



# Frankstown Avenue Signal Design

Public Meeting- Tuesday, 2023 (6:00- 7:30 PM)

Hybrid: In person at the Homewood Healthy Active Living Center  
7321 Frankstown Ave., 15208; and online via Zoom

Meeting Summary and Question/Answer Log

**Project Streets: Frankstown Avenue Corridor-(Murtland to Blackadore Avenue)**

## **Project Team Attendance:**

Rebekkah Ranallo, Senior Manager of Neighborhood Services, Office of the Mayor  
Jan Raether, Infrastructure Engagement Specialist, Office of the Mayor  
Ashley Bryant, Neighborhood Engagement Coordinator, Office of the Mayor  
Laura Tsutsui, Digital Engagement Coordinator, Office of the Mayor  
Khari Mosley, Pittsburgh City Council District 9  
Leila Bouabdellaoui, Project Manager, DOMI  
Sean Stephens, Project Manager, DOMI

## **Project Consulting Team:**

Amanda Purcell, Traffic Planning & Design  
Mike Mudry, Traffic Planning & Design  
Elliott Hair, Traffic Planning & Design (virtual attendee)  
Ryann McMahon, EHoldings  
Janette Williams, EHoldings

## **Public attendance:**

Fifty (50) community members attended in person  
Twelve (12) community members attended online

*Minutes recorded by Project Consulting Team.*

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## **Welcome and Introduction**

Jan Raether, Infrastructure Engagement Specialist in the Office of the Mayor, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda, meeting norms, a safety overview, and a virtual overview. He introduced the project team, as well as City Councilman District 9 Khari Mosley. Councilman Mosley gave a few words, in which he encouraged community members to speak with him, and emphasized the need for community collaboration.

## **Project Background and Purpose**

Leila Bouabdellaoui, Project Manager with the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), presented the project overview. This included a project area map, the specific project intersections, the project purpose, existing conditions of the Frankstown Avenue Corridor, and the project timeline.



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## Traffic Calming on Corridor Projects

Sean Stephens, Project Manager with DOMI, presented the design elements to be used to calm traffic along the corridor. These include raised crosswalks, raised intersections, and curb extensions.

## Proposed Intersection Improvements

Leila continued to present the proposed improvements at each intersection. Leila first reviewed the existing conditions along Frankstown Ave, highlighting the intersection at Frankstown Ave and N Murtland St. The proposed intersections would include new traffic signals and new pedestrian signals, in addition to the traffic calming elements discussed above. Leila covered each intersection and pointed out the differences at each one.

Sean then reviewed the proposed improvements for the unsignalized intersections, which include raised intersections, new pavement markings, sidewalk extensions, and all way stop signs. Sean also discussed the mid-block crossing to be built in front of the Homewood Healthy Active Living Center, which will include a rectangular rapid flashing beacon in addition to a raised intersection, sidewalk extensions, and new pavement markings.

## Next Steps

Leila presented the next steps for the project, which include collecting community input through February 2024, completing the preliminary design plan in late March 2024, develop construction plans beginning in the fall of 2024, and begin of construction in late 2025.

## Questions and Answer Session

At the end of the presentation, Leila explained how the questions and discussion portions of the meeting would proceed. First, there would be time for general questions which were about the project as a whole, and not specific to certain intersections. These questions were taken as a group, including attendees both in-person and online.

- Question:** Will there be lighting installed in front of the center and in the back alley of the center? It's a safety problem in the mornings and at night?

**Response:** There will be lighting installed at all of the intersections; to include in front of the cross walk of the Healthy Living Ctr. The alley way is not part of the project but the request can be forwarded to the City's lighting manager. The city is also doing a larger project that involves lighting being install all over the city.
- Question:** When will construction begin at the center?

**Response:** Construction at the center will begin in Spring of 2026
- Question:** Can a mid-block crossing be placed at the Senior building, between Murtland and Homewood Avenue (near Homewood House)? This will improve bus access for seniors to cross back and forth to their bus stops and will be traffic calming.

**Response:** This is the kind of feedback that the project team wants to hear, please let us know where there are additional needs, and we can look to see if they can be incorporated into the project.
- Question:** Why does construction take so long?

**Response:** Final design will begin the Fall of 2024 and will take a year for completion. Construction will start December of 2025.



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5. **Question:** Has funding already been allocated for the project?

**Response:** Funding has been allocated for this project through a federal grant. Federal grants usually take longer to receive.

6. **Question:** Have you reached out to local architects and engineers of color and indigenous? And how can contractors reach out to say they are interested?

**Response:** The procurement dept would better be able to answer this question, but the City has a DBE goal. Every contract issued by the City must show its intention to meet the goal. Additionally, the Mayors Office will be initiating a citywide newsletter. Procurement opportunities will be included in the newsletter.

7. **Question:** What is the purpose of the curb extensions and is it dangerous for pedestrians and cars?

**Response:** The purpose of the curb extensions has a 3-fold purpose (1.) more space for pedestrians; (2.) they increase sight lines by eliminating parked vehicles from being too close to the corner and allowing pedestrians sidewalk space to project out into the parking lane(3.) it encourages slower turns (a fire truck was used as an example to make sure there would be enough space for all types of vehicles to make a turn).

8. **Question:** What is being done with the existing utility wires hanging overhead, will they be left the way they are or put underground?

**Response:** Utility wires will remain overhead; some traffic signal wiring will go underground

9. **Question:** Does the budget include greenspace and landscaping?

**Response:** The budget for greenspace and landscaping is pending as it is not in the original design scope of work; this is only the preliminary stage, which may allow for a budget in the future. Opportunity for landscaping and planters on the sidewalks as a whole can be explored during final design.

10. **Question:** The sidewalks across the street from the center are in unsafe and horrible condition, is that in the budget?

**Response:** There will be some improvements to the sidewalks, but they will not go the entire way of the corridor. There is a "Closing the Gaps for Sidewalks" grant, it is just a matter of when the funds will become available.

11. **Question:** How can we get a hard copy of the presentation and how long will comments be taken?

**Response:** The center can be provided with a copy of the presentation and print for anyone requesting a copy. There is also an EngagePGH page to review the presentation and keep up-to-date on the project. Comments and feedback are being accepting until February of 2024.

12. **Question:** Has the decision already been made about the project? Is anything we say going to affect the outcome and decisions that have already been made?

**Response:** This is just preliminary design, and the project team wanted to show the community something to react to. The designs thus far have been determined by data. Additional comments and inputs are welcome.



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13. **Question:** How did you identify and select these specific intersections, was it because of the safety?  
**Response:** The techniques at each intersection as presented were based on safety and traffic volumes.
14. **Comment/Request:** There is an immediate need for cameras outside the center; we need to keep our precious seniors here safe. I did some research, and there are camera's at business all along this street.  
**Response:** Cameras are not a part of the scope. Rebekah is reaching out to the appropriate parties for that request.
15. **Question:** does this project use community block grants?  
**Response:** No, at this time, the project does not use community block grants.
16. **Question:** Will the center be closed during construction?  
**Response:** No
17. **Question:** Parking will be an issue once construction begins; can we park in the coliseum parking lot?  
**Response:** DOMI and the City will be happy to coordinate parking.
18. **Question:** Where is all the data coming from and who is making the decisions that this is the best thing for the community?  
**Response:** The project looked at the Homewood Mobility Plan to make initial decisions.
19. **Online Comment:** I don't think having a four-way stop at Frankstown and N. Braddock is an improvement when it comes to safety. Please consider keeping the traffic signals there.  
**Response:** The designs were based on data collected along the corridor which respond to how much traffic travels through each intersection and a review of the crash history. The proposed intersections improvements include all way stop control, curb extensions and raised intersections (like a speed hump through the intersection) to slow traffic and increase safety more than a traffic signal would.

### Specific Intersection Comments/Questions (in-person)

After the general questions, in-person attendees could visit boards detailing the recommendations for each intersection. Representatives from DOMI, the Office of the Mayor, and the consulting team were available to answer questions.

#### Board #1 – Mike Mudry

1. **Question:** General Question on the timeline – why does it take so long?

**Response:** I mentioned that the funding comes from a Federal Program called CMAQ – Congestion Management and Air Quality. This funding is primarily for improvements that improve air quality and reduce congestion.

No other specific questions related to the intersections on my board – Murtland or Lang

#### Board #2 – Leila Bouabdellaoui

No specific comments received on board #2.

#### Board #3 – Sean Stephens



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1. **Question:** Traffic calming on Frankstown at Oakwood – can this be accommodate through the project by my business?

**Response:** We cannot install traffic calming on every block of Frankstown given the street context but will review this specific location for crash data and determine if feasible at this location.

### Board #4 – Amanda Purcell

1. **Question:** why does the timeline to construction take so long?

**Response:** The City began preliminary engineering prior to being awarded the CMAQ grant for final design and construction. Preliminary engineering was expedited and funded by City budget. Between completion of public comment and beginning of final design, the City will go through the formal PennDOT process to award the next two contracts. The process will set final design beginning in the fall, with one year of work and construction can start three months after bidding which leads to a December 2025 Construction start. Concrete work would begin in the following Spring, 2026.

### Specific Comments/Questions (online)

Representatives from the consulting team facilitated the online discussion portion of the meeting, where they shared images of the intersection improvements, took comments, and answered questions. The following comments and questions were collected:

1. **Online Question:** Are there any considerations you like us to consider in regards to our input to ensure they are effectively utilized? How are you weighing input in general?
2. **Request:** Melinda McCormick Director of the Healthy Active Living Centers asks that any and all email updates please be sent to her so that she can keep the staff and senior posted (melinda.mccormick@pittsburgh.gov)  
**Response: Noted**
3. **Online Question:** How does DOMI address issues with community requests and internal best practices? (i.e. disagreement over stop signs and traffic lights?), as there may be some cultural competency missing within the internal process.
4. **Online Comment/Request:** In driving around this area for 10 years, I see more people more recently blowing through stop signs along Frankstown vs. traffic lights. I think knowing the data on accidents would be good to know.  
**Response:** Thank you for your comment, that is great feedback and we are going to talk about how we can be more transparent around traffic engineering decision making on signals vs. stop signs. In short, it has to do with crash data.
5. **Online Comment:** I'm still not clear on what is covered and what isn't in the project. There are many compounding issues with this location.  
**Response:** There can be opportunities in the future for individual projects to work together in one area. While some elements may not be in the scope of this project, there may be other projects or organizations that can meet other



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needs.

6. **Online Comment:** I look forward to seeing that data. Thank you.
7. **Online Question:** When will the next meeting on this project be held and will there be feedback and answers in response to and based on what was asked at this meeting?  
**Response:** Guests were provided with contact information for the project manager.  
(Leila.bouabdellaoui@pittsburghpa.gov)
8. **Online Comment:** It's unfortunate that the center was not initially part of this project and just added in. We are so glad this project has finally come to fruition. We have seen so many accidents over the years and some of our seniors were almost hit.
9. **Online Comment/Request:** At the next meeting, I would be interested in hearing more about the coordination with other efforts to improve the safety of this corridor, such as cameras, more lighting, etc. This would make the project more comprehensive in terms of safety. Things as they stand at this point seem a bit too piecemealed to have the most benefit. I guess the budget is in play here, but we don't know what that is.
10. **Online Question:** Given that the City has ownership on the shelters, it would be advantageous to add bus shelters, particularly at the intersections that will ultimately be widened.  
**Response:** DOMI will work with PRT to determine what kind of transit infrastructure is appropriate at these locations.
11. **Online Question:** What work is being done for stormwater mitigation?  
**Response:** While stormwater management has not been designed yet, it is certainly a part of the project and will be designed and incorporated in future phases of the project.
12. **Online Question:** Does this project consider increased loads which may come from projects in the area?  
**Response:** The traffic lights can be adjusted over time for different loads of traffic.
13. **Online Question:** If the Center wasn't initially in the plans, what factors were used to add it in?  
**Response:** This is a good example of where community input influenced the plan. The mid-block crossing was incorporated because it was asked for, serves a need, and can be accommodated into the scope and budget of the project.

### Comment Cards

Comment cards were shared at the beginning of the meeting for attendees to take notes, remember questions, or to return comments and questions to the project team. Below are the cards which were returned to the project team.



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14. **Comment:** Frankstown and Braddock Corner, children area of play safety issue. Traffic lights need to always be in areas near children, near parks, and near busy streets. Stop signs are not always safe, people are distracted, not coming to a full stop, in a hurry, on their cell phones, or being careless.
15. **Comment:** Did anyone check the pedestrians on these corners? Most people don't want to stop. They don't want to be approached by [active drug users] and [sex workers].
16. **Comment:** There must be a traffic light at Braddock because of the park. Yes, or no?
17. **Comment:** How about working with [PRT] to install more bus shelters? Take this opportunity to fix sidewalks and improve public facility infrastructure so as to more easily accommodate new businesses.
18. **Comment:** Very informative. Perhaps a little more background on how decisions are formed about such projects including the expertise (architecture/engineering, etc) and then an emphasis on how to integrate the concerns and suggestions of residents and other stakeholders.
19. **Comment:** Will this place overhead wires underground? Is there a plan for adding trees and greenery at the intersections?