



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



**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 2
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Monday March 18, 2019
 TIME: 7:00 PM
 LOCATION: William V. Musto Cultural Center
 420 15th Street, Union City, NJ 07087

ATTENDEES:

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGANIZATION
Anastasio	Tim	Resident, Union City
Fleisher	Douglas	Resident, Union City
Graham	Pam	Resident, Union City
Graham	Pete	Resident, Union City
Knoedler	Erin	City Clerk, Union City
Lehnbeuter	Cory	Resident, Union City
Morris	Angela	Resident, Union City
Reyes	Ramon	Resident, Union City
Sommese	Bryan	Resident, Union City
Tango	Ralph	City Engineer, Union City

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS:

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGANIZATION
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:** In your theoretical timeline for the project, when do you anticipate construction will begin?

FPA: If all goes well, we anticipate the project to begin sometime around 2026. However, before construction began, we must first obtain the necessary Resolutions of Support to graduate from the current Concept Development Stage and then get through the Preliminary Engineering and Final Design Phases of the Project.

HUDSON COUNTY: We just want to let everybody know that the County is planning to make some repairs to the wall, and that's going to happen probably before the end of this year. When FPA conducted the study, they brought certain things to our attention, for example, on Slide #14 you can see that there's a tree that has roots that are protruding into the wall and it's going to have to be taken down. We're going to have to speak to whoever owns that property regarding this matter. Also, we're going to have to speak to all the property owners along the wall because as was mentioned we are going to have to acquire easements to access the property and there are certain things that we are going to have to negotiate on a case by case basis with each owner. The County is not looking to destroy anything, we just need to reinforce what's there now to stabilize and protect the wall.

2. **RESIDENT #1:** When the wall tumbled in 2007, was there a temporary retaining wall installed behind the wall while they did the repairs?

FPA: When the wall collapsed in 2007, all of the soil being retained behind the wall fell onto the roadway (see Photo on next page), so there was no need to install any type of retaining system to keep it in place. However, in our case, we will need to install a temporary retaining system to keep the soil fill in place, while they dismantle and reconstruct the wall.





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3. **RESIDENT #1:** Have we learned anything about what impact that construction had on those homes?

FPA: The 2007 collapse occurred at a location with a vacant lot above the wall, so there were minimal impacts to the property owner. Our project is different and will involve properties along the entire wall.

4. **RESIDENT #2:** Is the construction of the North and South Walls going to be done concurrently or separately?

FPA: The construction would have to be done separately. We assume that the North Wall would be repaired first, since it is in worse condition. Our intent is to maintain one lane of traffic in each direction along the North and South Walls, but we will have to suspend parking at the North Wall. This would be a similar approach that was done in 2008, where they created a work zone adjacent to the wall and were able to work there. We expect that they would have to close one lane down during off-peak times, but during rush hour two lanes (one in each direction) would be provided. We wouldn't think of establishing a detour during rush hour, as we know that there are 20,000 vehicles per day that use the South Wing Viaduct and 7,000 vehicles per day using the North Wing Viaduct. However, depending on the required length of the anchors to be drilled into the rock, we may have to shut the road down overnight to enable the installation. We know that in 2008, they shut the road down overnight for one week to install the rock anchors.





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5. **RESIDENT #3:** So, they are going to have to shut down the road for 7 nights again for this project?

FPA: No, in 2008 there was only a 190-foot section of the wall that was repaired. In our case, we are dealing with approximately 3,000 feet of the wall and it would take a lot longer.

6. **RESIDENT #4:** Would there be regulations about noise pollution during the rock anchor installation?

HUDSON COUNTY: Yes, and we would work with the residents in the town to determine a time when the work would stop. Obviously, you have to be able to sleep at night, so we have to work something out. In other Hudson County projects, the Contractor was permitted to work all night, but had to stop jackhammering after midnight.

FPA: I want to emphasize that it's a little premature to talk about how long something would take because at this stage we're just trying to present to everybody what the worst-case scenario is. Once we get through the Preliminary Engineering phase, where we will do some additional geotechnical studies, we expect to be able to shorten these anchors and use smaller pieces of equipment that may enable us to do this work during the daytime. I don't want to give anybody a false sense of hope that no detour would be required, but obviously the intent is to reduce the impacts to the public as much as possible.

7. **RESIDENT #5:** Who paid FPA to do this study? Where are the funds coming from?

FPA: This study is being funded by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).

8. **RESIDENT #5:** Where does NJTPA get their money from?

HUDSON COUNTY: It's Federal money.

9. **RESIDENT #5:** Do you know which firm did the engineering work for the 2007 repair?

FPA: The 2007 repair was designed by Maser Consulting.

10. **RESIDENT #5:** At the last meeting you mentioned that when the wall was originally built in 1914, they didn't use the most modern construction techniques. Poured concrete was being used at the time, but they chose to build the wall out of an older construction technique. Is that correct?

HUNTER RESEARCH: Yes, I would say that an antiquated technique was used to build the wall. They actually drew up plans to build a concrete wall, but for some reason that we don't know, they switched to a stone masonry wall.





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Typically, when using stone masonry, they would have used a rather large ashlar block like you might see the Chinese wall down in Jersey City, which consists of big blocks. The Manhattan Avenue Wall is built from very small size masonry, which seems to have been done in an effort to be conducive to a local contractor who was also getting the stone from a quarry in Weehawken.

11. **RESIDENT #5:** Wasn't one of the Alternatives to take the wall down and just leave the existing palisade cliffs exposed? Why was that ruled out?

FPA: That Alternative (#4) was ruled out firstly due to the impacts to the properties above the wall. Especially in the areas along the North Wall, where they have raised the land up and have improvements, such as the house with the pool and the garage: it would have severe impacts to those properties. Also, if we removed the wall and expose the rock face, we would have to install a rock catchment system on the cliff (such as what's shown in the photo on slide 24), because the nature of this type of stone is that it fractures very easily and has a tendency to break free and potentially fall onto the roadway. We would have to install a rock catchment system to stabilize the wall and to keep stones from entering the road. Finally, the results of the PPA survey that was put out after the last Stakeholders Meeting, found that alternative to be the least preferred option.

12. **RESIDENT #5:** Is the existing roadway along Manhattan Avenue by the South Wing Viaduct 36-feet-wide? Is that wide enough to fit three lanes of traffic?

FPA: Correct, it would be wide enough for three lanes of traffic.

13. **RESIDENT #5:** So, right now even without widening the road, you could restripe it and create three lanes of traffic?

FPA: We investigated that matter, since we had received requests from the public to explore the feasibility of providing a dedicated right turn lane at the Manhattan Avenue and Paterson Plank Road intersection. What we found was that although it's a 36-foot-wide road, it is not divided evenly. There is actually a 15-foot-wide northbound lane, an 11-foot-wide southbound lane, and a 10-foot-wide northbound right turn lane. We believe that the road is striped this way because of the public bus routes in the Northbound direction, and that extra space is given to enable cars to bypass the bus when it stops. If we reduce the width of the southbound lane, it would be difficult for cars to pass the bus and traffic could get backed up.

14. **RESIDENT #6:** With respect to the new condos proposed at 1300 Manhattan Avenue, have you factored that in financially and the effect it would have on traffic?

FPA: We are aware of that project, and the County has provided us with a copy of the plans. We have looked at what they are proposing, and we feel that there is





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still adequate room to shift the road and keep it within the County's Right-of-Way. The anticipated increase in traffic associated with that future development was also taken into consideration in our traffic analysis for the proposed detours.

15. **RESIDENT #6:** Have the plans been approved yet?

HUDSON COUNTY: Yes, they have already been approved by the Hudson County Planning Board as well as the Union City Planning Board. To the best of our knowledge, any roadway improvements would be done within the County Right-of-Way and would not affect private properties.

16. **RESIDENT #7:** Can you explain what easements are and how they work? How much space do you anticipate that we would lose from our existing driveways?

FPA: We are not proposing to take any part of your driveway. All that the County is looking to do is to secure a permanent easement which will allow them to install anchors into the rock cliff beneath your property. Once construction was complete, the Contractor would be required to restore your property to the way it is right now prior to construction. You would still own and pay taxes on the property, and you would be able to park there.

17. **RESIDENT #7:** How far back behind the existing wall, would the temporary retaining wall be going?

FPA: The location of the temporary retaining wall would depend on the location of the rock face relative to the wall. We are estimating that it could be as much as 20 feet, but it would likely be less than that. If the rock face is right behind the Manhattan Avenue Wall, there would be no need for any temporary wall at all. The location of the temporary wall would be determined during the next phase of the project.

18. **RESIDENT #7:** Would you expect the work to be done in stages or would the impacts to my property be for a full 1.5 years?

FPA: I would not say that it would be for a full year and a half. We don't anticipate taking down the entire wall at one time and then reconstructing it. We expect the Contractor to take down small sections of the wall at a time. The impact to you would probably be about 3 to 6 months.

19. **RESIDENT #8:** Do you have any idea about the timeline for the project? Once this project graduates to the next Phase when could we expect that geotechnical testing program to begin?

FPA: I would say that realistically the Concept Development Phase won't be done until June. Once this is done, it would be about another 6 months until the





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



next phase of the project was put out. So, we would be talking about some time next year.

20. **RESIDENT #8:** You said that the Alternative that you are selecting will reduce impacts to the properties above the wall. Can you explain what type of impacts we could expect along the top of the North Wall?

FPA: The 20-foot easement shown on the slide is only related to where the anchors would be installed in the cliff below your property. Otherwise, most of the work would be done from the roadway below and we don't expect to have to physically come on to the properties above the wall to do anything. However, we are still evaluating that, and I don't want to completely rule that out.

21. **RESIDENT #8:** My house is 120-years-old and you mentioned that this type of rock that my house is sitting on can get damaged very easily. How would that play out when you start drilling and there is damage caused to my home?

FPA: What would happen is that there would be vibration monitoring requirement that would be in the contract as part of this project. I envision there will be a pre-construction survey of your property, in which they would go in and document the condition of your home, and based upon the condition of your home they would develop some parameters regarding the vibration threshold that could not be exceeded. The Contractor would have to monitor vibrations throughout the project and at the end of the Project there would be post construction assessment of your home to see if there were any damages. Obviously in a 120-year-old house, there would have to be some cracks already and the goal would be to make sure that the cracks haven't changed or gotten worse. Obviously, if they do cause cracks, the Contractor would be obligated to come back and fix it.

22. **RESIDENT #8:** Would there be vibration monitoring during the upcoming testing program too?

The geotechnical testing would be done with small pieces of equipment that do not cause a lot of vibration. The concern would only be during the real project, where larger equipment was being used.

