

**ROUTE 139 – REHABILITATION OF THE HOBOKEN AND CONRAIL VIADUCTS**  
 Contracts 1,2 & 3  
**MINUTES OF MEETING – NOVEMBER 23, 1999**  
 Frederic R. Harris, Inc.

<i>Meeting Date</i>	11/23/1999	<i>Type</i>	Internal	Team	Progress	Other
<i>Date of Issuance</i>						X
<i>Attendees</i>	Henry Cole	NJDOT		Ernest Hutchins		F. R. Harris
	Larry Vogel	NJDOT		John Kovar		
<i>Location</i>	Jersey City Planning Board					

- 1) Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to update the Jersey City Planning Board as to the project status. Henry Cole presented the project to the Planning Board and answered questioned as needed. The relevant sections of the transcript from this meeting are attached.

The above represents the understanding of the writer. Please advise of additions/corrections as soon as possible.

Submitted:  
**FREDERIC R. HARRIS, INC.**

Ernest R. Hutchins  
 Project Manager

cc:  
 Attendees  
 Task Leaders  
 Project File (Minutes)

PLANNING BOARD  
CITY OF JERSEY CITY  
COUNTY OF HUDSON

In the Matter of: TRANSCRIPT  
ITEM 8 - N.J.U.L. Section 40:55D-31 OF  
REVIEW OF CAPITAL PROJECTS  
PRESENTATION OF STATE HIGHWAY 139 : PROCEEDINGS  
Improvements between Kennedy Blvd.:  
and Jersey Avenue

Thursday, November 23, 1999  
30 Montgomery St., 8th Fl.  
Jersey City, New Jersey  
commencing at 6:27 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

JEFFREY KAPLOWITZ, Acting Chairman  
WILLIAM BROWER, Vice-Chairman  
MELISSA HOLLOWAY, Commissioner  
SCOTT SEALE, Commissioner  
CHRISTOPHER SPALIN, Commissioner

APPEARANCES:

ANTHONY ALOI, ESQUIRE  
Attorney for the Board

BRIDGET LEONARDOTTI,  
Certified Shorthand Reporter

PRECISION REPORTING SERVICE  
Certified Shorthand Reporters  
1178 Fairfield Road  
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807  
(908) 685-2227

1 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
2 First agenda is number 8, MLUL Section  
3 40:55D-31, review of capital projects.  
4 Presentation of State Highway 139  
5 improvements between Kennedy Boulevard and  
6 Jersey Avenue presented by New Jersey  
7 Department of Transportation.  
8 Gentlemen, I thank you very  
9 much for coming.

10 MR. COLE: Thank you for  
11 having us.

12 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
13 You're the only state agency that actually  
14 follows the law.

15 MR. COLE: Henry Cole, project  
16 manager with the Department of  
17 Transportation. C-o-l-e.

18 We were invited to come here  
19 by Bob Cottrell -- Cotter. I'm sorry. Bob  
20 Cotter, Planning Board. Generally we don't  
21 come to the Planning Boards, as we spoke  
22 about, but we wanted to do in terms of Jersey  
23 City whatever they preferred us to do in this  
24 presentation. We have made presentations to  
25 the mayor's office and we have made

ALSO PRESENT:

ROBERT COTTER, Director  
City Planning Division  
MARYANN BUCCI-CARTER, Supervising Planner  
City Planning Division  
MICHELE ALONSO, Principal Planner  
City Planning Division  
DOUGLAS GREENFELD, Principal Planner  
City Planning Division  
JEFFREY WENCER, Principal Planner  
City Planning Division  
HENRY T. COLE, DOT  
ERNEST R. HUTCHINS, P.E.  
Frederic R. Harris, Inc.  
JOHN KOVAR, P.E.  
Frederic R. Harris, Inc.

To John Kovar  
# 732 636  
6338

1 presentations to the general public. And  
2 we're making another presentation in December  
3 in the general information center. We've  
4 been to the Hudson County Planning Board with  
5 this project. I'd like to present it to you  
6 briefly, as I know you have a very busy  
7 agenda here tonight.

8 The State Highway in Jersey  
9 City is known as Route 139 and it was built  
10 in the '20s and it now needs rehabilitation.  
11 It is concrete on top of steel, and you know  
12 if you've driven through here some of the  
13 concrete is wearing away. We have three  
14 contracts that will rehabilitate the entire  
15 structure.

16 The first contract, which is  
17 known as contract number 1, is actually under  
18 construction as we speak. It's been under  
19 construction since June and it calls for the  
20 removal of concrete off the steel under the  
21 12th, 14th Street Viaduct and the Conrail  
22 Viaduct. That construction is ongoing. You  
23 may have heard the hydraulic equipment  
24 removing concrete. We're removing it with  
25 hydro water pumps.

1 Contract number 2, that  
2 contract's under construction, by the way.  
3 It's due to be completed in March of 2001.  
4 Followed by contract number 2, which will be  
5 awarded in May of 2003, and the construction  
6 will be completion in 2005, and that will be  
7 the rehabilitation of the 12th and 14th  
8 Street and Conrail Viaduct where we're  
9 removing concrete today, the rehabilitation  
10 of those structures.

11 Contract number 3, which is  
12 this blue portion of the drawing, which is  
13 known as the State Highway, that will be the  
14 rehabilitation in its current -- it will be  
15 rehabilitated in its current position. That  
16 contract is the largest and the final one.  
17 It will be awarded in June of 2004 and  
18 construction will be complete in 2007.

19 Each one of these projects --  
20 contract number 1, the department is putting  
21 nine million dollars into that contract, 88  
22 million dollars into contract 2, 109 million  
23 dollars in contract 3 for a total of 206  
24 million dollars to completely rehabilitate  
25 the 12th, 14th Street, State Highway and

1 ongoing. They're running parallel paths and  
2 they don't finish until a certain time.  
3 They're very extensive projects.

4 COMMISSIONER SEALE: How does  
5 this affect the Bergen Arches plan?

6 MR. COLE: Totally separate  
7 from that.

8 COMMISSIONER SEALE: The  
9 contract 3 phase, what's that going to look  
10 like? There's been a lot of controversy in  
11 the neighborhoods there with bridges, over  
12 the streets. What's the physical --

13 MR. COLE: It's going to look  
14 like it looks today. We're going to rebuild  
15 it in kind. It's basically going to look  
16 that way. It's going to have some additional  
17 enhancements to it. We're making some safety  
18 improvements and we're making -- we're adding  
19 some trees along the street. We have a  
20 picture. I'll be glad to show you if you  
21 have time for that. We're adding some  
22 historic lighting. And what we're going to  
23 essentially have is the roadway as you know  
24 it today with improvements, but in the same  
25 place. Safety improvements, traffic

1 Conrail Viaducts.

2 I have a much larger, more  
3 detailed presentation, but I don't want to  
4 present that unless you want that, but I can  
5 answer some questions.

6 COMMISSIONER SEALE: I have a  
7 question. Why is there a two-year lag time  
8 between contract 1 and contract 2? You've  
9 completing the first phase in March of 2001  
10 and you're not starting the second until May  
11 of 2003.

12 MR. COLE: Because each one  
13 of those contracts have independent schedules  
14 that they're working on. They're required to  
15 go through -- it's not a matter of one  
16 following the other. It's a matter of  
17 they're all ongoing right now in what we call  
18 "stroke" development. They're being  
19 developed as -- sketches have been developed  
20 and the contracts are being progressed  
21 through that entire phase. It takes that  
22 much time to get it finished.

23 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Two  
24 years just to get it. . .

25 MR. COLE: But they're

1 improvements, lighting improvements.

2 COMMISSIONER SEALE: But that  
3 won't be completed until 2007.

4 MR. COLE: That is correct.  
5 All these projects, they don't necessarily  
6 depend on each other to be completed.  
7 They're all running their own courses right  
8 now. They are -- these projects are fully  
9 funded through the phase that we're doing  
10 right now.

11 COMMISSIONER SEALE: This is  
12 already fully funded, this 206 million?

13 MR. COLE: The construction  
14 is not fully funded because we don't fund out  
15 that far, but it's identified and this  
16 project has -- we know that the safety  
17 profile of this project needs to be addressed  
18 so we are moving forward with the project.  
19 It's a real project.

20 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
21 How are you dealing with the grills, the open  
22 grills?

23 MR. COLE: I'm going to  
24 introduce you to Ernie Hutchins, who is  
25 taking care of that portion of it, and we are

1 dealing with that issue.

2 MR. HUTCHINS: The grill right  
3 now, that open area between the eastbound and  
4 westbound roadway, there's a wire mesh to  
5 take care of that. During the construction,  
6 when we do the deck replacement for the State  
7 Street, we're going to be placing open steel  
8 grate in that area for temporary construction  
9 to maintain traffic through the site, so we  
10 provide no detours. That grate will remain  
11 in place in the final condition. So it will  
12 provide venting for fumes from the lower  
13 roadways, but it will be steel grating to  
14 provide the same kind of protections you have  
15 now.

16 MR. COLE: Have you ever  
17 driven over a bridge where the steel is open  
18 and you can see through to the water, small  
19 openings? It will be like that. That kind  
20 of very close grating, steel permanent.

21 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Contract  
22 3, that three-year span, what's going to  
23 happen to the local traffic when you're  
24 renovating that roadway? I mean, what can  
25 you expect?

1 night what will happen? You'll be doing the  
2 construction. You'll still be --

3 MR. HUTCHINS: Because of the  
4 staging, we're going to be providing one lane  
5 of traffic east and westbound at night during  
6 the construction. Because of the reduced  
7 traffic volumes, we'll be able to close down  
8 those lanes in order to do the rehabilitation  
9 and deck replacement. And we'll get to the  
10 cross streets that go north and south. And  
11 there will be some -- as we work on those  
12 streets, we won't be closing all of them, but  
13 as we work on the individual intersection,  
14 we'll be closing those particular streets.

15 MR. COLE: There will not be  
16 any detours with this project.

17 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
18 Any other questions?

19 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Do you  
20 just have a rendering you can leave with us?  
21 Pictures?

22 MR. COLE: We do have a  
23 rendering. John, can we leave it.

24 MR. KOVAR: I don't know if we  
25 can leave it. We need it for next week.

1 MR. COLE: Ernie, I think  
2 you're better qualified to answer this  
3 question.

4 COMMISSIONER SEALE: What do  
5 you anticipate for the local traffic in the  
6 contract 3 phase when you're rehabbing that  
7 roadway? What do you envision for the  
8 traffic and all that?

9 MR. HUTCHINS: The discussion  
10 is primarily going to -- it's been done in  
11 stages, three stages, but the local traffic  
12 in the upper level, it's going to be done --  
13 construction's going to be done at night to  
14 allow for open traffic during the day. It's  
15 going to be opened up for traffic during rush  
16 hour and during the main AM and PM peak  
17 times. Construction will be performed by  
18 removing sections of the deck and putting in  
19 precast segments to minimize the time of  
20 construction and also to provide for traffic  
21 in the morning. So basically you should not  
22 see any major impact of traffic either going  
23 across State Highway, north and south, or  
24 east-west rush hour.

25 COMMISSIONER SEALE: But at

1 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Can you  
2 send us a copy?

3 MR. COLE: Absolutely.

4 MR. COTTER: I just have a  
5 question. One of the staff members reminded  
6 me to make sure. We're using -- any covers  
7 on catch basins at the curbs will be  
8 bicycle-friendly?

9 MR. COLE: That's standard  
10 DOT. That's the way it will be treated.  
11 Absolutely.

12 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Do you  
13 have like a highway somewhere else that  
14 you're just completing that we can even look  
15 at in the area?

16 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
17 Bring one over to us.

18 COMMISSIONER SEALE: He said  
19 they're standard catch basins. I'm curious  
20 how it will look. I'm on this road every  
21 day. I live on one end. What's it going to  
22 look like?

23 MR. COLE: Would you like to  
24 see the rendering we have tonight?

25 COMMISSIONER SEALE: Yes.

1 MR. COLE: We came prepared  
2 to show you a lot of information, but we saw  
3 your agenda and we know your schedule and we  
4 don't want to do that to you if you don't  
5 have time for that.

6 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
7 We're very happy about that.

8 COMMISSIONER SEALE: And  
9 there's a commitment to a lot of trees and  
10 greenery?

11 MR. COLE: There is. There's  
12 commitment to that and to treat the historic  
13 corridor with some of the lighting  
14 embellishments from the '20s. This type of  
15 finish is the way we see it.

16 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
17 That's interesting. You're bringing up the  
18 curb.

19 MR. COLE: In this area here?  
20 The barrier curb.

21 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
22 Yeah. Very good.

23 MR. COTTER: I don't know if  
24 you pointed it out, but there was a meeting  
25 in the mayor's conference room about four or

1 five months ago.

2 MR. COLE: We did mention  
3 that earlier.

4 MR. COTTER: With a number of  
5 the members of the community surrounding it  
6 as well as staff. And trees came out of that  
7 and period lighting came out of that.

8 MR. COLE: A number of  
9 operational improvements came out of that.  
10 We had fielded questions every place we've  
11 gone and we've addressed every one of those  
12 issues trying to work everything that the  
13 community wants and needs into the project.

14 COMMISSIONER SEALE: That  
15 intersection of Palisade and State Highway is  
16 a disaster, the lighting.

17 MR. COLE: We have  
18 operational improvements at that intersection  
19 that are major changes to the operation of  
20 that and safety issues of that and all the  
21 other intersections, too. We did an entire  
22 study about the traffic movements, not only  
23 of cars, but of pedestrians and people in  
24 this neighborhood and area. We looked at  
25 parking and we looked at all the issues. And

1 then we went out and presented that and then  
2 we adjusted those according to the new  
3 information we got. And if you tell us  
4 something here tonight, we'll look at that,  
5 also.

6 MR. COTTER: I also would  
7 chime in here because DOT -- this is the new  
8 DOT that's actually responding to  
9 communities' concerns.

10 COMMISSIONER SEALE: That's  
11 what I think Bill said.

12 MR. COLE: I've been in DOT  
13 for 30 years, so I'm not sure where the old  
14 stops and new starts.

15 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
16 The new starts that you're actually here  
17 talking to us.

18 MR. COLE: Thank you.

19 MR. COTTER: Bill Beitle (ph)  
20 and I were in grad school together. Seeing  
21 Bill in charge of planning for the state and  
22 DOT makes me very happy. But the community  
23 was concerned about that movement of traffic  
24 on Palisade Avenue to go west on 139. And in  
25 response DOT put in that left-turn arrow so

1 there's a little lead time there that makes  
2 it much safer and much easier to do now.

3 Part of this project cleans up  
4 all of the potholes and dips in the road.

5 MR. COLE: It's all redecked,  
6 resurfaced. What you see in this rendering  
7 is the old surface with the changes on it,  
8 but the resurface will service the deck for a  
9 much better roadway, also.

10 COMMISSIONER SEALE: If you  
11 could just send Bob a copy.

12 MR. COLE: I'll make sure it  
13 gets done, yeah. I'll make sure we send it  
14 out.

15 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
16 Is there any other questions from the Board?

17 COMMISSIONER HOLLOWAY: No.

18 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
19 I'll open it up to any comments from the  
20 public.

21 MR. SINGER: Alan Singer at  
22 256 Ninth Street. S-i-n-g-e-r. A-l-a-n.  
23 Two issues. First with regard to the  
24 movement of pedestrians and bicycles over the  
25 Route 139. Is there going to be any type of

1 an elevated walkway to allow for pedestrians  
2 not to have to interface with the vehicular  
3 traffic?

4 MR. COLE: Not elevated, but  
5 there is going to be additional widths. The  
6 traffic engineer is here, has looked at the  
7 pedestrian traffic and the vehicle traffic.

8 John, maybe you could address  
9 his concerns. MR. KOVAR: I  
10 guess one of the issues that came up very  
11 early was that of Palisade Avenue with the  
12 high school down the road. And that was one  
13 issue that was looked at very closely in view  
14 of pedestrians and that's why we did some  
15 pedestrian counts there and the counts are  
16 very high.

17 Unfortunately, given that an  
18 overpass would have to be about 20 feet over  
19 the road, the length of the ramp to meet  
20 handicap requirements would be somewhere on  
21 the order of about 250 feet long. And when  
22 you get on the north side of the State  
23 Highway, it's very built up. There's a lot  
24 of apartments in that area and there's no way  
25 to accommodate that kind of ramp. So we did

1 the other half.

2 MR. SINGER: Do you know the  
3 approximate square footage of this pedestrian  
4 median?

5 MR. KOVAR: It would be a  
6 typical six-foot-wide sidewalk by -- I don't  
7 know the length, but it's probably somewhere  
8 in the order of about 30, 35 feet long.  
9 There's plenty of storage capacity in that  
10 area for multiple students or people to cross  
11 at the same time.

12 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
13 I'd like to thank the State for coming,  
14 making this presentation to us. It's deeply  
15 appreciated. It's a road that certainly  
16 needs some repair.

17 MR. COLE: We know you're  
18 right about that and thanks for having us.  
19 We appreciate you letting us present to you.

20 MR. SINGER: I have one more  
21 issue and that is the closing of the Arthur  
22 Kill landfill over in Staten Island.

23 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
24 Sir, that's not this issue. The Board has a  
25 policy always to address public comment in

1 look at it, but unfortunately it was not able  
2 to be done.

3 MR. COTTER: Isn't there a  
4 safe haven in the center median for  
5 pedestrians?

6 MR. KOVAR: Right. What  
7 we've done in our plan is right now as you  
8 cross Palisade Avenue, pedestrians don't  
9 really have a place to stop halfway through.  
10 Right now on the eastern side there's impact  
11 attenuators covering the sidewalks. And on  
12 the west side of the intersection it's just  
13 very open. There's a lot of asphalt in there  
14 with a crosswalk that goes from end to end.  
15 And what we're going to do as part of this  
16 project is take away the impact attenuators  
17 by realigning the eastbound State Highway to  
18 line up with the ramp. We no longer need  
19 those impact attenuators. So that sidewalk  
20 will now be free. As well as on the western  
21 side of the intersection, we're going to  
22 create a pedestrian refuge in that area.  
23 There will be a curbed area and sidewalk so  
24 when a pedestrian crosses halfway, that  
25 person will be able to stop and then cross

1 direct relationship to the article that's  
2 being presented and this doesn't really have  
3 to do with that.

4 MR. SINGER: Yes, it does,  
5 because there's 250,000 garbage trucks that  
6 will be going through the night hours  
7 underneath the depressed highway to the  
8 Newark waste recovery facility and also down  
9 to Elizabeth. I don't know if you're aware  
10 of that, but they're intending to use the  
11 depressed highway.

12 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ: I  
13 think that is basically an elected official  
14 issue, not a Planning Board issue. That is  
15 something that has to do with interstate  
16 commerce, the DOT, the state, and local  
17 officials. We are here just to look at the  
18 land use aspect of zoning. I think that you  
19 have to raise that with your elected  
20 representatives.

21 COMMISSIONER HOLLOWAY: Go  
22 down the street to that meeting.

23 ACTING CHAIRMAN KAPLOWITZ:  
24 Thank you very much.  
25 (Whereupon, the hearing on