

**Friends of Liberty State Park May 24, 2007 Public Hearing Position Statement
opposing extension of Jersey Ave. connecting with Phillips St on western side of LSP**

This study had the wrong premise of searching for ways to make it easier for traffic to access downtown Jersey City. This study should have been called, "How to force commuters to get onto mass transit before entering Jersey City." This should have been a Mass Transit-based study and not a commuter in cars-based study. The City should have taken an enlightened 21st century approach and focused on mostly Mass Transit solutions. Commuters coming toward JC should be forced by any legal means necessary to take mass transit, and to park in remote park and rides and as a last resort, be forced to park at the LSP Park and Ride. Building a Jersey Ave. road, except for a one emergency lane next to the LSP LIGHT RAIL STATION Park and Ride parking lot is very irresponsible and mostly serves out of town commuters. It is wrong to cast aside the wisdom of urban mass transit, and not seek the solutions needed to get people out of cars.

The Jersey Ave. extension fails the Public Interest Standard.

The Friends of Liberty State Park, a 19 year old park user advocacy organization is strongly opposed to replacing the Jersey Ave. footbridge with a road that connects with Phillips St. on the western side of Liberty State Park. As we've stated in other meetings, we feel it is common sense and inevitable that gridlock on Phillips St. will cause commuters taking shortcuts onto LSP roads, Pesin Drive, Freedom Way and Zapp Drive. The only traffic entering LSP should be cars whose destination is LSP for the multitude of reasons that people come to use and enjoy this beloved urban haven and sanctuary. Commuters have no business driving into LSP and it would be an obscene crime against Liberty State Park users of the present and future for you to cause this to happen. LSP is essential to the spiritual, mental and emotional health of the people who use this waterfront urban oasis. Many people continue living in JC because of LSP. If the

Planning Dept approves a two lane road on the Jersey Ave footbridge, the planners and elected officials will be harming not only LSP users, but JC itself because such a road will certainly diminish the quality of life of JC residents who seek a peaceful and safe experience in LSP.

The Friends of LSP support the strong need to get commuter traffic off of Pacific St. in the Lafayette neighborhood, and the city has done nothing in the last few years to address this commuter intrusion into the Lafayette neighborhood. There must be strategies that the city and the state can initiate to prevent commuters from entering city streets.

The Friends feels that the Jersey Ave road option will be such a traffic magnet that it would not only harm LSP, downtown neighborhoods, the 1500 school children and school staff who go to Public Schools #3 and #4 and the Learning Community Charter School, and the new Medical Center hospital people near the Jersey and Grand St. intersection, but such a road will lead to such gridlock that the overflow traffic would be cause even more traffic in the Lafayette area than there is now.

Another reason that traffic jams on Phillips St. would have an adverse impact on LSP is that a major LSP goal is to connect LSP to Liberty Science Center. LSP Interior's 200 acre natural area with trails will be one of our nation's largest urban nature Restoration project and a congested Phillips St. will damage that key visual and physical linkage of the park to LSC. The only option that makes sense is the Merseles Center one that would at least relieve some congestion on city streets.

The Friends of LSP are dedicated to protecting the experience and the rights of urban park users to enjoy LSP without rush hour commuters coming through the park at morning and evening rush hours. Millions of dollars of state and federal money have been spent on LSP, which opened in our bicentennial year of 1976.

LSP is an urban haven, oasis, refuge, sanctuary, and escape from urban stress, and urban people come to LSP to experience its tranquility, peacefulness. Commuters rushing through is incompatible with and does certainly impair the public's many unstructured recreation uses of the park. Whether the urban person is a retired senior citizen, a young professional, a city official, or whether a park user of many colors, religions, and age they deserve a commuter-free park.