



Overview

On May 14th, 2021, NJTPA, the Borough of Keyport (NJ), Monmouth County, and Street Plans installed a 7-day demonstration project at the intersection of Maple Place, Atlantic Street, and Church Street. Demonstration projects help communities test the performance of street redesign concept(s) over a short period of time while also engaging residents in the qualitative benefits or drawbacks of the design. Both help inform longer term planning and investment in delivering more complete streets.

Goals

The goal of this specific demonstration project was to:

- Slow vehicular traffic
- Increase motorist visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Shorten and clarify pedestrian crossings
- Reduce confusion by improving the irregular geometry of the intersection
- Increase safe, continuous access through the intersection for all Henry Hudson Trail users

Project Elements

To accomplish these goals, the following elements were included in the demonstration project:

- Large curb extensions
- A protected, on-street trail segment for bicyclists and other wheeled devices (scooters, skateboards, etc.),
- High-visibility crosswalk and trail crossings

Materials

The above were delivered using low-cost, reversible materials like retro reflective foil-backed traffic tape, movable plastic channelizers, tempera paint, and coroplast/ metal informational signs, MUTCD compliant wayfinding and regulatory signs.

Project Learnings

Overall, the project was well received. Approximately 71% of survey respondents expressed that they “loved” the demonstration project, and a majority responded that the temporary changes made them feel “much safer” walking, biking, and / or driving in the area.

However, it was also clear from observations that trail users would still like a more direct path of travel between the two off-street trail segments. As a result, a future design project should

closely analyze how a more fully developed design response could support pedestrian and bicyclist desire lines. Other learnings include:

Walking + Cycling Movements

- The original draft design for Atlantic north of Maple would have been preferred as it provided a continuation of the bike path and separated pedestrians from other users; it was not sufficient to have bicyclists sharing the existing east sidewalk.
- Physical demarcation is needed to indicate to cyclists moving southwest on the trail, how to best continue on the trail – signage as well as barrier/bollards that prevent cyclists from cutting midblock across Atlantic into the park space.
- Much more cyclist compliance was observed for those traveling northeast (from Maple Place) than southwest.
- The placement of new crosswalks must be considered closely and respond to the selection and location details of other project elements (curb extensions, landscaping, bike facilities etc.)

Vehicular Movements

- Preventing southbound vehicular movements along Church Street, between Maple Place and Atlantic would effectively make that block local-access only for residents and visitors to the building located between Church and Atlantic, should it be occupied again. This would further calm traffic and reduce conflicts with trail users and those operating motor vehicles.
- Another option would be to transform Church and Atlantic into one-way pairs. Wider sidewalks and/or protected bike lanes could then be installed if extended to Front Street / 1st Street, linking downtown Keyport with neighborhoods to the south and Keyport's school campus.

Public Space

- The park-like space on the north side of the intersection, between Church Street and Atlantic, is an opportunity to add physical programming and landscape enhancements

Borough / County Capacity

- Demonstration projects were new to both Monmouth County and the Borough of Keyport. Delivering the project built comfort with the process and an understanding of the resources required to pull off an effective demonstration.

Next Steps

The Henry Hudson Trail is a busy and well-loved recreational and transportation amenity for residents and visitors alike. It's clear that the intersection of Maple Place with Atlantic and Church Street is deficient for all users. The demonstration project tested some possible improvement concepts, which can be further advanced in the short-term by making use of the learnings gleaned from the demonstration project and a more robust but still temporary palette of materials. This could include traffic paint, vertical delineators of some type, and signage. Future pilot or interim configurations could be considered as an opportunity to further refine the intersection's permanent re-design. Funding for that effort could come from the County's current TAP grant.

Moving forward it will be important to determine how to best route Trail users through this complex intersection. The future placement of crossings as well as more vertical treatments like raised intersections/speed tables could be considered in the long-term redesign, thus allowing more fluid movement of users and requiring people driving to slow down and share the intersection with pedestrians and cyclists as they cross from one side of the trail to the other. Such long-term investments should also incorporate any changes to the vehicular movement network as well as improving public open space in the form of a small pocket park.