

Statement on the Jersey Ave Vehicular Bridge Road at public hearing June 22, 2015

I'm speaking as the president of The Friends of LSP, an all volunteer 27 year old park open space advocacy organization. We realize the Jersey Ave road, after 20 years of conflict, will be built and we feel it has clear benefits if done right. The main negative is the potential for a large increase in commuter traffic on Grand St and downtown as commuters race to the JC Waterfront or the Holland Tunnel.

The Friends main advocacy for the \$10 million road, is for the essential bicycle lane and pedestrian sidewalk on both sides of the road to best serve the public now and the future. The existing footbridge, alone with thousands more people moving to JC, will be insufficient so bridge non-vehicle paths are vital.

We have gotten a pledge from Mayor Fulop's administration and we've heard it (or we'll need to hear it) confirmed tonight by JC officials that the road's approximately 9 foot wide shoulders will definitely become bike and pedestrian paths on both sides of the road. (I urge the city to consult with LSP superintendents and local bicycle advocates regarding the pavement markings.)

In addition to the necessity of non-vehicle paths where the shoulders are, the TA and JC officials must build the safest barrier between the road and the bicycle lane. The Deputy of LSP has provided some specific ideas to JC officials which includes bollards or a low cement traffic wall and we feel plastic reflective pylons are not safe enough to protect bicyclists and pedestrians from bad, speeding or drunk drivers.

We also call for landscaping on ends of the bridge which the TA should help fund. This road will be a major entrance to one of the world's greatest parks and landscaping will help make a statement that the road is a local neighborhood road and not a highway.

JC officials have said that a traffic light will be needed where this road goes into the intersection of Johnson & the cobblestone Audrey Zapp Drive. So this design should include the traffic light.

I will summarize the main road benefits as we see it:

- Police/ fire departments/emergency services are longtime advocates for another way in/out of LSP in case of a disaster & a faster way from neighborhoods to Medical Center
- Road will help strengthen connections/bonds between JC neighborhoods, especially Lafayette and downtown residents but also other neighborhoods. Other than rush hour commuters, the bridge has this major benefit of connecting neighborhoods.
- Lafayette residents have made it clear in the least few years that their quality of life is negatively impacted by commuters, going through their neighborhood (by way of Johnston to Pacific to Grand St) so the road will allow these commuters to get to Grand St. directly
- Road will make it easier for residents from downtown & other neighborhoods to get into and out of LSP more directly.

The main road detriment is that in addition to commuters who currently go to Grand St through the Lafayette neighborhood , there may be many more commuters attracted to this road – coming from Staten Island or Bayonne along Caven Point Road to Philip St or commuters getting off of exit 14B.

I urge Jersey City to start to find funding to follow the recommendation (to JC Redevelopment Authority) of a top planning firm(SSE) of having a few "roundabouts" - traffic circles on Phillip St. to slow down the traffic and discourage commuters from south of the Science Center from using Caven Pt Road and exit 14B.

What is needed is for city, state and TA to urge commuters to use mass transit and leave their cars home, instead of the Jersey Ave road to get to the Holland Tunnel and JC waterfront.

I also urge the Turnpike Authority to get involved in opposing any Gov Christie administration LSP privatization plan such as a commercial amphitheater with regular large concerts, as such plans will cause traffic jams on the Turnpike and at exit 14B and will restrict and block public access to LSP on weekends for those wanting to enjoy the park as an urban open space park.

Thank you for establishing an email address for public comment and for extending the comment period until July 10. The transcript of tonight's meeting and the public comments should be put on your website or the Jersey Ave website for this new road to have the public record available.