



MARKLEY STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Newsletter 2 - Spring 2009

Including Improvements to Johnson Highway between Markley Street and Dekalb Street



Edward G. Rendell, Governor
Allen D. Biehler, PE, Secretary of Transportation

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is moving forward with a project to rebuild and improve Markley Street in Norristown and Johnson Highway in Norristown and East Norriton Township. Final engineering design is underway on the Markley Street Improvement Project following the completion of environmental studies and preliminary engineering. This improvement of Route 202, commonly referred to as Section 500, extends along Markley Street from just south of Main Street to Johnson Highway, and along Johnson Highway between Markley Street and DeKalb Street.

Since the start of preliminary engineering in late 2002, PennDOT's worked closely with Norristown and this relationship formed the basis of an agreement to transfer the ownership and maintenance responsibility of Markley Street from the municipality to PennDOT upon the completion of construction.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Traffic Study

To ensure that the Markley Street Improvement Project is designed using the latest traffic information, PennDOT's project team recently performed traffic studies along the corridor and reevaluated plans developed in the preliminary engineering phase of the project. The recent traffic study resulted in two significant design changes:

Intersection of Markley Street, Johnson Highway and Swede Road - The new traffic analysis determined that the second northbound through lane on Markley Street was not needed and that there was no need to widen on the east side of Swede Road. This design change will eliminate impacts to adjacent properties and reduce impacts to the Grand View Heights Historic District.

Re-aligned Intersection of Coolidge Boulevard and Brown Street at Markley Street - The recent traffic study determined a traffic signal was warranted at this intersection that is adjacent to the A. D. Eisenhower Middle School. The traffic signal will include countdown pedestrian signals on all four corners to enhance safety for school children crossing Markley Street and the two side streets.



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For more information and project updates, please visit our website at

www.US202.com

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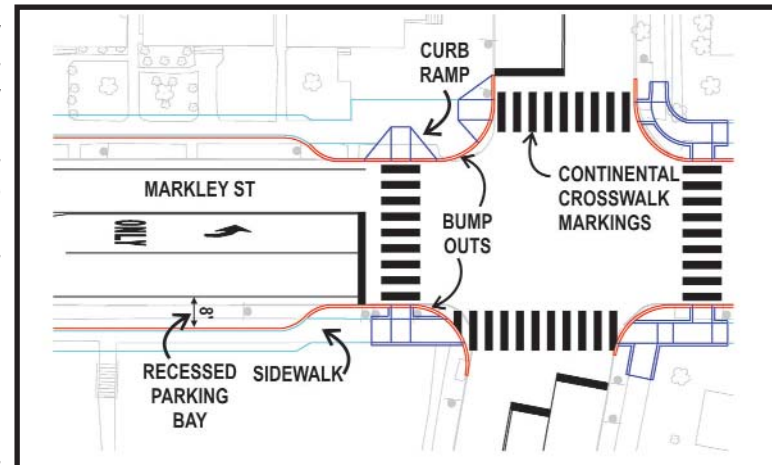
Public Involvement Process - Keeping You Informed

WHERE ARE WE NOW? (con't.)

Parking Study

To help determine parking needs along the Markley Street Corridor, PennDOT engineers utilized information obtained from the Block-by-Block parking survey that was conducted in late 2007 and early 2008. In addition, parking space counts were conducted to supplement the information obtained from the workshop and survey forms, and a parking study was completed. The parking study resulted in certain recommendations for the project, including locations for recessed parking on Markley Street between Elm Street and Roberts Street.

Shown in this figure is a detail of the typical recessed parking bay. In general, the parking study confirmed that the recessed parking bays shown on the preliminary engineering plans were necessary on Markley Street. One notable exception was the 1600 block between Brown Street and Roberts Street. The parking study concluded that recessed parking was not required in this block except for a small parking bay in front of the A.D. Eisenhower Middle School.



Proposed Improvements

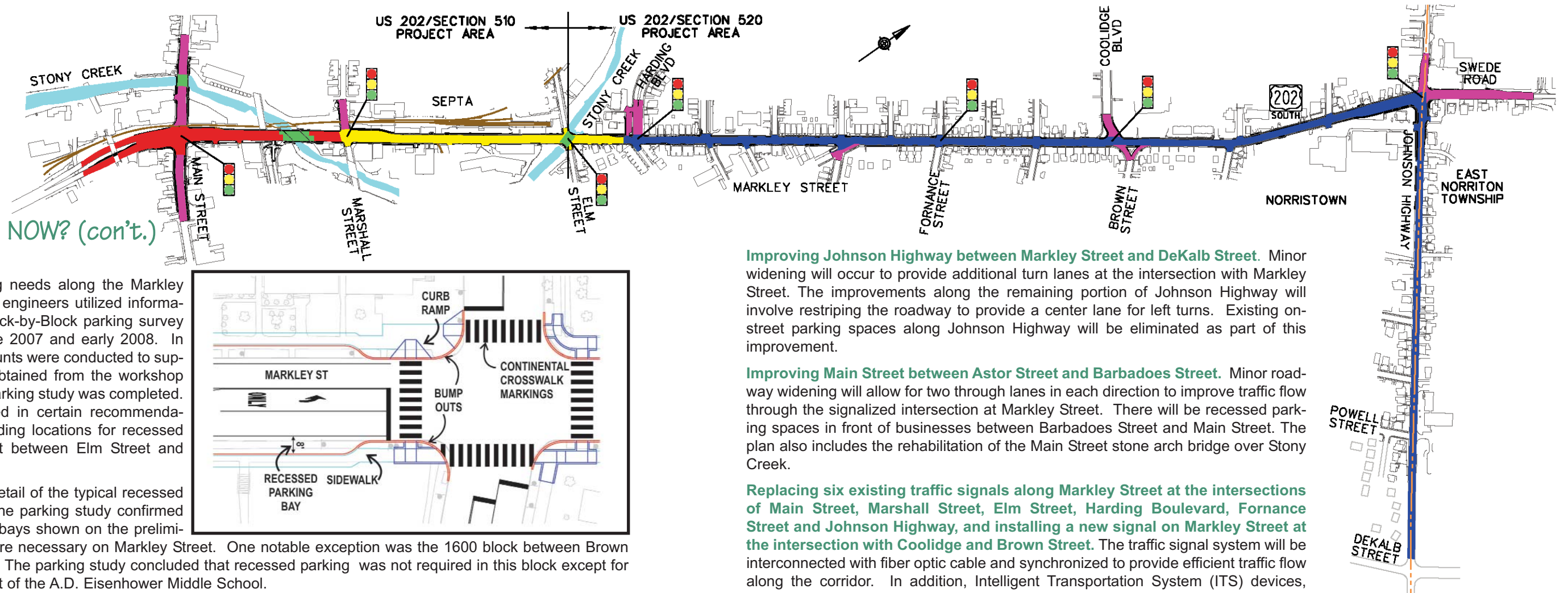
Following the completion of new engineering studies done after June 2007 for the Markley Street project, PennDOT's project team made refinements to the plan that was developed during the project's preliminary engineering phase. The refinements were made based on a new field survey, traffic study, and parking study as well as information received during the October 2007 open house and the "Block by Block" parking survey. The updated plans are available for viewing on the US 202 website -- www.US202.com -- under "Project Updates" for "Johnson Highway to Gulph Road".

The proposed improvements include:

Rebuilding the existing four-lane section of Markley Street between Main Street and Marshall Street with minimal widening. PennDOT will also improve the dual bridges over Stony Creek, just north of Airy Street. Both bridges, including the temporary steel truss bridge, will be removed and replaced with a single bridge that will accommodate both northbound and southbound traffic. No barriers or gaps will exist in the middle of the street, which will improve safety and visibility for the traveling public.

Reconstructing and widening Markley Street to provide one northbound lane, two southbound lanes and a center left turn lane between Marshall Street and Harding Boulevard. PennDOT plans to minimize widening on the west side of Markley Street to avoid impacting parking spaces at SEPTA's Elm Street Station. The plan for this section includes rehabilitating the Markley Street/Elm Street stone arch bridge over Stony Creek, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and adding a small off-street parking lot on the southwest corner of Harding Boulevard and Markley Street to mitigate the reduction of on-street parking between Elm Street and James Street.

Reconstructing Markley Street between Harding Boulevard and Johnson Highway to provide one lane in each direction, with a center left turn lane and recessed parking bays at key locations in residential areas. The new Markley Street will fit within the existing roadway footprint, except for the recessed parking bays where minor widening will be required. This design will enable most of the improvements to fit within existing right-of-way with minimal impacts to adjacent properties. This portion of Markley Street will include the realignment of Coolidge Boulevard so it aligns with Brown Street to improve traffic operations and safety at the intersections.



Improving Johnson Highway between Markley Street and DeKalb Street. Minor widening will occur to provide additional turn lanes at the intersection with Markley Street. The improvements along the remaining portion of Johnson Highway will involve restriping the roadway to provide a center lane for left turns. Existing on-street parking spaces along Johnson Highway will be eliminated as part of this improvement.

Improving Main Street between Astor Street and Barbadoes Street. Minor roadway widening will allow for two through lanes in each direction to improve traffic flow through the signalized intersection at Markley Street. There will be recessed parking spaces in front of businesses between Barbadoes Street and Main Street. The plan also includes the rehabilitation of the Main Street stone arch bridge over Stony Creek.

Replacing six existing traffic signals along Markley Street at the intersections of Main Street, Marshall Street, Elm Street, Harding Boulevard, Fornance Street and Johnson Highway, and installing a new signal on Markley Street at the intersection with Coolidge and Brown Street. The traffic signal system will be interconnected with fiber optic cable and synchronized to provide efficient traffic flow along the corridor. In addition, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) devices, including closed circuit television cameras, will be installed at key intersections. Both the traffic signals and ITS equipment will connect to PennDOT's Traffic Operations Center to enhance traffic flow and quickly address incidents along the corridor.

Improving pedestrian access along Markley Street with the construction of a new sidewalk on the west side of the street between Main Street and Marshall Street. Pedestrians will use this sidewalk to walk between the SEPTA railroad stations at Main Street and Elm Street without crossing Markley Street. In addition, PennDOT will build new handicap ramps at all intersections to meet current ADA requirements. All signalized intersections will include pedestrian countdown signals and continental crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety, and there will be bump outs at the side street intersections between Elm Street and Roberts Street to minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians.

Incorporating context sensitive design solutions to enhance the corridor. The use of streetscape elements, such as trees, will be implemented on Markley Street to replace trees impacted by the proposed improvements and to enhance the appearance of the corridor. Streetscaping also will occur along Main Street between Barbadoes Street and Markley Street to match the streetscape improvements made under Norristown's Main Street Streetscape Project.

Under a private project, there are plans to redevelop the Logan Square shopping center located at the southeast corner of Markley Street and Johnson Highway. The proposed redevelopment plan includes a movie studio, office and retail buildings, as well as substantial streetscaping along Markley Street. PennDOT has coordinated closely with the developer since the start of final design, and will continue coordination to ensure compatibility between the proposed site access driveways and frontage improvements and the Markley Street project roadway improvements.

- LEGEND**
- █ - EXISTING 4-LANE SECTION (2 NORTH, 2 SOUTH)
 - █ - PROPOSED 4-LANE SECTION (1 NORTH, 2 SOUTH, 1 TURN)
 - █ - PROPOSED 3-LANE SECTION (1 NORTH, 1 SOUTH, 1 TURN)
 - █ - PROPOSED SIDE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
 - █ - BRIDGES TO BE REPLACED OR REHABILITATED
 - ● ● - UPGRADED OR NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL
 - █ - SEPTA (RAILROAD YARD)

Keeping You Informed

This newsletter is part of PennDOT's public outreach effort to inform citizens about the development of the Markley Street Improvement Project. In October 2007, PennDOT conducted an open house public meeting at the A. D. Eisenhower Middle School in Norristown to give citizens a first-hand look at the plans being developed during the preliminary engineering phase of the project and to receive their input on the proposed improvements. Approximately 100 people attended the open house and common concerns were expressed by citizens in regards to parking availability; traffic flow and safety at various intersections; pedestrian accommodations; and property impacts.

Following the open house, a "Block by Block" parking survey workshop was conducted by PennDOT in November 2007 at the Norristown Borough Hall to provide residents and property owners with the opportunity to speak to the project team about their concerns over the potential loss of parking. Additional survey forms were mailed in January 2008 to residents and property owners who did not attend the workshop.

Anticipated Project Schedule

Following the completion of preliminary and pre-final design activities, PennDOT began final engineering design on the Markley Street Improvement Project in January 2009. PennDOT plans to divide the project into two construction sections: Section 510 and Section 520. Section 510 is anticipated to be the southern section and extend from just south of Main Street to Elm Street. Section 520 is expected to be the northern section and run from Elm Street to Johnson Highway. Section 520 also will include the stretch of Johnson Highway between Markley Street and DeKalb Street. Final design is expected to last two years. Section 520 is expected to start construction in 2011. Section 510 is anticipated to begin construction in 2013.