely be delayed, but it is hoped that it can be held in the Spring.

Terence provided a brief update that the Draft Fee and Scope has been submitted to the City for preliminary review and that the geotechnical lab testing and analysis is being completed and should be completed soon.

Other Issues / Items/Questions by Attendees.

1. Ben W. asked if construction would still start in 2022?

Eric S. indicated that this was still possible depending on PennDOT, however, a 6 month or more delay could push construction into the following year.

2. Pacific Avenue Intersection Discussion.

Eric S. confirmed that while the traffic analysis does not support installation of a full traffic signal at this intersection, the City and TA will study other pedestrian safety enhancements. This would include treatments such as a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) and others as part of Final Design.

Anna asked if the City's Pedestrian Action Report can be incorporated into this phase of design? Eric S. indicated that yes, this project should reflect the goals of the report.

Jennifer questioned whether bump outs are still being considered for this intersection. She indicated that there did not seem to be anything on the Engage PGH web site or the DOMI web site and that the Friendship Community Group would like to review and comment on this design feature. She indicated that large trucks already knock down stop signs, strike cars, and hit trees especially near Coral Street. She indicated that two existing trees needed to be completely removed. There is a major concern with truck turns especially with the high pedestrian traffic and several nearby pedestrian generators including schools and daycares. She indicated that she would like to request a separate meeting with DOMI to discuss these issues. Eric S. asked if trucks were traveling along Coral Street? Jennifer indicated that it was more of the maneuvers that each tractor-trailer ends up making including jack-knife maneuvers which sometimes result in the trucks getting stuck. This does not seem safe or appropriate and may be an issue that goes back to the original zoning approvals for these retail developments. Eric S. indicated that bump outs were still in the design and that the stores should potentially consider using smaller trucks. Designing for only these larger trucks tends to conflict with pedestrian safety goals.

Nina and Benjamin W. agreed that the Family Dollar is the main problem. Jennifer indicated that she does not want the project to make conditions worse at Coral Street and Eric S. confirmed that the City does not want to push trucks into the neighborhood. Jennifer questioned whether the proposed bump outs will make the truck turning movements worse going down Pacific. Terence confirmed that turning templates have been evaluated and will also be part of Final Design. Apparently, trucks are going down to Coral Street although they are not supposed to. Nina suggested that the City talk with Family Dollar and ALDI to see if these conditions can be improved.

Eric S. indicated that the current design does not extend down South Pacific and bump outs would only be on Penn Avenue. Bump outs on South Pacific would create additional issues and could reduce parking and would ultimately not improve the issues observed. Nina stated that people are terrible drivers and they hit bump outs all the time and this has discouraged Healthy Ride from being by Pacific. Amber indicated that bump outs are hard to see for unfamiliar

drivers. Anna asked if the bump outs could be rounded over so they could be driven over? Eric S. explained that this is not a desirable condition for a bump out design. Anna also asked if a raised crosswalk could be provided? Eric S. indicated that the City was looking at this for Pacific. Benjamin W. inquired if the proposed traffic circle was still going to be installed at the intersection of S. Pacific Avenue and Coral Street? Eric S. indicated that this improvement did not happen this year but it is still anticipated to be constructed. This improvement will further discourage trucks from traveling onto Coral Street.

David asked if the bump outs could be extended on S. Pacific Avenue? Eric S. indicated that bump outs would only be for the parking lanes on Penn Avenue. David also asked if widening S. Pacific Avenue could be widened for trucks? Eric S. indicated that this would generally not be done. Nina noted that trucks make multi-point turns so that they can go back out onto Penn Avenue. Eric S. explained that he did not know if this project would necessarily correct this problem and that there are no proposed changes to the driveways of these businesses. Nina asked if a traffic circle would stop trucks and Jennifer stated that they tend to be mountable for emergency vehicles.

3. Detours During Construction.

Nina was worried about Friendship Avenue and moving cars over to this roadway during construction. Terence confirmed that the detour will be similar to Phase I of the improvement project as presented in the public meeting. Nina indicated she had concerns with schools and school bus traffic in the area. Eric S. confirmed that buses would be detoured to Friendship Avenue then Roup Avenue and all other vehicles would be detoured to Liberty Avenue then Negley Avenue to avoid the entire area. However, while this detour is the intent and will be posted people, especially local traffic familiar with the area, will still drive the shortest local detour regardless of what is posted for an official detour. Nina indicated that there were problems with buses using the proposed detour. Jennifer indicated that for Phase I the detour signs were terrible, especially on one-way streets. She added that bus drivers make mistakes too. Anna indicated that important to properly re-route and coordinate with applications such as GoogleMaps too. Eric S. agreed that this is important with the high usage of GPS apps. Jennifer added that the City should make sure that traffic uses Friendship Avenue and not Coral Street during construction.

4. Use of Engage PGH.

Nina asked if this project should be on the City's Engage PGH platform? Phillip indicated that he could assist with this effort if needed as this platform may be opening up to non-profits and community groups. Eric S. indicated that he would look into this possibility.

5. Bus Stop Eliminated.

Sam believes that the bus stop at Graham Street has been eliminated. Nina indicated that she had heard that the incorrect bus stop had been eliminated.

6. Possibility of Temporary Improvements?

Benjamin W. asked if there are any temporary improvements that can be done, especially if project may be delayed? Eric S. stated that he would check, however, the City would not want to do something only to have it torn out with this project. Nina mentioned that there are a lot of temporary options. Eric S. agreed that even treatments such as high-visibility, piano-key crosswalks can help. Nina stated that there are not enough pedestrian crossing signs and that drivers just don't yield to pedestrians.

Nina closed the meeting at 12:02 P.M. and indicated that any questions should be e-mailed to her at nina@bloomfield.garfield.org.

Terence Olesniewicz compiled the above meeting minutes.

Date for next meeting: To Be Determined.
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