

COMMENTS ON PLAN

The following list describes our concerns regarding the GSP Interchange 109 Improvements Plan as currently proposed:

1. EVALUATE THE TIMING OF LIGHTS ON ROUTE 520 TO MAXIMIZE TRAFFIC FLOW

The addition of a new traffic signal at Schulz Drive West increases the number of lights on Route 520 between the GSP SB Toll Plaza and Phoenix Drive (a distance of 2,250 feet) from three lights to four lights. A study of the timing and synchronization of the lights should be considered within two months following the project completion.

2. EXAMINE TRAFFIC QUEUE BACKUPS

- a. The new left turn lane from Route 520 East into Half Mile Road will be the only eastbound access to the Academy bus stop lots and Half Mile Road. A backup in the left turn lane could result due to the volume of cars and buses. This could cause the Route 520 East traffic to back up and be reduced to one lane.
- b. During commuting hours, the Garden State Parkway South Exit 109 is currently backed up in the double left turn lanes moving onto Route 520 East. With the potential backup accessing Half Mile Road, will the traffic back up onto the Garden State Parkway South Exit 109 ramp before the toll? There is a potential cause and effect where by fixing the GSP NB exit ramp flow you could cause a problem on the GSP SB exit ramp flow.
- c. With the removal of the second right turn lane from Half Mile Road to Route 520 West, traffic might back up on Half Mile Road causing congestion. Will vehicles turn into Schulz Drive West at the light north of the intersection when there is no sign to indicate that route is open? Will vehicles cut through the parking lot of 230 Half Mile Road which has an east and west entrance/exit? This traffic flow, signage, and lot access should be examined.

3. MINIMIZE DRIVER CONFUSION AND PREVENT NEIGHBORHOOD TURNAROUNDS

To avoid neighborhood turnarounds when drivers navigate the GSP NB Exit 109 off ramp incorrectly:

- a. For cars mistakenly taking the Route 520 West left turn when exiting GSP NB Exit 109, add a new U-Turn sign at Woodland Drive to direct vehicles to return eastbound through the Exit 109 Southbound exit (after toll). This could prevent neighborhood turnarounds on local Lincroft roads adjacent to Route 520 such as Woodland Drive, Neville Drive, Parkview Terrace, etc.
- b. Provide appropriate signage before exiting the GSP North Exit 109, not just when the road splits after exiting, so that the appropriate west, straight or east ramp is selected by drivers.

4. EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF THE BUS STOP REMOVAL ON ROUTE 520 EAST

Where will the NJ Transit bus for bus route 838 deliver passengers since the current bus stop at Half Mile Road and Route 520 East will be removed for the widening of Route 520 East?

Will Middletown designate a new bus stop location so that NJ Transit bus passengers can safely access the Academy bus stop? The route, bus stop location, and schedule time of each bus servicing the area should be examined to determine if there is any effect on traffic flow.

5. SCHULZ DRIVE WEST: PARKING CAPACITY, ACCIDENT RISKS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

- a. There is a shortage of commuter parking spaces at the Academy bus site. On weekdays, when both the main and overflow lots are filled, cars park on both sides of Schultz Drive West. Parking should be prohibited or limited and 25 mph speed limit signs posted. The bend on the north end of the road is a dangerous turn when cars are parked on both sides of the road.
- b. Pedestrians will be crossing between the main commuter lot and the overflow lot. A prominent crosswalk and speed reduction measures should be put in place as Schulz Drive West becomes a more heavily traveled road. As cars exit GSP North Exit 109 and cross over Route 520, they could be traveling at a high speed on a green traffic light, and they would encounter a pedestrian crosswalk only 275 feet from the traffic light. Lights, signs, and any reflective markings to warn drivers of the crossing should be added for the safety of pedestrians.
- c. Drivers are allowed to cut through the parking lot at 230 Half Mile Road to travel between Shultz Drive West on the west side and Half Mile Road on the east side. This causes a pedestrian and vehicle safety issue. Consider the addition of signs warning that only tenants and visitors are allowed to enter, or change the driveway access to prevent this cut-through travel.
- d. Improve the road markings, add a Yield sign for the left turn at the intersection of Schulz Drive West and Connector Road, and remove raised concrete barriers at that same intersection.
- e. Widen or re-design the shoulder of Connector Road (the one way from Schulz Drive West to Half Mile Road) so that buses standing idle do not interfere with traffic on Connector Road.

6. COMMUNICATION

The NJ Turnpike Authority should post notifications on the Academy bus website, at the Academy bus stop and at the ticket sales area notifying commuters about the project and any changes to travel routes and parking.

SUGGESTED ALTERNATE IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

There are features of the plan that will likely improve the safety of Interchange 109 by reducing traffic queues on the exit ramp and eliminate the merge/weave condition on the jughandle. However, we feel the plan should be implemented in phases to first examine how the addition of the GSP NB entrance ramp, removal of the jughandle and addition of the 520 East left turn lane will effect traffic flow. If these three improvements can meet the project's intention, then no additional changes should be made. We describe this in more detail below:

- As proposed, add new ramp and bridge from Newman Springs Road East to Garden State Parkway North .
- As proposed, remove the existing jughandle ramp on Route 520 East.
- As proposed, add a left turn lane from Route 520 East into Half Mile Road.
- Make no change to the exit ramp lanes from GSP NB Exit 109 (one left turn, one left/straight, one straight, one separate feeder road right).
- Make no change to the Half Mile Road turn lanes (one right turn, one right/left turn).
- Make no change to the entrance driveway to Schultz Drive West.
- Eliminate the new Ramp 109 NBXB (thereby eliminating the new traffic signal at Schulz Drive West and allowing for a longer left turn lane on Route 520 East).