

Borough of Metuchen – TA 2018 – Grove Avenue and Eggert Avenue Bicycle Lanes
Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County
Preliminary Engineering Phase
Design Consultant: NV5
In-Person Public Information Center
COMMENT RESPONSE SUMMARY

Prepared By: NV5 and Metuchen Borough

Comment Period: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 through Thursday, February 23, 2023

Progress Print: April 18, 2023

Questions received through February 23, 2023

Document Format:

Question or comment received during Virtual Public Information Center or during the comment question period.

Response | [Responses to question or comment provided by NV5 and Metuchen Borough \('Borough'\)](#)

General Note:

1. Will this session be recorded for replay / will there be a link where we can download the presentation material and post comments?

Response

The Public Information Center plan sets will be provided on the Metuchen Borough website:

<http://www.metuchennj.org/metnj/>

<http://www.metuchennj.org/metnj/Announcements/Updated%20information%20about%20Grove%20Ave.%20Bike%20Lane%20Project.html/> top

Questions and Comments between February 7, 2023 and February 23, 2023 can be sent to:

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Questions and Comments prior to Public Information Center

- **Email received 01/26/2023 6:22PM:**

Jay: How are you. I just got the mailer for the Grove Avenue Bike Path. I will try and be there. I have looked over all the presentations I would like an exact count please of the total number of signs again in advance of this presentation. Those reports reflected everything but NO PARKING Signs. Why? Where are they in the count? Unless plans were changed to not prohibit cars from parking on Grove. The count is higher no question in my mind.

Jay, That's going to be at least another 20 for NO Parking bringing the total number of signs on Grove to close to 75 plus. About what it was when we had the 2002 mess. With the other 25 then being down Woodbridge for a total of 100. I will stand corrected. I think I am right. Please let me know.

I think the committee owes it to the homeowners to tell us how many signs are actually going to be on each of our properties. Sound like an average of 3 to me. At least tell us. Certainly someone counted the number of homeowners affected. I expect the same on the signs. That's planning and transparency.

I will say something else, I resented intensely the commentary made that only 50 homeowners were affected by this. What was the point? Negative for sure. Insulting too. Who ever stated that low brow comment should know that I matter. That statement sat the wrong way with me to this day. Not the way to sell a project. Again, you have my support, but lets be totally accurate and remember us the homeowners are being affected. We are the same as the other 2,000 plus homeowners in this community. Let's show a little respect to us. This is affecting our lives and our home values more than the other 1950 homeowners.

[Redacted]

Response

Resident attended the Public Information Center and reviewed the sign summary report prepared by NV5. The attendee spoke with Jay Muldoon and Michael Kilar who showed him the design exhibits that indicated where signs would be placed. The attendee was satisfied with the

information provided and indicated his support for the project.

• Email received 01/31/2023 9:05AM:

I will be out of town on February 7 and cannot attend the public meeting regarding the proposed bike lanes on Eggert Ave. and Grove Ave..

See my previous email below.

- 1) Will there be a written response from Metuchen confirming that parking will still be allowed on Eggert Street in way of the bike lanes (which you told me it would be if these bike lanes are approved).
- 2) Will my comment (#2 below) in my previous email be discussed at the meeting?

Sincerely, [Redacted]

Previous email: Sent 10/19/2021 11:15PM:

We live at [redacted], on the west side of the first block of Eggert Ave, off of Amboy Ave.

Two comments:

- 1) Eggert Ave is so narrow now that none of my neighbors (or us) can use the street for regular parking. However, when we have a delivery, or a workman at the house, they do need to occasionally park in the street, when our cars are in the driveway. We want to ensure that the proposed bike lines will not make our street (and Grove) a target for parking tickets when the street is occasionally used by delivery folks or workmen. There are a very limited number of side streets which allow parking, when additional parking is needed.
- 2) Eggert and Grove are the principal thoroughfare for ambulances from JFK Hospital. Does it really make sense to encourage more bike traffic on this busy route, which is already very narrow from curb to curb? I am particularly concerned for the bicyclists at night as the existing street lighting is not very effective.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely, [Redacted]

Response

Metuchen Borough Email 01/31/2023 10:52AM

Thank you for your email. As I believe I've stated earlier, Eggert Street will not be getting a bike lane. Grove Ave will have the bike lanes. Due to the limited width of Eggert Street, we will be placing shared lane markings (<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/bikeway-signing-marking/shared-lane-markings/>) on the street pavement to signal that the road needs to be shared with cyclists. The markings will be the same as what is currently on Amboy Ave. and Woodbridge Ave. Parking is allowed on streets that have shared lane markings. There are no plans to prohibit parking on Eggert St.

As far as you comment below (#2) we are aware of those concerns, and it was considered when the Borough Council made the decision to pursue the Grove Ave Bike Lane project. I believe you will find some information that addresses your concern in the link above about the use of sharrows.

Public Information Center • Frequently Asked Questions and Comments:

• Frequently asked questions:

- o How will the green pavement treatment being considered for the bicycle lanes benefit cyclists?

Response

The green pavement treatment being considered for the project will increase visibility of the bicycle lane for vehicular traffic, increase driver awareness of the potential for bicyclists in the area, and provide a dedicated area for bicyclists traveling through the area.

- o Approximately how long will it take to install the green bicycle lane treatment?

Response

The green pavement treatment being considered consists of a polymer cement that is mixed on site and sprayed onto the pavement using a stencil pattern. Installation

- o For areas with proposed bicycle lanes, will parking be prohibited?

Response

Parking within areas with bicycle lanes will be prohibited.

- o Can a two-way cycle track / bi-directional bicycle lane on one side of the roadway be considered? This would avoid impact to parking on both sides of Grove Ave. Also, can a buffer area and plastic bollards / delineators be incorporated to better separate vehicular and bicycle traffic? (Comments provided from attendees noted similar treatments have been installed at Rutgers University within New Brunswick, NJ. One attendee provided the project team with an example for a two-way cycle track.)

The Daily Targum



Graphic provided by an attendee during the in-person Public Information Center

Response

Inclusion of a two-way separated bicycle lane / cycle track for bi-directional bicycle traffic with a buffer area with plastic delineators (similar to the graphic provided by the attendee) was not included in the scope of the original Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) grant, which was a competitive grant with other municipalities. The original 2018 grant included two bicycle lanes as shown on the plans.

Per the 2017 State of New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide: 10' minimum, 12' desirable width for the proposed bicycle lanes with a 3' wide buffer (in which plastic delineators similar to the ones shown in the provided graphic would be provided). While Grove Avenue is generally 36'± to 38'± in width (curb-to-curb, excluding the signalized intersections that feature left turn lanes), inclusion of 2-11' travel lanes and a 13' minimum cycle track and buffer may fit within the existing roadway but roadway widening would be required at the signalized intersections. If roadway widening is required, potential issues with right of way, environmental / drainage, and conflicts with existing signal equipment may occur, which is outside the scope of the project. This option would also have issues at Eggert Avenue / Middlesex CR660 (Woodbridge Avenue) and the Edison / Metuchen municipal border with bicyclists having to cross the road in order to continue.

- Why are shared lane markings included at signalized intersections instead of bicycle lanes?

Response

Shared lane markings are included in the project limits at Middlesex CR660 (Woodbridge Avenue), NJ State Route 27 (Middlesex Avenue), and in the vicinity of the Conrail Shared Assets / CSX Railroad (Port Reading Secondary) due to existing roadway widths being insufficient to accommodate the bicycle lanes without widening. For the signalized intersections, to avoid widening the roadway and potential impacts to right of way / drainage / environmental, etc., bicyclists will share the road with vehicular traffic. For the existing structure, a separate NJDOT project is currently in Final Design phase to replace the structure, which will include wider shoulders.

- Is it required by law to have both Bike Lane signs and No Parking signs? Or is it to be understood by motorists that they are not allowed to park in bike lane?

Response

Certain segments of Grove Avenue feature parking restrictions per Metuchen municipal code. While there is no specific Metuchen or New Jersey law stating parking is prohibited for bicycle lanes, generally parking is prohibited on bicycle lanes to accommodate bicycle movement and to avoid conflicts between bicycles and vehicles (i.e., bicycles passing parked vehicles by traveling into the adjacent active lane). For this project, No Parking signs will be installed along with the Bike Lane signs throughout Grove Avenue.

- What if during a religious or community event parking is needed on Grove Ave?

Response | The Metuchen Police can post a temporary order to close the bike lane and allow parking. Metuchen can notify public in advance.

- o Comment regarding installation of a temporary stop for pedestrians crossing sign with base within Grove Avenue – vehicles tend to move towards the curb line when these signs are present, which may result in conflicts with bicyclists in the roadway / future bicycle lanes (situation may have occurred in the vicinity of the Neve Shalom Synagogue)

Response | Existing stop for pedestrians crossing signs with a base were not recently observed within Grove Avenue. If present, the green bicycle lane treatment will better define the bicycle lane and make drivers aware of the potential for bicyclists in the area.

- o Resident that lives on Grove Avenue across from New York Avenue concerned about food delivery or package delivery drivers not knowing where to park since they do not have a driveway.

Response | Although food and package delivery drivers will likely temporarily park on the bicycle lane, they can also use adjacent side streets for parking.

- o Can advanced shared the lane warning signs be installed prior to the railroad bridge (Conrail Shared Assets / CSX Railroad – Port Reading Secondary) south of Norris Avenue and Metuchen High School? The current design includes bicycle lanes where width permits installation, however, the existing bridge width decreases and required shared lane markings.

Response | Additional advanced warning signs for the shared lane configuration can be included in the plans. The Conrail Shared Assets / CSX Railroad (Port Reading Secondary) structure will be reconstructed by a separate NJDOT project that is currently in Final Design phase.

- o What are bicycle safe grates?

Response | A bicycle safe grate is a component of drainage inlets that extend into the gutter of the roadway to collect stormwater runoff. Inlet grates similar to the one shown in the graphic to the left were once used in the past, however, these proved to be a hazard for bicyclists using the roadway. Currently, NJDOT uses a bicycle safe grate as shown in the graphic to the right, which allows bicycle tires to safely roll over the grate without becoming stuck. While most of the existing inlet grates throughout the project limits are bicycle safe, two non-bicycle safe inlet grates were observed on the corners of Eggert Avenue / Grove Avenue and Middlesex CR660 (Woodbridge Avenue). These inlet grates will be replaced with bicycle safe grates.

Examples of non-bicycle safe and bicycle safe inlets:



Example of a Non-Bicycle Safe Grate
Image by KTesh licensed under Creative Commons.

Bicycle Safe Grate Example
Grove Avenue and Henry Street

- o Are bicycle safe grates present on Grove Avenue at the Amtrak railroad overpass?

Response | Bicycle safe grates are present on Grove Avenue beneath the Amtrak railroad overpass.

- o Will there be impacts such as noise and dust during construction? Will I be able to get out of my driveway?

Response | The proposed improvements included in this project do not involve excavation or heavy equipment and should be limited to equipment required to install the green bicycle lane treatment and signs. Noise and dust should be kept to a minimum. During construction, the contractor will be made aware of residential driveways and coordinate with property owners regarding installation of the green bicycle lane treatment.

- o Can speed bumps / speed humps or pedestrian bump outs be included in the proposed improvements? Can porous pavement be used in lieu of / with the green pavement treatment?

Response | Speed bumps / speed humps and pedestrian bump outs were not included in the original grant; however, they may be considered by Metuchen Borough as a part of a separate project.

- Comment regarding overall number of signs present within the project limits. Potential issue with signs coming projectiles if struck of a vehicle. Can the overall number of signs throughout the corridor be reduced?

Response | Following the Public Information Center, No Parking Bike Lane signs have been added to the proposed bicycle lane signs. Regarding the overall count of signs, a table that was available during the Public Information Center has been updated and includes the following:

Note: A “sign assembly” can be considered one or more signs on a single signpost. The following numbers are for the project limits along Eggert Avenue and Grove Avenue only – additional signs along side streets were not included.

Existing versus Proposed Sign Quantities:

- Existing signs / assemblies 78 sign assemblies, 126 signs
- Existing signs to be removed..... 17 sign assemblies, 30 signs
- Existing signs to be replaced in kind 4 signs
- Proposed signs to be installed 25 sign assemblies, 58 signs
- Net increase to signs within project limits8 sign assemblies, 28 signs

While some existing signs will be removed, proposed signs will be required to denote proposed bicycle lanes, share the lane conditions, etc.

- Can a Bike Box be installed at Route 27? Disappointed that Route 27 intersection does not have more improvements but overall a significant improvement along Grove Avenue for bike safety and to promote bike travel

Response | The proposed bicycle improvements through the Route 27 intersection along Grove Avenue include share the road signs and pavement markings only to avoid widening of the roadway to accommodate bicycle lanes. While there is interim approval for bicycle boxes at signalize intersections, use of shared lane markings and bicycle boxes is not available.

- Project should be a big stepping stone to promote connections to other existing bike paths / greenway. There is an access point to the Middlesex Greenway at Green Street which is a short distance from the intersection of Eggert Avenue and Amboy Avenue.

Response | Acknowledged. The proposed project will promote connections to existing bicycle routes (shared lane markings) along Amboy Avenue, Middlesex CR660 Woodbridge Avenue, and State Route 27 Middlesex Avenue.

- General comments:

- Several attendees were from Edison Township and expressed desire for bicycle treatments within their municipality based on this project.

Response | Acknowledged.

- Grove Avenue is dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially at night and in the vicinity of the railroad bridge (Conrail Shared Assets / CSX Railroad – Port Reading Secondary) south of Norris Avenue and Metuchen High School.

Response | Additional signs in advance of the railroad bridge have been added to the plans. Following completion of the NJDOT bridge replacement project, existing conditions should improve.

- Attendees noted that they appreciate the efforts of Metuchen Borough and NV5 for the proposed design which should benefit cyclists in the area and students going to Metuchen High School.

Response | Acknowledged.

- Attendee noted that they are ‘excited but hurts a little bit,’ noting more should be done for cyclists in the area.

Response | Acknowledged.

- This project should now encourage high school students to use bike lane to get to school

Response | Acknowledged.

- Is there a proposal to reduce the posted speed limit even more? Currently at 25 mph.

Response | The existing speed limits of Eggert Avenue and Grove Avenue are 25 MPH. Reduction of speed limits would require additional review / traffic studies and approval of Metuchen Borough. approval of Metuchen Borough.

- Improvements should increase awareness and slow down drivers

Response | Acknowledged.

- One stakeholder opinion - Spending taxpayer money, even if Federal, on a bike lane a waste since bikers can ride in the road anyway. Appreciated they received an invite the opportunity to discuss but not a fan of the project.

Response | Acknowledged.

Questions and comments during comment period (post PIC meeting):

- No additional comments received during the comment period