Route 27, Eighth Avenue to Brookhill Avenue
Concept Development Phase

Virtual Public Information Center ▪

PRESENTATION TRANSCRIPT

Slide #	Transcript
1 (1 min.)	Hello, and welcome to the Public Information Center for the Concept Development phase of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Route 27, Eighth Avenue to Brookhill Avenue Roadway Safety Improvement Project located in Highland Park, Middlesex County, New Jersey. This virtual Public Information Center is open from October 2, 2023, through October 16, 2023 to learn about the project at any time. It is open to all members of the public. The video presentation will be available to view at www.Route27HighlandPark.com/ through the public comment period which ends October 16, 2023. We will explain how to submit questions and comments at the end of the presentation.
2 (45 sec)	In this presentation, we will provide the purpose and need which lead to the development of this project; as well as the goals and objectives that the project attempts to accomplish. We will also provide information on the project's background and review existing conditions of the project corridor. The proposed preferred alternative will then be presented and finally, we will review the status of the project and offer an opportunity for comments and feedback.
3 (45 sec)	The NJDOT Bureau of Traffic Engineering has identified that the Route 27 corridor needed improvements for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. The Safety Management System ranked the area 9 out of 10; with 10 being the highest priority areas in need of safety improvements; and the 2015 Bicycle Segment Ranking listed the area 41 out of 375 and, indicating high needs for safety improvement. Key issues that were identified along Route 27 include safety, mobility, and accessibility for all roadway users. Congestion in the corridor as well as environmental and right of way impacts were also considered key issues.
4 (1 min)	The overall purpose of the Route 27 Roadway Safety Improvement project is to increase safety for all roadway users by implementing on and off roadway improvements within the project area. The goals and objectives of this project include implementing a road diet, which aligns with the Municipality's goals; avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential environmental impacts; minimize impacts to traffic and the local community during the construction phase; implement cost effective improvement methods that will address the stated purpose; minimize right-of-way and utility impacts; increase safety and security; and ADA upgrades and sidewalk connectivity.
5 (15 sec)	We will now review the project information.
6 (1.5 min)	The project area includes residential and commercial buildings as well as religious establishments. There are 2 signalized intersections, 15 unsignalized intersections and numerous driveways along the Route 27 corridor within the project limits. The project area also includes bus and pedestrian facilities; however, many of the sidewalks and ramps are non-ADA compliant and in need of repair. Currently there are shared lane markings in the right lanes of both directions for bicyclists to share with motorists. These right lanes are only 11' in width which is narrower than the desirable lane width to accommodate shared use. There is one structure within the project limits. Structure number 1217-151 along a tributary to Mill Brook, which is a twin barrel, reinforced concrete elliptical pipe culvert constructed in 1980.

7 (30 sec)	The Route 27 corridor is an urban principal arterial roadway that runs north and south in Highland Park, Middlesex County. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour. This segment of Route 27 experiences approximately 13,350 vehicles per day.
8 (15 sec)	We will now review the existing conditions.
9 (1 min.)	Route 27 within the project area is a 4-lane typical section. The interior and exterior lane widths are 11 feet with no shoulder or divider and have inconsistent cross slope between 1 and 6 percent. 5' wide sidewalks are located on both sides of the roadway for a majority of the project. The signalized intersections within the project area are at Route 27 with Eleventh Avenue and Route 27 with Sixth Avenue/Woodbridge Avenue.
10 (45 sec)	Safety issues are a major concern for this corridor. Within the 3-year analysis time frame of 2015 to 2017 a total of 68 crashes occurred, including 2 fatalities and 1 bicyclist crash. Out of that 68, 38 of the crashes occurred at unsignalized intersections or between intersections, which can be seen in the large percentage of angle and left turn/U-turn crashes. Both categories are significantly higher than the 2017 statewide average. There were 2 pedestrian crashes which also ranked higher than the statewide average. The crash rate for this corridor is 7.58 crashes per million vehicle miles, which ranks higher than the statewide average for a similar roadway. Additional crashes are known to have occurred since this analysis period.
11 (15 sec)	We will now review the proposed improvements.
12 (45 sec)	The Proposed Preferred Alternative involves reducing the number of travel lanes from 4 to 2 and implements a bicycle lane with a buffer in each direction. The proposed cross section as shown would maintain the existing curb to curb width. Sidewalk connectivity and ADA upgrades throughout the project limits will also be included with this alternative.
13 (1 min.)	The next few slides will show the proposed improvements throughout the corridor. We will highlight important features and those features that differ from the typical section which was discussed on the last slide. On the southern limit of the project, the northbound approach of Route 27 is converted to be one through lane and one right turn only lane, a revision to the existing condition. The southbound approach of Route 27 adopts the preferred alternative cross section. The remaining 3 legs of the Sixth Avenue/Woodbridge Avenue intersection maintain their existing lane configurations.
14 (1 min)	As we continue northbound through the corridor the preferred proposed alternative typical section continues depicting one lane as well as bicycle lanes and buffers in each direction. The traffic signal at 11th Avenue will be upgraded, including new traffic signal heads with retroreflective backplates and pedestrian signal heads in conjunction with these improvements. In 2019 a new pedestrian signal was constructed at the northern leg of the intersection with Washington Avenue.
15 (30 sec)	The proposed improvements continue to the northern limits of the project, concluding at Brookhill Avenue which is the approximate border between Highland Park and Edison Township. Past this intersection within Edison Township, the roadway returns to the existing geometry of 2 lanes in each direction.
16 (15 s)	We will now review the traffic operations and proposed traffic management during construction.

17 (30 s)	Analysis was performed to compare the No Build Alternative versus the Proposed Improvements. The No Build alternative utilizes traffic volumes projected to the year 2024 with no changes made to the existing project area. These results are compared to the proposed improvements in order to determine how traffic operations are affected by reducing the number of lanes and incorporating proposed improvements to the traffic signals. These results found that operations were maintained throughout the corridor.
18 (15 s)	This slide depicts the proposed staging of traffic and traffic management during construction. It is anticipated that 2 stages will be utilized, shifting traffic to each side to allow for the improvements to be constructed.
19 (15 s)	Next, we will review the project status.
20 (15 s)	This image shows the NJDOT Project Delivery Process. The project has graduated through the Problem Screening and is currently in the Concept Development Phase. In this phase, the project team is responsible for data collection, evaluating deficiencies and identifying fatal flaws, evaluating alternatives, coordinating with stakeholders, completing the environmental screening, assessing right of way and access impacts, determining the preliminary preferred alternative, identifying substandard design elements, determining applicable environmental documents, and preparing the construction cost estimate. Once Concept Development is complete the project will advance to the Preliminary Engineering phase where design will commence to begin the permit processes. After preliminary Engineering, the project will move into the Final Design Phase and then the Construction Phase.
21 (1 min)	We will now provide information on how to submit comments and feedback.
22 (1.5 Min)	Thank you for taking the time to view this presentation on the Concept Development Phase for the Route 27, Eighth Avenue to Brookhill Avenue Roadway Safety Improvement Project. Next steps include the 14-day public comment period where NJDOT welcomes input from the public. Then the Concept Development Report will be prepared with all documentation to finalize this phase of the project. Please submit questions or comments through October 16, 2023 using the form on the website. After October 16, 2023, you can contact Meredith Hammond by email at Meredith.Hammond@dot.nj.gov or by phone at (609)-963-1982. Your participation and comments are appreciated by the New Jersey Department of Transportation.
23 (15 s)	Thank you.
Total: 18 min.30 sec	