



**Local Concept Development Study for Retaining Wall & Slope
Stabilization Improvements along Manhattan Avenue,
Union City, Hudson County, New Jersey**



**PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER (PIC) MEETING NO. 2
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Monday, March 25, 2019
 TIME: 7:00 PM
 LOCATION: Union City High School Performing Arts Center

ATTENDEES:

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGANIZATION
Tango	Ralph	City Engineer, Union City
Caballino	Nick	Washington Park Association, Secretary
Thomas	Mory	Washington Park Association, President
Borda	Lesly	Resident, Union City
Elshami	Ahmed	Resident, Union City
Kvint	Valeria	Resident, Union City
Lao	Czarina	Resident, Union City
Malkowski	Ana	Resident, Union City
Malkowski	Mike	Resident, Union City
Meyer	Rachel	Resident, Union City
Price	Larry	Resident, Union City
Rees	Maria	Resident, Union City
Yogorov	Alexei	Resident, Union City
Yogorov	Brittany	Resident, Union City

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS:

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGANIZATION
Frimpong	Sascha	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
Brundage	Richard	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
Newton	Patricia	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
Antun	Abraham	Hudson County Administrator
Malavasi	Thomas	Hudson County Engineering, County Engineer
Pisani	Anthony	Hudson County Engineering, Chief Engineer
Moren	Jon	French & Parrello Associates (FPA)
Pyontek	William	French & Parrello Associates (FPA)
Septon	Daniel	French & Parrello Associates (FPA)
Harshbarger	Patrick	Hunter Research, Inc.
Pace-Addeo	Nicole	Stokes Creative Group
Piel	Robert	Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants





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MEETING PRESENTATION

FPA delivered a short presentation in which they reviewed the Project Purpose & Need, the Repair Alternatives that were considered by the Project Team, and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA). This presentation is included as an appendix to these minutes.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

The following is a transcript of the Question and Answer period, which followed the presentation:

1. **RESIDENT #1:** There was a comment made about shutting down the road overnight to install the rock anchors. Are you going to be doing the rock installation at night?

FPA: Yes, that is what was done in 2007/2008 when they repaired the section of the wall that collapsed in the Nor'easter.

2. **RESIDENT #1:** Will the rock anchor drilling be loud? Most of Union City is home at night and this noise will cause a lot of disturbance.

FPA: There may have to be some noise and disturbance. However, it is premature to be discussing this issue at this point. The intent right now is to provide the worst-case scenario, which may change as we proceed through the design process. We don't want to promise that there won't be any noise, but we may be able to engineer our way out of this by finding ways of installing the rock anchors during the daytime without shutting down the road. Noise limitations and allowable work hours could be added to the contract documents for construction.

3. **RESIDENT #2:** I saw that one of your alternatives was to remove the wall and expose the rock cliff behind it. Can you explain why this alternative was ruled out? The natural stone is beautiful, and I don't understand why we can't do that?

FPA: The wall is comprised of 2 different systems. The lower portion of the wall is just a stone facing for the rock cliff, but the upper portion of the wall is actually a retaining wall that is holding back the properties above the wall on Palisade Avenue. If we removed the wall entirely and exposed the rock face, then there won't be anything to support those properties, and a large section of those properties would no longer be useable.

4. **RESIDENT #3:** My question is about the parking spots above the wall. You mentioned that you will need a temporary construction easement from the property owners to repair the wall. Is that easement going to impact our use of these parking spots?





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FPA: In the final condition, after the project is complete, you will have full use of your parking areas. However, during construction, you may not be able to park there.

5. **RESIDENT #3:** I just moved from Hoboken to Union City because of the lack of available parking there and it is very frustrating and unacceptable to be told once again that we are not going to be able to have parking. Would it be possible for you to work out with the City to provide guaranteed parking for us during the repairs?

FPA: During the next phase of the project, we could certainly look into what accommodations could be made to provide parking nearby. This is typically handled by providing monetary compensation to the property owners for their temporary loss of use which will enable you to pay for parking at a municipal parking lot. We could also try to stage the project, so that your loss of use is as short of possible, say 3 to 6 months. There are several ways to deal with this, which could be explored further during the next phase of the Project.

6. **RESIDENT #4:** Is the new wall going to be higher than the existing wall?

FPA: No, however, there will be a 27-inch-tall barrier added at the top of the wall to prevent vehicles from going over the wall.

7. **RESIDENT #5:** There are many different types of easements. What is the nature of the easements that you are looking for?

FPA: The easements are intended to enable the installation of the rock anchors and to provide the County with access to the top of the wall for future maintenance work.

8. **RESIDENT #5:** What restrictions would there be on the property owner in terms of construction or putting a fence on that land within the permanent easement?

FPA: The easements would have to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the individual property owners. Obviously, we would not be able to permit you to construct a building on that land. But other uses, such as parking your car on this land would not be a problem.

9. **RESIDENT #5:** Would there be any restriction on installing a fence within the easement?





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FPA: We will already be installing a fence installed along the entire top of the wall.

10. **RESIDENT #5:** You're going to be installing a fence along the North Wall?

FPA: Yes, we are going to be installing a 6-foot high fence above the wall. This is necessary for safety to provide fall protection. The specific type of fence hasn't been decided yet, but we intend to use an open type of fence that would not impact to your view of the Manhattan skyline.

11. **RESIDENT #5:** Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the wall and the new fence?

FPA: Hudson County.

12. **RESIDENT #6:** It has been 12 years since that section wall fell (during the 2007 Nor'easter) and as a trustee for the Washington Park Association, we have been sending photos to the County showing the poor condition of the wall along Washington Park. You can clearly see how sections of the wall are in poor condition, especially near Paterson Plank Road, and it's only a matter of time before we have another failure. If the wall fails, we will be in a similar situation like 2007, where there was no parking and transportation had to be rerouted around the entire area. I just would like clarification whether you will be purchasing new stone or reusing the existing stones?

FPA: We will be purchasing new stone for the North Wall, but at the South Wall we should be able to reuse the existing stones. This is because the North Wall will remain in place and be encapsulated by the new wall, so there will not be any way to salvage the stones. However, because the South Wall is going to be dismantled, we will be able to salvage the existing stones. In both cases, the reconstructed wall will have a similar appearance to the existing one.

13. **RESIDENT #7:** I am the president of Washington Park Association, and we are thrilled to hear of this project and think that it's needed because of the poor condition of the wall. I have already mentioned to other members of the project team, that we have plans to renovate the existing dog run at Washington Park next year and the dog run is probably within 15 feet of the wall. You were talking about the need for easements behind the wall to enable the reconstruction of the wall and I was concerned how the construction will impact the new dog run. We also wanted to know about the type of fence or parapet you were planning to install above the wall, as we have been pushing to have that fence replaced for 10 years.





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FPA: This is the first time we are hearing about the new dog park and we will certainly take it into consideration. If you can provide us with the plans, we can try to make accommodation as we advance the project. Regarding your question about the new fence, we are only early in the planning stages of the project and at this point we have only identified the need to provide a barrier for vehicular impact and a fence for pedestrian fall protection. The specific type of fence and parapet will be refined during a future phase of the project.

14. **RESIDENT #8:** Based upon your various studies for this project, I'm sure that you are aware that there are many bicyclists that use the North Wing Viaduct. How are you planning to address the need to provide accommodations for bicyclists, since I don't see any bike lanes in the drawings?

FPA: We have not considered adding bike lanes at this stage, and we can certainly evaluate the feasibility and cost of adding them. However, even if we were able to widen the roadway along the North Wall to provide a bike lane, it would have to terminate when we got to the Manhattan Avenue Bridge. The Manhattan Avenue Bridge, (see adjacent photo) is a 700-foot-long bridge that crosses the ravine, and widening it is beyond the scope of this project. Most of the bicyclists are anyways commuting between Hoboken and Union City via the 14th Street Viaduct bridge, which does not have bike lanes. Unless pedestrian accommodations could be made along the entire route between Hoboken and Union City, the new bike lane along the North Wall would be a path to nowhere and it would be difficult to justify the cost and benefit of adding a bike lane along this short stretch of the road.



15. **RESIDENT #9:** There are many people that park their cars along the North Wing viaduct and walk to their houses above on Palisade Avenue. A new sidewalk along the base of the North Wall would not be a path to nowhere, since it would be used by all the people that park there.

FPA: I imagine that what you do now is that you park your car along the west side of the road and then cross the road to use the sidewalk on the east side of the road. You will be able to continue utilizing this sidewalk, once the project is complete.





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16. **RESIDENT #10:** You mentioned that your inspection found that there are hollow sounding areas along the wall that had to be repaired. How are you going to reinforce the wall without taking it down?

FPA: There are hollow sounding areas throughout the wall, especially in the areas that are bulging. The hollow sound is an indication that these stones are not solidly engaged to the surrounding masonry. This condition is prevalent along the top of the North Wall and as part of the interim repairs, we are planning to remove and reset/reattach these stones.

17. **RESIDENT #11:** Are you going to be coordinating the construction with the other agencies in the area, regarding other ongoing construction in the area.

FPA: We are aware of some of the other big projects, that are planned for the area, such as the replacement of the Helix at the Lincoln Tunnel and the Gateway Tunnel Project that could potentially pass through this area. We intend to coordinate with these agencies, so that there are not multiple projects going on at the same time.

18. **RESIDENT #11:** What about the local projects such as the 1300 Manhattan Avenue Project?

FPA: All those projects have been under discussion for a while, and there is no way to know if they will ever get built and when their construction would begin. All we can do is to be aware of them and do our best to make sure that these other projects don't overlap with the timing for the Manhattan Avenue Project.

19. **RESIDENT #11:** Is there going to be an official public vote or referendum regarding what the final plans for the area will look like? I want to understand what the public engagement will be for the rest of the project going forward.

FPA: This is a concept development study and nothing that is discussed is set in stone. Obviously, we need a Resolution of Support from the City, which says that they agree with the concept that is being presented, to advance this project to the future Preliminary Engineering Phase. Regarding the public outreach process, you can choose to become a Project Stakeholder, so that you can take a more active role in the planning for the future phases of the project. We already had 2 Stakeholders Meetings during this Concept Development Phase and these meeting will continue during the future phases of the project.

