

## **VI. SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

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**A. Introduction**

A Section 4(f) Statement is prepared when a federally-funded or federally-administered transportation project proposes using land from a publicly owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic site of national, state or local significance.

This Section 4(f) Statement has been prepared for the historic resource that would be directly impacted by the project proposed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) in Newark along First Street between Sussex Avenue and West Market Street, namely 400-406 Central Avenue, which has been deemed by the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (United States Code, Title 49, Section 307), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and NJDOT may not approve the use of land from a publicly-owned park, recreation area or wildlife/waterfowl refuge, or any historic site, unless a determination is made that:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the property; and
- The proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR 771.135)

The word “use,” as is stated in this analysis occurs when:

- Land from a Section 4(f) property is acquired for a transportation project, referred to a “direct taking;” or
- The proximity impacts of the transportation project on the Section 4(f) site, without acquisition of land, are so great that the purposes for which the Section 4(f) site exists are substantially impaired, known as “constructive use.”

The following sections, drawn from earlier chapters of the Draft Environmental Assessment, describe the proposed project location; the Section 4(f) resources; the feasibility and prudence of alternatives that would avoid Section 4(f) resources; and describe the planning efforts to minimize any potential impacts on Section 4(f) resources.

**B. Description of the Proposed Project**

## **1. Project Location and Existing Conditions**

The proposed project is located in the central part of the City of Newark, and provides access from the regional highway system to the city's Central Ward, including the University Heights and Science Park neighborhoods. The project corridor provides direct access to the Roseville neighborhood, and indirect access to the Central Business District (CBD) and other portions of the City from Route I-280. Considered part of the Roseville neighborhood in Newark's Central Ward, the project area contains a mix of low to medium density residential properties comprised mostly of two to four unit structures, as well as service and retail commercial, institutional, and light industrial properties. Several multifamily structures are located throughout the project area, including two high-rise structures on the south side of West Market Street. A significant number of the residential structures are old and in need of repair, and many lots have been cleared. In addition, several dilapidated and abandoned residential structures are scattered throughout the project area. The community has promoted plans to construct low-density residences within the project area by the private sector. Recently, new housing has been constructed particularly along Second Street and along the east side of First Street. The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is located to the southeast of the project corridor.

Central Avenue and West Market Street, which cross the project corridor, provide a mix of retail commercial services to the community as well as access to the Newark CBD and neighborhoods to the west of the project area.

## **2. Proposed Project**

A detailed description of the project is provided in Section III.B of this Environmental Assessment.

### **C. Need for the Proposed Project**

Detailed information about the project purpose and need is provided in Section II.B of this Environmental Assessment.

### **D. Description of Section 4(f) Resources**

The proposed project would have an adverse effect on one Section 4(f) resource: 400-406 Central Avenue, which the SHPO has deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **1. 400-406 Central Avenue**

The proposed University Heights Connector would require the acquisition and demolition of 400-406 Central Avenue. The property consists of a four-story, masonry building constructed between 1908 and 1911. The building exhibits the Renaissance Revival style, and is an example of early twentieth century, urban commercial development in Newark. Although a sign awning and modern plate glass windows currently dominate the first floor façade, the SHPO determined that the building retains sufficient elements of its original design to be deemed eligible for listing in the National Register. These

building elements include stone, ionic pilasters, window lintels, trim, and decorative stone keystones. Not all of these building elements are intact. The building also retains a simple metal cornice between the second and third floors, and an elaborate cornice with lintels and brackets along the roofline, with decorative, vertical projections along the roofline above this cornice (See Exhibit VI-1). The first floor of the building is occupied by several small businesses, while the upper floors are vacant due to their inhabitable condition.

## **2. Other Resources**

In addition, it was determined by the SHPO that the proposed project would have *no effect* on three other resources and *no adverse effect* on one other resource found within the project area. The three resources on which the project would have *no effect* include the Newark Christian School (former Seymour/Essex County Vocational School), 34-50 Third Street, and 394 New Street. It was deemed that the proposed project would have *no adverse effect* on Tuck-it-Away Storage (former Whitehead and Hoag Factory). The Newark Christian School and Tuck-It-Away Storage were found to be eligible for listing in the National Register by a study prepared in 1995 for a roadway improvement project located immediately north of the current project along First Street. The resources at 34-50 Third Street and 394 New Street were found to be eligible in the study completed for the current project.

Additional information about these historic resources is contained in *Survey of Historic Architectural Resources – First Street/University Heights Connector, Volumes I and II*, both prepared by Kise Straw and Kolodner for this project in 2000/2001.

The proposed project may also indirectly impact archeological resources. However, Section 4(f) does not apply to these resources, as they are important chiefly because of what can be learned through data recovery (see Section V.F of this Environmental Assessment).

## **E. Effects on Section 4(f) Resources**

The proposed project includes the widening of the existing right-of-way by approximately 42.5 feet to the west. This would require the acquisition and demolition of buildings along the west side of First Street between Sussex Avenue and New Street, and would, therefore, result in the acquisition and demolition of 400-406 Central Avenue.

Insert Exhibit VI-1

## **F. Alternatives Considered**

During the course of the project study, ten alternatives were considered, all of which would avoid impacts to 400-406 Central Avenue. The alternatives that were considered include the No Build Alternative, widening First Street along the east side of the existing right-of-way, widening First Street along both sides of the existing right-of-way, improving First Street within the existing right-of-way, and relocating portions or all of the through traffic along First Street to either Second Street or Morris Avenue. See Table VI-1 for a comparison of alternatives for the proposed University Heights Connector.

Insert Table VI-1

## **1. No Build Alternative**

The No Build Alternative would require no changes to the current roadway configuration. However, this alternative is not prudent, as it does not meet the demonstrated need for the project.

The No Build Alternative would not address the traffic bottleneck that currently exists along First Street. Under the No Build Alternative, no pedestrian safety improvements would be made to the First Street corridor, and the existing hazardous traffic conditions would remain.

Also, the No Build Alternative would not provide improvements to the local circulation network. As described in this Environmental Assessment Section II.B, Project Need, the First Street corridor provides important access to the University Heights neighborhood, the CBD, and other parts of Newark, and it is, therefore, necessary to eliminate the existing substandard traffic conditions. This is not a prudent and feasible alternative.

## **2. Widen First Street Along the East Side of the Existing Right-of Way**

Widening First Street to the east would provide a similar cross-section, operational and geometric configuration as that provided by the Preferred Alternative. This alignment is shown in Figure VI-1, and a typical section of the alternative is shown in Figure VI-2. Widening First Street along the east side of the right-of-way would provide a Level of Service, corridor operations, and traffic safety similar to the Preferred Alternative, given its similar geometric and operational design. Pedestrian operations would be similar to the preferred alternative as well. In addition, a portion of the proposed Newark Greenway Bikeway Project would be shifted to the east side of First Street.

This alternative would have the following impacts:

- Nearly 40 percent of the frontage along the west side of the existing corridor is owned by, or soon to be dedicated to, public entities (either the State of New Jersey or the City of Newark). In contrast, only one property on the east side of First Street, with about 25 feet of frontage, is currently owned by the City of Newark, according to latest available property ownership records.
- The easterly widening would require the acquisition and demolition of two newly constructed (circa 2001 – 2002) two-family buildings (with a third building proposed) south of Dickerson Street.
- This alternative would require the acquisition of the recently rehabilitated (circa 1997) Modern Sanitation Systems Building located at 393 Central Avenue. This office building is occupied by several businesses providing a significant employment opportunity in this economically distressed area. Approximately 90 people are employed by businesses located in this building.



**Insert Figure VI-1**

**Insert Figure VI-2**

- This alternative would require the acquisition of the C. Patti Metal Finishing Plant (27 First Street), with 8 employees, which is suspected to contain hazardous materials requiring special treatment. Actions necessary to address the hazardous materials issues at this site would likely complicate the property acquisition and construction processes, thereby increasing the cost of the project and extending the time for its implementation.
- This alternative would require the acquisition of the Checkers Restaurant site at First and Hartford Streets. This business has 43 employees, of which 35 reside in Newark; many within the surrounding residential neighborhoods. According to statements made by representatives of Checkers Restaurant, this restaurant is the most profitable operation of a group of restaurants, and its loss could put the company's full staff of 325 employees in jeopardy of losing their jobs.
- NS Stores, a variety store that reopened in April 2002 under new management, would be displaced entirely under this alternative. The business employs 20 persons.
- The alignment for this alternative would require the acquisition of a portion of the Tuck-It-Away Storage Property. Figure VI-1 shows that the roadway alignment could be designed to avoid impacts to the actual building on the site, but doing so would affect the residential properties along the west side of First Street between Dickerson Street and Sussex Avenue, as well as the Supernatural Deliverance Revival Tabernacle Church. The alignment would reduce the depth of the property along the west side of the Tuck-It-Away building, thereby adversely impacting this site, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

In summary, this alternative would involve the displacement of 10 dwelling units and 7 businesses with about 170 employees. Relocation of the businesses displaced by a east side widening of the existing widening (C. Patti, Checkers, Modern Sanitation, NS Stores) would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve within the immediate neighborhood. The displacement or relocation of jobs from this neighborhood would pose a hardship to employment in the local community. Many of the displaced jobs are at the entry level, unskilled, or semi-skilled positions, which are important to the economic well being of the community. The community disruption caused to minority and low-income employees found within the project area would be quite severe. On this basis, this alternative is considered not feasible and prudent.

### 3. West-East Shift Alternative

The West-East Shift Alternative would provide a narrowed cross section through the intersection of First Street with Central Avenue by rotating the alignment about 15° counter-clockwise from the existing First Street alignment. This rotation allows a five-lane cross section to pass between the Modern Sanitation Systems Building and the Section 4(f) resource (400-406 Central Avenue) without requiring acquisition of either building. This alignment rotation requires shifting the connector alignment from the west side of the corridor north of Central Avenue to the east side of the corridor south of Central Avenue. This alignment is shown in Figure VI-3, and a typical section of the alternative is shown in Figure VI-4.

However, this alternative does not meet the project needs in the following respects:

- Lacks a raised median at Central Avenue to separate opposing traffic along turning lanes.
- Provides a narrower median width throughout the project area.
- Reduces stopping sight distance at the approaches to Central Avenue.
- Narrows sidewalk widths at the intersection of First Street and Central Avenue.
- Lacks or provides a narrower refuge area for vehicles turning at the intersection of First Street and Central Avenue.
- No provision for a separate continuous bikeway.

The reduced median width will lessen the size of the mid-intersection refuge area within which cars await to turn, and the narrowed corner sidewalks, lack of medians and shared bike/pedestrian use at Central Avenue will significantly reduce the size and safety of crosswalk refuge areas. With the constraints at the Central Avenue intersection, a section of the proposed Newark Greenway Bikeway Project between Central Avenue and New Street would be relocated along the east side of the corridor. Bicyclists would cross both Central Avenue and the University Heights Connector at this intersection, requiring the use of narrowed corner refuge areas (southwest or northeast corners) between crossings.

This alternative would have the following impacts.

- Impaired pedestrian and bicycle safety resulting from reduced width of sidewalks at the busy Central Avenue intersection.
- Impaired vehicular safety resulting from the loss of physical separation between opposing movements, and the reduced size of the mid-intersection refuge area, at the Central Avenue intersection.
- Compromises the “Gateway” aspect of the corridor, which is seen by city representatives as an important streetscape amenity for suburbanites seeking access to city arts, business, sports, recreational, educational, and health care institutions.

Insert Figure VI-3

Insert Figure VI-4

- Displaces the C. Patti Metal Finishing Plant. This site is suspected of having hazardous materials issues requiring special treatment, which in turn could complicate acquisition and construction processes, thereby slowing implementation.
- Requires the acquisition of the Checkers Restaurant site. This business employs 43 people, many of whom reside within the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Indirectly, the loss of this location could place the jobs of all 325 employees of the New Jersey Metro Burger franchise in jeopardy.

In summary, the West-East Shift Alternative would result in the displacement of 21 dwelling units and 3 businesses with 53 employees. Relocation of the displaced businesses would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve within the immediate neighborhood. The displacement or relocation of jobs from this neighborhood would pose a hardship to local employment. Many of the displaced jobs are at the entry level or are unskilled or semi-skilled positions especially important to the economic well being of this community. Further, the Newark Checkers restaurant bolsters the entire Metro Burger franchise, and its loss would place an additional 282 jobs at risk. As a result, it is not considered a prudent and feasible alternative.

#### **4. Reduced Cross-Section**

This alternative consists of a reduced roadway cross-section (four lanes). It would widen the existing roadway within the existing 66-foot right-of-way, thereby eliminating the need for new right-of-way acquisitions north of New Street. A typical section of the alternative is shown in Figure VI-5.

The existing roadway would be widened to 46 feet between curbs, allowing for two travel lanes in each direction. This configuration would not allow for designated left turn lanes to separate turning vehicles from through traffic, except at West Market Street where additional widening and right-of-way acquisition could accommodate a single southbound left turn lane. Left turning vehicles would be accommodated either through the provision of lead/lag green phases to peak movements, or with turn prohibitions to maximize through lane capacity. This alternative would reduce sidewalks from a nominal 13-foot width to 10 feet. A raised median, sidewalk improvements, street trees, and the Class 1 Bikeway, all elements of the Preferred Alternative that seek to improve corridor safety and create a “visual gateway” to the city, would be eliminated. New signalization would be provided at West Market Street, Central Avenue, Dickerson Street and Sussex Avenue, with interconnection to optimize peak direction operation.

Even with the slight widening and improved signal coordination measures, Level of Service and corridor operations and safety would remain similar to the existing conditions, which are considered unacceptable by city and State representatives. The lack of separate southbound left turn lanes at Dickerson Street and Central Avenue will create blockages of southbound through traffic lanes by turning vehicles unable to proceed due to opposing traffic. Devoting greater time to a protected phase for peak direction flow would worsen cross street or still-sizable reverse peak (northbound AM, southbound PM) traffic operations. This assessment assumes that the curb lane would remain unimpeded by parked cars during peak periods. However, due to the limited availability of off-street parking along First Street, the presence of illegally parked, standing or stopped vehicles along the curbs during peak periods would further constrain capacity. The lack of turning lanes also eliminates any refuge that turning vehicles would require to enhance corridor safety. In summary, the most onerous aspects of existing vehicular operations (congestion, delay, illegal curbside parking, diversions into residential areas, accident rates well in excess of State averages for similar facilities) would remain.

This alternative would reduce the usable width of sidewalks to seven feet, due to the presence of building features that intrude into the existing right-of-way. Pedestrian operations and safety would thus become worse than the existing conditions.

Without the acquisition of property along First Street, it would not be possible to develop a continuous Class I Bikeway along the corridor between Sussex Avenue and New Street as per the plans for the Newark Greenway project. Bicycle use would be relegated to the less safe Class III status, i.e., shared use of curb lanes.

This alternative fails to meet any of the project needs. Specifically, this alternative:



Insert Figure VI-5

- Would not alleviate the current First Street bottlenecks or reduce commuter diversions onto adjacent residential streets.
- Would not provide a north/south boulevard corridor through the Central Ward to improve peak period traffic and emergency access.
- Would not reduce turning movement conflicts.
- Would not enhance pedestrian safety.
- Would not beautify the First Street corridor to provide a visual gateway to the city.

As it does not meet any project needs, this is not a prudent and feasible alternative.

## **5. Reduced Cross-Section with TSM and Reversible Lane**

This alternative would develop the same geometric cross-section as the Reduced Cross Section Alternative. However, it would attempt to overcome the operational concerns of the Reduced Cross Section Alternative through the use of Transportation Systems Management (TSM) or Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies. Specifically, the corridor would utilize overhead lane control signals and variable message signing to operate the University Heights Connector corridor with three travel lanes in the peak direction (southbound in the AM Peak, northbound in the PM Peak). A typical section is shown in Figure VI-6.

During peak periods, one of the travel lanes would be converted into a left turn lane to provide a storage and/or refuge area for turning vehicles. This would be especially important in the southbound direction during the AM peak period, where considerable left turning volumes are noted at Dickerson Street and Central Avenue. Left turns at these locations total about 500 vehicles per hour during the morning peak, and are opposed by 500-600 vehicles in the non-peak direction. This combination of high turning volume opposed by moderately high through traffic volumes requires the provision of a separate left turn storage lane to avoid blocking peak direction through traffic. During the PM peak period, northbound left turning volumes are lower; however opposing through volumes are considerably higher than the opposing volumes during the AM peak. The net result is that a lane reversal for PM peak operations is also warranted. Left turning vehicles would be accommodated through the provision of lead/lag green phases to peak movements. At West Market Street, additional widening and right-of-way acquisition could be necessary to provide left turn lanes. New signalization would be provided at West Market Street, Central Avenue, Dickerson Street and Sussex Avenue, with interconnection to optimize peak direction operation. Overhead lane use control signals and variable message signing would be employed in the corridor.

The provision of the third lane during peak periods would improve peak direction operations. However, reverse direction operations (northbound AM, southbound PM) would be limited to a single travel lane adjacent to a curb, and would deteriorate to levels at or below existing conditions as turning and driver behavior adjacent to the curb would become more difficult. This assessment assumes that the curb lane would remain unimpeded by parked cars during peak periods. The lack of off-street parking would likely result in the presence of illegally parked, standing or stopped vehicles along the curbs during peak periods, further constraining capacity. Devoting greater time to the single off-peak lane would worsen cross street or left-turning volumes. Cross street turns into the single lane off-peak approach would become more difficult, especially for right turns in an urban street grid system with tight curb radii. The net result would be a slight improvement in overall traffic operations and safety as compared to existing conditions, but these improvements would not remedy diversions into the surrounding neighborhoods. This modest level of improvement, when compared to the labor and enforcement-intensive efforts associated with the lane use control signals and the variable message signing, would likely be considered unacceptable by city and State representatives.

Insert Figure VI-6

Widening the roadway within the existing right-of-way would reduce sidewalk widths, resulting in a narrowing of the usable width of sidewalk due to the presence of building features that intrude into the existing right-of-way. Overhead signals and variable message signing associated with this alternative would also impede sidewalk/pedestrian operations. Pedestrian operations would thus be worse than existing conditions.

Without the acquisition of property along the First Street Corridor, a continuous Class I Bikeway could not be developed between Sussex Avenue and New Street. Bicycle use associated with the Newark Greenway would be relegated to the less safe Class III status. During peak periods, bicycles would have to share a single lane with vehicular traffic.

This alternative fails to meet four of the five project needs. Specifically:

- This alternative would not substantially alleviate existing north/south bottlenecks.
- This alternative would not provide a north/south boulevard corridor through the Central Ward, to improve peak period traffic and emergency access.
- This alternative would worsen pedestrian safety along First Street, as it would narrow existing sidewalks while retaining existing encroachments.
- This alternative would not provide a visual gateway to the city along First Street. Rather, widening the roadway and narrowing the sidewalks within the existing right-of-way would further reduce streetscape aesthetics along First Street.

Due to its failure to meet four of the five project needs, this is not a prudent and feasible alternative.

## **6. Limited Widening of the First Street Corridor and Enhanced Cross Streets**

This alternative maintains the existing 66-foot right-of-way of First Street, but widens the cross street approaches to reduce the amount of green time devoted to the cross street movements. By doing this, the amount of green time provided to First Street can be maximized, allowing for additional improvements to the operations of the north-south corridor (see Figure VI-7).

For the purposes of this evaluation, it is assumed that the First Street cross-section for this alternative would replicate the geometrics assumed for the Reduced Cross-Section Alternative.

Widening the roadway within the existing right-of-way would reduce the existing sidewalk width, resulting in a narrowing of the usable width of sidewalk. Pedestrian operations would thus be worse than existing conditions.

Without the acquisition of property along the First Street Corridor, it would not be possible to develop a continuous Class I Bikeway along the corridor between Sussex Avenue and New Street. Bicycle use associated with the Newark Greenway would be relegated to the less safe Class III status.

Traffic studies conducted for the Preferred Alternative indicate that the capacity-constrained intersections along the corridor include the intersections of First Street with Central Avenue and West Market Street. In both cases, parking would be prohibited during peak periods on Central Avenue and West Market Street to maximize approach capacity. Further reductions to green time on Central Avenue and West Market Street needed to increase First Street green time would considerably worsen operations along these two key east-west routes by limiting corridor-wide progression and by requiring their widening to offset these losses in capacity. Green time reductions on Central Avenue and West Market Street are limited by the time necessary for pedestrians to cross First Street and the demands of signal coordination with adjacent signals.

Improving intersection and corridor operations while avoiding corridor-wide property acquisition including 400-406 Central Avenue, would require other property acquisition, especially along one side of Central Avenue and West Market Street. Acquisitions must be of sufficient length to allow the addition of lanes to accommodate queues and tapers at both ends of the added lane. Widening Central Avenue along the north side of its corridor would require the acquisition of most buildings between Second Street and Morris Avenue, including the Modern Sanitation Systems building. Widening West Market Street along its south side would adversely affect existing parking and storefront access for the McDonald's (southwest corner) and the strip mall immediately to the west (a north side widening would have even greater adverse impact). This alternative would result in the displacement of nine businesses, including an office building with approximately 100 employees, and four residential properties.

Insert Figure VI-7

This alternative fails to meet any of the project needs, as follows:

- It would not alleviate current First Street bottlenecks or reduce commuter diversions onto adjacent residential streets since access to the CBD by way of the West Market Street and the Warren Street / Raymond Boulevard corridors would be impaired.
- It would not significantly improve peak period traffic and emergency access due to the lack of right-of-way widening.
- It would not reduce turning movement conflicts because it would not provide turning lanes and storage capacity.
- It would worsen pedestrian safety because it would narrow existing sidewalks and retain existing sidewalk encroachments.
- It would not provide a visual gateway to the city along First Street.

Since it does not meet any of the project needs and results in substantial impacts to minority and low-income employees, it is not a feasible and prudent alternative.



## **7. One-Way Couplet (First and Second Street)**

This alternative would retain the existing First Street right-of-way, but splits existing corridor traffic between First Street and Second Street. Under this scenario, First Street would carry northbound traffic, while Second Street would carry southbound traffic. It is assumed the existing roadway widths would be retained, with curbside parking prohibited along one side during peak use. Left turns would be accommodated through parking prohibitions along the left curb in the direction facing traffic. As shown on Figure VI-8, a possible scenario for connecting southbound traffic with the Second Street corridor would include: 1) cutting through state-owned properties along the west side of First Street just south of Sussex Avenue; and, 2) use of the existing West Market Street grid system at the south end. The establishment of a one-way couplet would require additional signalization at the Second Street intersections with Dickerson Street, Central Avenue and West Market Street, and would include improved channelization for the eastbound to southbound right turn at West Market/Bergen Streets.

Existing land use along Second Street is decidedly different than along First Street. Second Street is a residential street with single-family and multi-family housing along both sides, particularly north of Central Avenue. Current traffic demand along Second Street is under 100 vph during the peak periods, whereas bi-directional peak period demands in the First Street corridor approach 1500 vph.

From an operational aspect, the one-way couplet proposal could be developed to provide operations at a level that satisfies this project need. The split alignment of the couplet would allow for unopposed southbound left turns onto Dickerson Street, Central Avenue and West Market Street, the most critical of all movements during either peak period. At West Market Street, signalization could be simplified to two-phased operation (from the three-phase operation of the Preferred Alternative) or the third phase could be assigned to left turns from Market Street rather than from First and Bergen Streets; either modification would benefit intersection operations.

Pedestrian use of the existing sidewalk areas would be enhanced by the use of brick pavers, crosswalk delineation, decorative lighting and other context-sensitive design elements. However, bicycle operations associated with the Newark Greenway Project would be split by direction to both corridors of the one-way couplet. This would lengthen the southbound bikeway route between Sussex Avenue and New Street by two blocks, relegate bicycle use in the area to Class II (separate striping within the roadway) or Class III (shared vehicular / bicycle use of the curb lane) status, and could lead to “wrong-way” use of the northbound First Street corridor by southbound bicyclists seeking to avoid the additional length.

This alternative does not meet four of the project needs, as follows:

- It would shift the large (currently over 1000 vph) southbound AM peak period movement from the First Street to Second Street, significantly increasing the effects of peak hour traffic upon adjacent residential areas. This is in direct contrast to the first project need, which seeks to “reduce commuter diversions onto adjacent residential streets.”

Insert VI-8

- It would worsen peak and off-peak period emergency access. The one-way couplet would lengthen the trip from the I-280 Connector, just north of the project site, to the State Trauma Center at University Hospital by reducing the directness of the route followed by ambulances and increasing the number of turns necessary to reach the hospital.
- It would introduce high volumes of traffic to a residential street increasing the risk of pedestrian accidents.
- It would not beautify First Street to provide a visual gateway to the city. While brick pavers, decorative lighting, signing and additional street trees could be employed, the gateway concept is based upon a wide landscaped boulevard that would open up to the arterial system serving the Central Ward, particularly Central Avenue, West Market Street and Bergen Street.

This alternative would severely disrupt cohesion of the Roseville neighborhood by the dislocation of 21 residential dwelling units and isolating the dwelling units along First Street between Sussex and Dickerson Streets. If proposed, it would likely result in vehement community opposition to the proposed project. For these reasons, this alternative is not feasible and prudent.

## **8. One-Way Couplet (First and Morris Avenues)**

This alternative would retain the existing width of First Street, but would split existing corridor traffic between First Street and Morris Avenue. First Street would carry southbound traffic, while Morris Avenue would carry northbound traffic. It is assumed the existing roadway widths would be retained, with curbside parking prohibited along one side during peak use. Left turns would be accommodated by localized parking prohibitions employed along the left curb in the direction facing traffic. As shown on Figure VI-9, the most realistic scenario for connecting northbound traffic from West Market and Bergen Streets to Morris Avenue would require the acquisition of the Newark Car Care Center on the triangular shaped block formed by Hartford Street, West Market Street and the extension of Morris Avenue. The roadbed and right-of-way of Morris Avenue extended between Hartford Street and West Market Street until the mid-1990's, when the street was de-mapped and the property was divided and transferred to the adjoining Newark Car Care Center and the Bethany Baptist Church sites by the city. The re-connection to the First Street corridor would be by way of Dickerson Street. The establishment of a one-way couplet would require additional signalization along the Morris Avenue, including the intersections at Dickerson Street, Central Avenue, and possibly New Street. It would also include improved channelization for the turns at the following intersections: West Market and Bergen Streets; Dickerson and Morris Avenues; and, Dickerson and First Streets.

There are several disadvantages associated with this alternative, as follows:

- It requires right-of-way acquisition of active businesses in the vicinity of West Market Street, including the Newark Car Care Center.
- It would enlarge the First / Bergen Street intersection with West Market / Hartford Streets, worsening pedestrian and turning operations.
- It would bring large northbound corridor volumes into conflict with school-related drop-off and pick-up activities near the Bethany Baptist Church.
- Service and delivery vehicles to existing businesses along Morris Avenue would periodically block through traffic along Morris Avenue.
- Northbound widening would be necessary along First Street between Dickerson Street and Sussex Avenue, as the couplet cannot otherwise be extended to Sussex Avenue, requiring acquisition of the multi-family homes along the west side of First Street between Sussex Avenue and Dickerson Street.
- The northerly terminus of this alternative would likely impact upon the frontage to the historically-eligible Tuck It Away Storage property.

This alternative does not meet the project need for a visual gateway to the community, and provides a low level of operational efficiency due to a further enlargement of the already complex intersection at West Market Street. Traffic flow along Morris Avenue will likely be disrupted periodically by service and delivery vehicles. It would also have a direct visual impact on Tuck-It-Away Storage, a historic structure. On this basis, this alternative is not feasible and prudent.

**Insert Figure VI-9**

## **9. Shift University Heights Connector to Second Street**

This alternative would relocate the University Heights Connector to Second Street. It would maintain the connector termini at the intersections of First Street and Sussex Avenue and First Street with Bergen, West Market, and Hartford Streets; the key intersections most convenient to I-280 Connector located at the north end of the University Heights Connector; and, the Bergen Street/UMDNJ area to the south. The concept is shown in Figure VI-10. This concept would widen Second Street through property acquisitions along the west side of the corridor in order to avoid the acquisition and demolition of newly constructed houses on the east side of Second Street between Dickerson Street and Central Avenue, and the industrial building located on the east side of Second Street between Central Avenue and New Street. Further, a west side widening of Second Street provides a better geometric design than an east side widening.

Shifting the project's right-of-way and traffic impacts to the more-residential Second Street would have a substantial adverse impact on the Roseville neighborhood, including an increased risk of pedestrian accidents. Generally, homes in good condition would be demolished. Properties located between First and Second Street including Wendy's Restaurant (near West Market Street) and multi-family homes along the west side of Second Street north of Dickerson Street, would also be acquired to connect the relocated boulevard to its proposed termini, resulting in further impacts. Finally, this alternative does not take full advantage of the properties along First Street already owned by the city and State.

This alternative would result in the displacement of 48 dwelling units (the most of any of the alternatives considered) and 2 businesses, one of them a large industrial property. This alternative would severely impact the community cohesion of the Roseville neighborhood. If proposed, this alternative would likely be vehemently opposed by the community. For these reasons, this alternative is not feasible and prudent.

Insert Figure VI-10

## **10. Shift University Heights Connector to Morris Avenue**

This alternative would relocate the University Heights Connector to the Morris Avenue corridor, about 500 feet east of First Street. It would maintain the proposed connector termini at the intersections of First Street and Sussex Avenue and First Street with Bergen/West Market/Hartford Streets, the key intersections most convenient to the I-280 Connector at the north end and with the Bergen Street/ UMDNJ area to the south.

The concept is illustrated on Figure VI-11. It is assumed this concept would widen the Morris Avenue corridor through property acquisitions along the west side of the corridor. The west side of the Morris Avenue corridor was selected due to the perceived presence of greater areas of open space along the west side of Morris Avenue. The alignment also seeks to lessen impacts to the Bethany Baptist Church and to avoid demolition of several large industrial sites, though other industrial buildings and the Phillips Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church appear to be in its path.

Shifting the project's right-of-way and traffic impacts to the Morris Avenue corridor would have the following impacts:

- The loss of several businesses, including the Newark Car Care Center, Hayes Bus, and NS Stores, would constitute a significant economic loss to this neighborhood. These businesses would be difficult, if not impossible, to relocate within the immediately surrounding neighborhood.
- The acquisition and demolition of the Phillips Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church would have significant adverse social impacts.
- Service/delivery vehicles would periodically block traffic along Morris Avenue.
- The relocated boulevard would not take full advantage of the properties along First Street already owned by State or local agencies.
- Northbound widening would still to be necessary along First Street between Dickerson Street and Sussex Avenue, as the couplet cannot otherwise be extended to Sussex Avenue. This would require the acquisition and demolition of the residences located along the west side of First Street between Sussex Avenue and Dickerson Street.
- The northerly terminus of this alternative would impact the Tuck-It-Away Storage building, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Property acquisition required under this alternative would result in adverse impacts to access, parking, and site operations.

This alternative would result in the displacement of eight businesses with significant employment and eight residential dwelling units. For these reasons, this alternative is not feasible and prudent.



Insert Figure VI-11

In addition, in view of the required acquisition and demolition of 400-406 Central Avenue, the partial acquisition on both sides of the street alternative it is not considered here.

### **G. Measures to Minimize Impact**

Since the acquisition of 400-406 Central Avenue cannot be avoided by the implementation of any of the considered alternatives, it is recommended that this adverse effect be mitigated through the completion of an appropriate program of recordation. Historic American Building Survey (HABS) guidelines for written reports and photographic documentation will be utilized in defining the appropriate program of recordation.

### **H. Summary of Project Coordination**

Coordination and on-going discussions between the NJDOT and SHPO have occurred during the course of the project. That coordination will continue as the proposed project is advanced through the environmental review process. This coordination will ensure that all practical measures to accommodate the proposed project with the minimum impact to the Section 4(f) historic resources will occur, and that all available opportunities and mitigation measures will be considered.

Coordination between the above agencies has served to ensure that all reasonable planning has been accomplished to minimize adverse impacts to these Section 4(f) resources.

Direct consultation and coordination between the FHWA, the NJDOT, and the NJHPO will identify appropriate mitigation measures to address the adverse effect resulting from the proposed project. Mitigation measures agreed upon by FHWA, NJDOT and the NJHPO will be set forth in a Memorandum of Agreement and may consist of documentation to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

### **I. Conclusion**

There are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the acquisition and demolition of 400-406 Central Avenue. The proposed project includes all possible planning to mitigate the adverse impact to 400-406 Central Avenue