

January 17, 2025

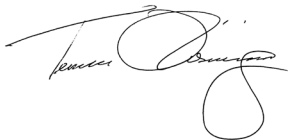
Mr. Michael Panzitta, P.E.
Project Manager
Department of Mobility and Infrastructure
City-County Building, Floor 3
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Subject: Penn Avenue Phase 2 Reconstruction Final Design
Final Design – Public Meeting
City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania
Meeting Minutes

Dear Mr. Panzitta:

Enclosed are the meeting minutes for the above-subject project. If there are any changes or modifications to the enclosed minutes, please do not hesitate to call and discuss.

Sincerely,



Terence V. Olesniewicz, P.E.
Principal/Design Services

Enclosure: Meeting Minutes

cc: All Attendees
File

MEETING MINUTES

PROJECT NAME: Penn Avenue Phase 2 Reconstruction – Final Design

DATE / TIME: 2024-11-07/6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Bloomfield Garfield Corporation Activity Center, 113 North Pacific Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

SUBJECT: Final Design – Public Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Michael Panzitta – Project Manager, City of Pittsburgh, Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI)

Jan Raether - City of Pittsburgh, Infrastructure Engagement Specialist, Office of the Mayor

Lindsey Robles – City of Pittsburgh, Mayor’s Office Neighborhood Engagement Coordinator

Shoshana Davidson – City of Pittsburgh

Pamela Schon – Children’s Home of Pittsburgh

Rick Swartz – Bloomfield Garfield Corporation (BGC)

Jamie Kelly – BGC

Roy Holt – Peoples Gas

Nick Paradise – Peoples Gas

Jeffree N.V. - Resident

Michael Medwed – Resident

Caroline Kranz – Resident

John Lubic – Aldi

Patrick Nelson – Aldi

Harpreet Pabla – Business Owner

Darla Cravotta – Resident

David Weber – Resident

Sharell Johnson – Business Owner

Ellen DiBiase- Resident

Greg Heiglek – Resident

Myra Awodey – Resident

Matt Watson – Resident

Walter Tien – Resident

Brian Kubet – Resident

Jennifer Haven – Resident

Tom Youngs – Resident

Minette Vaccarieleo – Resident

Ian C – Resident

Joseph Lentin – Resident

Michael Onofray – Resident and Business Owner

Chris Harison – Resident

Allison Glanrey

Dave Varg – Business Owner

Julia Clemm – Resident

Terence Olesniewicz – Trans Associates, Inc. (TA)

Braedon Jelinek - TA

Sallyann Kluz – Shiftworks
Claire Truscott – Collective Efforts, LLC (CE)
Brianna Shea - CE

The following represents the project team's understanding of the meeting and the issues discussed:

Thirty-two people signed into the public meeting. Rick Swartz (BGC) opened the public meeting. Jan Raether reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Michael Panzitta continued the meeting with the project presentation. The slides presented are attached to this document.

Jan Raether discussed the contact information for follow-ups. After the presentation of the project, questions and comments were received and responses were provided.

Questions and Answers:

Question: I'm so excited. I live at the corner of Penn and Pacific. I didn't hear anything about trash cans during the presentation, is this happening?

Answer (Michael Panzitta): Current plan is to provide the City's standard trash and recycling cans as part of the streetscape.

Question: Two seasons of construction were stated as the project duration. What is a season of construction?

Answer (MP): When it is warm enough to pour concrete (typically April through October, weather dependent).

Question: So, two years?

Answer (MP): Yes.

Question: The speed bumps on Friendship through the detour, will they have cuts?

Answer (MP, Terry Olesniewicz): Speed bumps will be temporary and will be the City standard, so yes, they will be at roadway grade on the curbline for drainage and bicycles.

Question: What about parking for residents? Will there be parking for neighboring homes and businesses? Parking for Penn Avenue?

Answer (MP, TO): Parking will remain open on at least one side Penn Avenue that is open to traffic and on blocks where no construction is taking place.

Question: Is there going to be any heavy excavation?

Answer (MP): Excavation beyond removal of existing sidewalk/curb/street surface will be conducted for inlets, catch basins, and removal of old buried trolley tracks.

Question: Will there be pest control so to prevent pest invasion in homes during excavation? There have been problems with bugs and rodents during work in the past (Phase 1 project).

Answer (Jan Raether): We will do some coordination with our City Permits, License, and Inspections department. I know that they have been able to do some kind of mitigation on some other projects, we will have a conversation with them.

Question: With the health department as well?

Answer (JR): I don't know what our coordination with them looks like, but the Permits, Licensing, and Inspections department does baiting and trapping, so that is something they may be able to do here.

Question: Drivers are using Coral Street instead of the posted detour during the current gas line work.

Answer (MP): We have heard from others about this and are working on it.

Question: What is happening with the bus line redesign? Is it going to match up with the detour? Will this change the plan for the design?

Answer (MP): DOMI has a meeting with PRT next week to discuss this item.

Question: Will there be any cohesiveness between Phase 1 and Phase 2? Some of the furnishings and treatments from Phase 1 are no longer desired and should be updated.

Answer (MP): This could potentially be addressed but would need to be its own effort through separate dedication of funding, as it is not within this project scope which is only for the Phase 2 limits of work (Evaline to Graham)

Question: Will there be any more parking restrictions between Evaline and Pacific? I live on Penn Avenue and haven't had to pay for parking yet and have never gotten a ticket.

Answer (MP): This is not planned, but we can check.

Questions:

- I agree that we should do something with the Phase 1 to make some type of seamless piece. Investing all this money on Phase 2 will make Phase 1 look bad.
- I think communication is critical for this project. This is the first evening meeting I have heard about for this project.
- You have answered questions about speed bumps on Friendship, I would suggest you look at Broad and Dearborn as well because I think that that is going to be an unofficial detour. I'm curious about your wayfinding that talks about residential zones. I'm sure everyone has experienced 18 wheelers getting lost and hitting trees. I appreciate the work, but it was bad.
- I also wanted to talk about stormwater management, while I think that putting inlets along the road is important, some other way of managing the water, like green management would be great
- I just wanted to reiterate that communication is critical, coming to the community in the evening is so much better. If final design is going to be sent to the City in a couple of months, it might be great to have you guys come back. Communication – emails, I get calls from the water company, I can certainly get calls from the City. I appreciate you all.

Answer (JR): My role was created by the City for communication on infrastructure projects. You can contact me directly. We have the ability to send letters, and if you signed in for this meeting, we can email you. We do not have the ability to do the reverse 911 that PWSA has to call you. We are trying to improve communications on projects such as this.

Question: Is there anything to help with wayfinding?

Answer (MP): Detours are set in a generally standardized way. Neighborhood wayfinding isn't standard for a project like this.

Question: The last detour was not great. There could be more “You’re entering a residential zone” signs, right? It could be more explicit for the people who are brought into our neighborhood by the detour. They do it for the Italian Festival.

Answer (MP): Noted.

Question: What is the frequency of the new bike racks?

Answer (MP): We will have to confirm with the designer and the landscape plan.

Question: Are you going to replace the water lines on Penn Avenue?

Answer (JR): The short answer is that it is not our responsibility. The City can’t order PWSA to align their work with ours. We do coordinate with them for projects like this and give them the opportunity to update facilities in advance of or during our construction. It is our understanding that PWSA does not have plans to upgrade their existing water lines in the project area.

Question:

- Our water pressure on Penn is horrible and with the water lines, who knows?
- Will residential areas that didn’t have parking meters before have parking meters after construction? Is that going to happen or not? Because it is important that it doesn’t.

Answer (MP): Noted.

Question: How will the raised intersection and the sidewalks during construction be made friendly for people with low and no vision?

Answer (MP, TO): For the raised intersections where everything is on the same level, we will be utilizing the standard detectable yellow truncated domes.

Question: What about when the sidewalks are closed? It can be confusing.

Answer (MP): We will take that into consideration and do what is needed to provide ADA accessibility during construction.

Question: Will nearby projects be considered, what about work on the roads around the project area?

Answer (MP): We’ve been coordinating with the utility companies to let them know about the project. They should be able to work around that. Obviously things like emergencies can occur but, everyone is required to have permits, and these are coordinated at the City.

Question: Will there be updates on the Engage page through the project?

Answer (JR): We have been working to set some standards with DOMI and DPW Planning, working to generate quarterly updates to the pages. While we are in the construction phase, we plan on doing monthly updates.

Question: Do you have a construction management plan? Raw materials storage?

Answer (MP): We don’t normally have that for street construction.

Question: I think because the first time was such a big nightmare, there were big dirt piles on sidewalks and in front of people’s houses.

Answer (Rick Swartz): We are aware the City has already been in conversation with Children’s Home of Pittsburgh to use their large lot which is just an open gravel lot, and we are asking that construction vehicles be parked up there. Storage of raw materials: it is all about how the project is staged. We are going one block at a time. Raw materials will be stored on the same side of the street in the same block where work is being done.

That was a major miss on Phase 1. We will be closely monitoring where vehicles are and what time construction begins and ends. We will go after the contractors if they start making up their own rules.

Question: In regard to parking at Children's Home, we would be happy to provide parking. I am just concerned about school buses being able to turn in and out of that parking lot.

Answer: Noted. This will be accommodated during construction.

Question:

- Are you coordinating with PRT? Penn Avenue is a main route I want to make sure buses can go on that route.
- Has anyone looked at the traffic impacts? The bump-outs at every corner leave no room for a car to move around a bus.
- On the detour, there are two left turns that already back up. Is there a way to adjust the timing of that?
- If you wait until spring instead of starting construction in September, could you get it done in one season?

Answer (MP, JR): We can talk to our signals group. If we started in spring, there is still more than one season of work that needs to be done. The reason for bump-outs is for pedestrian safety, and it makes it easier for buses to load and offload at the intersection near the bus stops, mostly to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

Question: I worry that we are prioritizing pedestrian safety and making the crossing three feet shorter especially at the intersection and results in more traffic. That doesn't really benefit us.

Answer (JR): Pedestrians are crossing 24/7 and there's queueing only during those high traffic times.

Question: What will road closures and traffic rerouting look like? What is the projected impact to local business look like?

Answer (MP): For detours, the main detour is Liberty and Baum. With businesses, part of it is restricting work to one block at a time and requiring contractors to not block businesses. We have had conversations with the URA that businesses may be eligible for some opportunities/programs even before construction.

Question: This coincides with the closure of the Squirrel Hill tunnel. Has this been taken into consideration? There is going to be a lot of traffic redirected this way.

Answer (MP): I will talk to the DOMI exec team. We will have to take a look at all the detours around the City and contact the people who issue permits for detours and figure out how we are going to deal with huge impacts. This is the nature of having such a large amount of infrastructure investment right now. The City is doing work at the same time as the County and PennDOT.

Post Meeting Summary:

During the remainder of the meeting time from 7:00 pm to around 7:40 pm, people viewed the posters, writing additional questions down for the Project Team, and community members had discussions amongst themselves as well as the Project Team members and BGC staff. Peoples Gas representatives were present throughout the meeting and had a discussion with Rick Swartz and residents after the meeting regarding issues the area has been having during their on-going replacement project.

Notes, Comments and Questions From Posters/Boards:

Raised Intersection:

- So excited for real bollards!
- Love the raised crossing. I use it everyday and feel in danger from speeding cars.
- Communication needs to be on-going with community members.
- Wayfinding signage will be critical.
- Stormwater management needs to be high on the list.
- We are concerned that trucks leaving the Aldi and Family Dollar won't be able to make the turns back onto Penn Avenue.
- All your hard work is not unnoticed! Bump outs and raised crossings are what Penn needs!

Proposed Detours During Construction:

- A community meeting before Final Design submitted Feb 2025.
- Descriptive signage for detours.
- Concern that Dearborn St. in Garfield will also be used as a cut through.
- Will parking kiosks be installed between Evaline and Pacific after project is done?
- Spot enforcement (or at least redirection).
- Diverters on neighborway.

Speed Table/Hump Locations During Construction:

- Speed bumps will have cut-throughs for bikes.
- Hopefully, time will not be wasted by workers standing around!
- Signage is critical before you come upon the construction.
- Additional traffic calming on neighborway and side streets?

Aiken Avenue Intersection Enlargement:

- Please consult with pest control and Allegheny County Department of Health Department over pest habitats under street.
- Can we have another meeting after Final Design is done?
- Can Phase 2 be made seamless with Phase 1?
- Love! The bump outs.

This concludes the minutes of the meeting held for the project. If you have any comments or concerns or corrections, please do not hesitate to call.