|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pleasantville logo | **Village of Pleasantville**  80 Wheeler Avenue · Pleasantville, New York 10570  (914) 769-1975 Fax: (914) 769-2127 |

***EAF Part III – Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts and Determination of Significance for the Manville Road Corridor Improvement and Civic Space Project.***

The Board of Trustees for the Village of Pleasantville established itself as the Lead Agency for SEQRA review of the proposed Manville Road Corridor Improvement and Civic Space following circulation of its Notice of Intent to Declare Lead Agency to all Involved Agencies. The purpose of the Proposed Action (sometimes referred to herein as the “project”) is to create a safe and enjoyable pedestrian experience between Memorial Plaza and Tompkins Avenue. The Proposed Action consists of modifications to improve pedestrian circulation in downtown Pleasantville, including sidewalk improvements, signal enhancements, speed calming measures, pedestrian signals, medians, and other improvements. The project has been awarded a federal grant, to be administered by the New York State Department of Transportation (“NYSDOT”) (Manville Rd is owned by NYS), due to its efforts to increase pedestrian safety. A significant component of the Proposed Action is the removal of the Memorial Plaza “slip lane”, which has been identified by NYSDOT and the Village as an intersection that would benefit from improvements for motorists and pedestrians. The elimination of the "slip lane" presented an opportunity to create a civic space/pocket park in its place. After public workshops and meetings, an initial design for the civic space was developed, and the design was then further modified to meet community and budgetary needs.

The improvements contemplated in this project were conceptualized in a 2007 study entitled *Memorial Plaza Intermodal Conceptual Planning Study* developed by the RBA Group. This study was performed by the Village of Pleasantville and Westchester County as a result of a Walkable Community Workshop that occurred with Village residents in 2006. The RBA Group study recommended several pedestrian improvements and the creation of a park at the northern end of the Memorial Plaza Parking Lot. The proposed project is carrying out the vision of this study within the project area, which has been a goal of the Village since 2007, and is contemplated in the Village’s current Comprehensive Plan. The long term benefits of creating a central gathering space coupled with the increased safety associated with the corridor improvements will result in a net long term benefit to the Village.

The Village Board of Trustees evaluated the nature, magnitude and importance of the relevant areas of environmental concern in order to make its determination of significance, including but not limited to potential impacts on stormwater, traffic, parking, construction phasing, funding and budget. Based on this assessment and upon review of Parts 1 and 2 of the Long Environmental Assessment Form and all other materials, reports, testimony and other information submitted to the Village Board of Trustees regarding the project, the Board determines that the Proposed Action will not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment.

**Impact on Land:**

The Manville Road Corridor Improvement and Civic Space project is located at the heart of the Village of Pleasantville, and is heavily used by pedestrians and motorists who are coming into the Village to shop, eat, or commute via the Metro North Train Station. The project proposes to reconfigure existing hardscape surfaces in order to create a safer environment for pedestrians. The resurfacing of Manville Road, the bump-out of sidewalks, enhancements of crosswalks, and addition of medians will have no environmental impacts. Drainage work is incorporated into the project to ensure proper storm water management. The Civic Space will convert an existing roadway and parking lot into a pedestrian plaza, which includes the addition of grass and trees. Approximately 0.2 acres will be transformed from hardscape to a permeable grass surface. This reduction in paved surfaces will provide an environmental benefit by reducing stormwater runoff, and heat island effect. Based on these findings and all other materials, reports, testimony and other information submitted to the Village Board regarding the project, the Proposed Action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact on land.

**Impact on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety:**

The Village of Pleasantville contains a vibrant and growing downtown that needs to accommodate both a pedestrian and motorist population. Dating back to 2006 the Village has identified the need to enhance the pedestrian and motorist experience within the downtown by creating a municipal space and safer traffic conditions. An accident review summary of the Manville corridor, completed as part of the design process, indicated an accident rate of 10.17 acc/MVM as compared to the NY Statewide Average of 2.51 acc/MVM[[1]](#footnote-1). This high accident rate is attributed to excessive pavement width with limited delineation and excessively long crosswalks.

The core concept of the project is to create a safer pedestrian environment with enhancements to sidewalks, crosswalks, signalization, medians and the removal of the right hand slip lane. To this end, the project was awarded a federal grant to be administered by the New York State Department of Transportation.

The proposed project will narrow areas of excessive pavement width, eliminate existing conflicts associated with the “slip lane”, improve ADA accessibility, and create shorter and perpendicular crosswalks. These improvements will provide a safer pedestrian and motorist experience in the downtown area. In addition the new lanes will meet the standard width for bicycle shared lanes further encouraging the multiple uses of transportation experienced in the Village of Pleasantville. While the project prioritizes the creation of a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians, there is also the intent to ensure traffic flow in the area is not severely impacted.

The proposed traffic improvements incorporated in the project includes the elimination of the “slip ramp” used by the Memorial Plaza parking lot traffic and west-bound Memorial Plaza traffic turning right to go north-bound on Manville Road; addition of a right turn lane for west-bound Memorial Plaza and parking lot traffic to replace the eliminated “slip lane”; modification of the location for egress to the Memorial Plaza lot; addition of a right turn lane from south-bound Manville Road to west-bound Grant Street; and, the elimination of excess roadway width on Manville Road west of Wheeler Avenue. The Village engaged HVEA Engineering to conduct a comprehensive traffic study of the area in order to gauge the potential impacts that the Proposed Action may have on the flow of traffic in and around Memorial Plaza. HVEA also proposed an updated traffic circulation within the redesigned Memorial Plaza Lot in order to accommodate the loss of the “slip lane” and addition of the Civic Space. In addition, Insite Engineering evaluated the Memorial Plaza redesign in order to maximize both parking and efficient traffic flow.

The traffic study conducted counts at several intersections in the immediate vicinity of Memorial Plaza during AM and PM peak hours. These intersections included Bedford Road at Memorial Plaza, Manville Road at Memorial Plaza/Grant Street, Manville Road at Wheeler Avenue, Manville Road at Washington Avenue, and Manville Road at Tompkins Avenue. HVEA utilized Highway Capacity Software analysis to analyze existing traffic movements, and those same traffic movements with the proposed improvements. This data was analyzed to provide potential conditions 10 years into the future.

The study indicates an existing condition on the north-bound approach to Grant Street. “The Grant Street (NB) approach is currently operating at LOS E or near capacity as evidenced by the volume to capacity ratio (v/c) of 0.93. This condition is expected to continue through the proposed (2020) action and to 2030 under current growth projections. The associated queue length of 382 is significant since vehicle storage length on Grant Street from the Saw Mill River Parkway to Manville Road is approximately 450 feet. The peak hour traffic conditions on Grant Street will continue to impact the Manville Road/Memorial Plaza/Grant Street intersection. As such, it is suggested that the Village discuss with the NYSDOT the need for a comprehensive review of the signal operation to arrive at a more equitable timing/phasing scheme”[[2]](#footnote-2). It is important to note that, as confirmed by HVEA, this is an existing condition that will not be further impacted by the Manville Road Corridor Improvement and Civic Space project, as no alteration to the northbound approach to Grant Street is proposed. There will be no increase in northbound traffic as a result of this project. The Village and HVEA have notified the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) of this situation, and requested that the timing/phasing scheme be reviewed and adjusted to improve the queuing condition.

Further, the study cites the observation of long queue lengths on the eastbound approach to Wheeler Avenue as a concern. “The observed queue lengths at the eastbound approach to Wheeler Avenue are of concern given the proximity to the Memorial/Manville/Grant intersection… As observed, traffic currently queues on the excess pavement width between Wheeler Avenue and the “slip ramp” with queuing also being accommodated on the slip ramp itself. Traffic operations are also impacted at the Manville/Memorial Plaza/Grant Street intersection with sporadic interruptions to eastbound traffic flow through that intersection”[[3]](#footnote-3). As confirmed by HVEA, this is an existing condition that will not be further deteriorated by the proposed project. HVEA concluded that NYSDOT should be contacted so that traffic signal coordination along Manville Road can be reviewed and adjusted. This will ease the queuing issue, allowing for traffic to more efficiently move through the intersection at both peak and off-peak hours.

The traffic study concluded that “the Level of Service (LOS) analysis for these intersections shows all operating at an overall LOS C or better in both the AM and PM peak hours. The analysis for the “slip lane” removal and replacement with an exclusive right turn lane at the Memorial Plaza/Grant St/Manville Road intersection shows both the AM and PM peak hours LOS and delays almost identical to the current “slip ramp” condition. The LOS for the future 10-year condition is also acceptable”[[4]](#footnote-4). In addition, the study analyzed data from a traffic analysis conducted by RBA Group in July 2007 titled *“Memorial Plaza Intermodal Conceptual Planning Study”.* That study recommended the removal of the Memorial Plaza “slip lane” in order to improve overall traffic flow in the area. In addition, a comparison of the data showed “that since the 2007 study, traffic peak hour volumes have decreased an average of 17.6% in the AM peak hour and 9.1% in the PM peak hour for four of the intersections studied here and in the RBA report. This equates to an approximate 1.7% per year decrease in AM peak hour traffic and 0.9% per year decrease in PM peak hour traffic”[[5]](#footnote-5). The Village engaged an additional consultant, Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc., to provide a peer review of the HVEA traffic study and its findings for the Manville Road at Memorial Plaza intersection. This review confirmed that the peak hours used in the report were appropriate for the purposes of completing the analysis in order to make a determination on potential future operations; and, that the results indicate that these signalized intersections will operate at an acceptable overall Level of Service during both the weekday morning and weekday afternoon peak hours. “It is important to note that the elimination of this slip ramp will reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and in our opinion, improve overall the operational characteristics at this intersection”[[6]](#footnote-6). Based on these findings and all other materials, reports, testimony and other information submitted to the Village Board regarding the project, the Proposed Action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact on traffic conditions.

**Parking Impacts:**

The proposed Civic Space is 0.6 acres in size to be located within the Memorial Plaza Lot, occupying both existing parking spaces and the “slip lane”. The project will lead to the loss of forty-three parking spaces, broken down to twenty-nine permit spaces, twelve 2-hour metered parking spaces, and two additional spaces to be converted to handicap parking.

In an effort to increase parking capacity within the downtown area, the Village has made significant investments to secure parking. In 2011, the Village acquired the former Lane Lot Plumbing Supply property which yielded approximately seventy spaces. In 2018, the Village acquired an eighteen space parking lot at 7 Hobby Street, formerly the parking lot for Pizza Hut. The Village has since converted those spaces to 12-hour metered parking, but has the ability to change these to permit parking in the future.

To further analyze parking, the Village engaged BFJ Planning to study occupancy rates in parking lots around the downtown area. The analysis concluded “that the Village’s current parking inventory can absorb the loss of 43 spaces in the Memorial Plaza area.”[[7]](#footnote-7). The results of the analysis showed that there was always a minimum of 208 vacant spaces in the downtown during the time period studied. Generally, occupancies of 85% to 90% are considered to be at practical capacity. Permit spaces had an average occupancy of 74% with a peak of 78% after 3PM. These occupancy statistics reflect the general feedback provided by the Village’s Parking Enforcement Officer who patrol and monitor all Village owned lots. According to the analysis, of approximately 308 permit spaces, there were always a minimum of 68 vacant spaces.

Although BFJ concluded that the loss of forty-three parking spaces can be absorbed into the Village’s current parking inventory, the analysis by BFJ Planning included recommendations for the generation of more efficient parking utilization. Implementation of these recommendations is not necessary to address the loss of forty-three parking spaces resulting from the project. The recommendations include introducing paid hourly parking in the high-demand permit lots after 3PM when parking is free; replace half of the 3 hour metered spaces in the Manville Lot with permit spaces; move the free employee parking from Memorial Plaza to underutilized lots; and, increasing permit fees in the lots closest to the train station and lowering fees for lots farther away. The Village will continue to work with its consultants to develop optimum ratio of permit to metered parking spaces. In addition, a temporary striping plan is proposed during the first construction season so the majority of the lot can temporarily be used by commuters. The analysis also notes that a proposed mix-use development at 70 Memorial includes excess parking spaces in a subterranean lot to be built by the developer. “The developer has agreed not to assign parking spaces to individual apartment tenants and to lease the vacant daytime spaces to either rail commuters or downtown merchants or employees”[[8]](#footnote-8). A shared parking arrangement would provide additional parking relief in the downtown area.

Based on the parking occupancy analysis and all other materials, reports, testimony and other information submitted to the Board regarding the project, the Proposed Action will not have a significant adverse impact on parking.

**Project Funding/Budget and Construction Phasing:**

The Village has analyzed the impacts of the timing, duration and cost of the Manville Road Corridor Improvement and Civic Space project. The project is broken down into two distinct phases.

The first phase of the project is referred to as the Manville Road Corridor Improvement project, which incorporates the pedestrian safety enhancements on Manville Road, along with the removal of the “slip ramp” and the addition of a signalized right hand turn lane on Memorial Plaza. According to the New York State Department of Transportation’s timeline, the project is expected to begin in the spring of 2020 and be completed in the late fall of 2020. The second phase of the project, known as the Civic Space, is expected to take one full construction season to complete, and it cannot commence until the “slip ramp” has been removed. If both projects were to begin in 2020, the Civic Space construction would stretch into the spring of 2021, which would increase pricing and impact the budget. Furthermore, having both phases under construction simultaneously could minimize opportunities for staging areas and impact quality of life. It was therefore proposed by the Village and its consulting engineers to schedule both phases over two construction seasons. Noise impacts associated with each phase will be limited to temporary impacts generated during construction and there will be no significant noise impacts post-construction.

The Village identified the duration of construction to have the potential to impact the Farmers Market and commuters. The Farmers Market currently utilizes the northern end of Memorial Plaza between April and November each year. During the first construction season, provisions will be made to allow the Farmers Market to continue to operate while the Manville Road Corridor Improvements are being constructed. During the second construction season the Village will work with the Farmers Market to either temporarily relocate the Market elsewhere in the Village or Memorial Plaza. While construction will have an impact to the downtown area, by temporarily accommodating the Farmer’s Market, providing connections to store fronts through construction, and ensuring adequate parking is maintained throughout the Village, the potential impacts have been minimized.

The cost estimate for the Manville Road phase of the project is approximately $2,400,000 with an additional $450,000 for the reconfiguration of the Memorial Plaza parking lot. This phase of the project is supported by $1,510,000 to be reimbursed to the Village via a federal grant administered by the New York State Department of Transportation. The Civic Space phase of the project has an estimated budget of $2,000,000. Both phases will be funded through the issuance of debt within the Village’s General Fund.

A financing strategy was developed by Fiscal Advisors & Marketing, the Village’s financial consultant, to create a short-range and long-range financing plan for both phases. The financing plan incorporates the initial issuance of a Bond Anticipatory Note (BAN) in December of 2019 for the Manville Road phase of the project along with design costs and non-related capital items for a total of $3,361,000. At the conclusion of the Manville Road phase, the federal grant funding of $1,510,000 will be disbursed to the Village and used to pay down the BAN. In December of 2020 a bond will be issued for the balance of the BAN and the cost of the Civic Space phase. The annual debt service costs are projected to be $328,000 over the life of the fifteen year bond[[9]](#footnote-9). The Village’s overall debt is below the U.S. median. Furthermore, the Village’s General Fund debt level is expected to drop approximately $2,400,000 over the next five years. This will decrease the annual debt service expense by $440,000 over this time. Accordingly, the project can be prudently funded via the issuance of debt.

**Fiscal/Budgetary Impacts:**

The loss twelve metered parking spaces in Memorial Plaza are estimated to decrease General Fund revenues by approximately $27,000. The twenty-nine permit spaces expected to be lost will not have a significant adverse impact on revenue, as they are expected to be absorbed within existing permitted lots.

The annual maintenance and operations will add additional expenses within the Village’s General Fund. The maintenance of the grass area is estimated to cost $5,000 per year, while the tree-care expense is expected to be $5,000 per year, although this will not be realized until the trees have matured. Personnel and associated costs for the upkeep and staffing of special events in the Civic Space are projected to cost $20,000 per year. The allocation of funds for events and programs within the Civic Space will be at the discretion of the Village Board, although an initial budget estimate of $20,000 has been presumed. In terms of public safety, the Pleasantville Police Department has recommended placing cameras within the Civic Space. The initial installation cost is estimated to be $5,000.

Based on the foregoing, the Proposed Action will not result in a significant adverse impact due to construction phasing and will not result in a significant adverse fiscal or budgetary impact.

**Determination of Significance:**

The Village Board of Trustees has analyzed the relevant areas of environmental concern and based on the rationale provided herein as well as the Village Board’s review of Parts 1 and 2 of the Long EAF and all other information and documentation submitted, the Village Board determines that the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

1. HVEA, Manville Road Corridor Improvement Project, Accident Analysis, Page 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HVEA, Manville Road Corridor Improvement Traffic Study (December 2018), Page 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. HVEA, Page 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. HVEA, Page 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. HVEA, Page 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Frederick P. Clark Associated, Inc., Final Traffic Review – Manville Road Corridor Improvement Traffic Study – Manville Road at Memorial Plaza/Grant Street (December 10, 2019), Page 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Georges Jacquemart, Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart, Inc., Parking in Downtown Pleasantville (February 5, 2019), Page 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Jacquemart, Page 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Fiscal Advisors, Estimated Debt Service Schedule, Schedule B (February 5, 2019) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)