

HADDON AVENUE BETA PROJECT

Advisory Group Meeting #2 Meeting Highlights

Monday, June 29, 2015
Cooper Medical School at Rowan University
401 Broadway, Camden NJ

Introduction

Alison Hastings (DVRPC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and re-introduced the project. DVRPC was one of 5 teams selected to pilot or test the Federal Highways Administration's new "Health in Transportation" framework. DVRPC chose to pilot this process along Haddon Avenue in Camden City and convened this Advisory Committee to help inform the process.

Baseline Data/Current Conditions

Amy Verbofsky (DVRPC) reviewed the current conditions data for Haddon Avenue and the surrounding quarter mile study area that was presented at the first Advisory Group meeting. Please see presentation for additional information.

Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

Aaron Truchil and Jean Behrend of Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers (CCHP) presented on CCHP's work in Camden, including their identification of "hotspots" – geographic areas that have disproportionately high percentages of emergency department visits – and development of community-based care management teams.

For its hotspotting work, CCHP conducted a spatial analysis of hospital claims data in Camden and found that 6% of city blocks account for 18% of patients and 37% of hospital costs. They found that the average patient in Camden is 57 years old, had 4.5 emergency department visits, and spent 5.3 days as an inpatient in one year.

CCHP's community-based care management teams noted that poor sidewalk conditions in Camden can often be a barrier for patients to get to their appointments, specifically:

- Uneven pavement;
- Barriers that obstruct the sidewalk, such as light posts;
- Sidewalk width – often too narrow for wheelchairs, which may lead wheelchair users to enter the street;
- Wheelchair accessibility – missing wheelchair ramps;

They also noted that adding more benches and improving street lighting would allow more people to get to their doctor's appointments either by public transit or walking.

In addition to their direct healthcare work, CCHP also maintains, analyzes, and publishes a significant amount of data. CCHP is working to aggregate and publish the data through the [Camden Health Explorer](#) so that a broad range of partners can better understand and then help to address the broad range of social and built environment factors that impact health outcomes.

CamConnect

Josh Wheeling with CamConnect presented on their recent Camden vacancy study. Conducted with the help of many community organizations, CamConnect surveyed every building in Camden, documenting occupancy status and building condition. They combined these observations with public tax records and building data in an easy to navigate interactive web mapping portal. Josh noted that there were many vacant buildings in Whitman Park, which can lead to potential public safety problems. Additionally, he noted that both Parkside and Whitman Park lacked open spaces or green spaces. Based on his experience and work in Camden, Josh thought that the lack of open space and transportation options were some of the biggest public health concerns for this areas.

Focus Areas

Greg Krykewycz (DVRPC) led a discussion on five focus areas along Haddon Avenue. These geographic focus areas were selected as a result of conversation and input from the first Advisory Group meeting.

- MLK Blvd at Haddon Avenue
 - This intersection is very wide, with approximately 200 feet of crossing distance.
 - Many pedestrians use this intersection. This area is also a high traffic area as visitors drive through to other/waterfront destinations.
 - A few options for improving the intersection could include:
 - Extending median island to meet crosswalks for better pedestrian refuge
 - Adding pedestrian countdown timers
 - Extending bike facilities along Haddon Avenue
 - Pedestrian overpass
 - More & better signage
 - Diagonal crosswalk – “Pedestrian Scramble”
 - Signalization for pedestrians – always have a walk signal instead of requiring push button activation
- 676 Overpass
 - The 676 Overpass is a poorly lit space with narrow sidewalks and wide vehicle lane(s).
 - A few options for improving this area could include:
 - A road diet to narrow lanes, wide sidewalks, and stripe bike facilities
 - Significantly improve overpass lighting
 - Leverage the future Cooper-Campbell GCL station to provide significant pedestrian, bicycle, and lighting improvements in the overpass area for safe station access.
- Pine St. + Mt. Ephraim + Haddon Ave
 - This area suffers from a general lack of maintenance of crosswalks, sidewalks, and curbs ramps. Due to the deterioration of the curb cuts, a lot of informal parking is occurring in the area; however one attendee noted that resident parking is an issue in the area.
 - It also has a wide turning radius due to the angle of the streets which encourages high-speed turns.
 - A few options for improving this area could include:
 - Redesign and formalize the intersections
 - Traffic calming between Mt. Ephraim and Haddon
- Kaighns Avenue
 - This intersection is a major intersection along Haddon Avenue but has worn low-visibility crosswalks. Additionally, due to the angle of the intersection, the wide turning radii permit high-speed vehicle turns.
 - A few options for improving this area could include:

- Re-stripe crosswalks; consider adding texture for traffic calming
- Use bumpouts to narrow wide turning radii and reduce pedestrian crossing distances
- Bus shelters
 - NJ Transit noted that this intersection would be a good one to consider for bus shelters because a number of bus routes pass through this intersection.
- Bike lanes
 - One attendee suggested eliminating parking along Haddon Avenue to make room for bike lanes and other amenities (assuming off-street parking)
- Ferry Ave/PATCO
 - Cooper’s Ferry is currently completing the redesign of Haddon Avenue in front of Lourdes hospital and will begin the extension of these renovations east to Venner Street later this fall.
 - Venner St./Old White Horse Pike is the front door of the Ferry Avenue PATCO station to Camden City. It is a crucial connection from transit to Haddon Ave and Our Lady of Lourdes hospital. Currently it is not very welcoming with no sidewalks and many junk yard uses along it.
 - A few options for improving this area could include:
 - Formalize Venner Street and add sidewalks
 - Formalize movements in station-front plaza/drop-off area, including crosswalk striping and bus shelter
 - Opportunities for future TIGER grants/ Ladders of Opportunity

Other Issues

Closing thoughts from meeting attendees included:

- Separate health status from health care when looking at data
 - These markers will go beyond the immediate Haddon Avenue corridor area
- Look at environmental health factors like air quality, exposures due to ports and metal recyclers, lead in the water supply, open space, and food deserts
- Camden County Health Department will be releasing municipal level data shortly as the state works to attain Public Health accreditation.

Next Steps

DVRPC will convene the final Advisory Group meeting in August. This meeting may focus on one or two areas where DVRPC can take a deeper dive into specific recommendations or strategies for incorporating health through infrastructure improvements along the corridor.