



COUNTY OF UNION

**Local Concept Development Study for South Front Street Bridge
over the Elizabeth River, City of Elizabeth, Union County, NJ**

**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Wednesday, March 19, 2014
 TIME: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 LOCATION: Elizabeth City Hall, Third Floor, Council Chambers
 50 Winfield Scott Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ

ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
Attendees		
Nina	Astillero	Freeport-McMoRan Copper Prod.
Liza	Betz	Union County
Anthony	Bottitta	City of Elizabeth Public Works
Robert A.	Calandra	Elizabethport Boat Basin, L.L.C.
Jorge	Chavez	Elizabeth Fire Dept.
Alan	Coen	Resident, Elizabeth
John F.	Dengel	Construction and Marine Equip.
Paul	Dengel	Construction and Marine Equip.
Connie	DesRochers	Construction and Marine Equip.
A.	Galante	Waste Mgmt (Front St.)
Mike	Kruimer	NJ Committee of ECGA
James	Kura	Lorco Petroleum Services
Daniel J.	Loomis, P.E.	City of Elizabeth Engineering
Charles	Minervino	Resident, Elizabeth
John F.	Papetti, Jr.	City of Elizabeth Public Works
Juan	Pascual	247 Contracting
Jonathan	Phillips	Groundwork Elizabeth
Steven P.	Rinaldi	City of Elizabeth Engineering
Mark	Sompel	Elizabeth Marina
Bruce	Tucker	Front Street Smokehouse
Project Team		
Martine	Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson, LLC
Maryellen	Dierkes	Stokes Creative Group
Tom	Faranda, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover
Pamela	Garrett	NJDOT, Environmental
Brenda	Hunter	Stokes Creative Group
Sarbjit	Kahlon	NJTPA
Paul J.	Leso, P.E.	Union County Engineering
Marie	Limage	NJDOT, Environmental
Frank	McCombs	NJDOT, Local Aid District 2

Glenn	Modica	Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.
Bruce K.	Riegel, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover
Bill	Romaine	Amy S. Greene Environmental
Khalid	Shaikh	NJDOT, Bicycle & Pedestrian

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Union County South Front Street Bridge over the Elizabeth River. (See attached Agenda)

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Project Overview & Background

After introductions from the Project Team and Attendees, Paul Leso, Union County Project Manager, opened the meeting explaining the closure of the bridge for two to three years is due to structural deficiencies. The purpose of this study is to identify how to rehabilitate or replace the existing bridge. The costs are too great for the County so it requires Federal funding. This Local Concept Development Study is the first step to bridge improvements. An application was filed with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) who is overseeing this phase of the project. NJDOT Local Aid will then administer the project with the County utilizing Federal funding for the design and construction phases.

2. Concept Development Process

Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, provided an overview of the display boards: one with an aerial of the project area indicating the design deficiencies; one indicating the environmental screening for the project; photos of the existing bridge condition; and a flow chart showing the steps to be followed for this project for the Concept Development Phase. Attendees were welcomed to view the boards after the Power Point presentation.

- (a) Currently, the project is in the Local Concept Development (LCD) phase, shown in blue on the LCD flowchart slide and a copy of the flowchart is in the Project Portfolio given to each attendee.
- (b) The Concept Development Flow Chart shows the steps to be completed so to gather data, establish a Purpose and Need Statement, develop conceptual alternatives and through a matrix analysis recommend a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) to move forward to the design phase.
- (c) Working as a team in collaboration with the Agencies, Union County and the City of Elizabeth, the bridge improvement option to be determined as the preliminary preferred alternative (PPA), would be the one with the most benefits and least impacts.

3. South Front Street Bridge – Data Collection, Bridge and Traffic Analysis

Bruce Riegel presented information on the project status, preliminary bridge condition and information to be collected in referring to the project information handout and the Concept Development (CD) flowchart in the Project Portfolio.

- (a) The project work commenced on January 6, 2014. A project notification letter to the Mayor as well as Access Notification Letters to property owners within the 200' set back were distributed.

Field survey work and data collection is nearly done with base mapping and environmental screenings completed.

- (b) The team has begun identifying existing substandard design elements and gathering accident and historic traffic count data. New traffic counts will be collected prior to the Pulaski Skyway closures to reflect more typical traffic.
- (c) Bruce provided information and photos of the existing bridge condition, the deficiencies, substandard design elements including the bridge electrical and operating machinery.
- (d) He presented the project schedule with milestones and the community involvement steps to be met as indicated on the back side of the Project Information Sheet (included in the Project Portfolio).
- (e) The Concept Development Phase is anticipated to be completed within 18 to 21 months (September 2015).
- (f) Input is needed from community stakeholders and the public in developing the Project Purpose and Need; which is the first major milestone. Martine Culbertson, as the Community Involvement Facilitator will provide more information on the Stakeholder Survey Summary, during the group discussion. Community input is part of the Environmental Process.

4. Environmental Process

Bruce explained that the environmental process must be followed for federal funding transportation improvements. NJTPA is administering the project, however FHWA provides the funding. Any transportation project receiving Federal funding must also follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

- (a) The South Front Street Bridge Local Concept Development Study must identify any environmental concerns and develop an environmental profile. When analyzing alternatives, one looks to avoid or minimize environmental impacts and if that's not possible then to provide mitigation. The environmental resources include air, noise, hazardous or contaminated sites, parks, wetlands, water resources, social and economic impacts, and cultural resources such as historic structures and facilities.
- (b) Bill Romaine, of Amy Greene Environmental Consultants, conducted the environmental screening and presented the findings to date and they will assist the team with possible environmental permits related to each alternative developed. There are hazardous waste sites, superfund clean-up areas within Arthur Kill Park, some parcels near the bridge and the Elizabeth River itself. There are no wetlands, but the bridge does lie within the 100 year floodplain and there are permits required by both Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- (c) Glenn Modica, of Richard Grubb Associates, conducted the cultural resources screening and presented the findings to date. The bridge itself is historic so there will be on-going coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- (d) Pamela Garrett, Environmental Project Manager, from the NJDOT Bureau of Environmental Program Resources (BEPR), noted that SHPO and the regulatory agencies look carefully at comments from the public and thus community involvement is an important part of environmental process and moving the project forward with consensus and environmental compliance. The results of the environmental and cultural resource screening, which is in the project schedule, will be presented at the public meetings. A good Purpose & Need Statement and documentation is important for the review agencies to work well with the project team in moving the project forward from the LCD Phase to design and construction.

5. Community Involvement – Input and Discussion

Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, provided an overview of the information in the Project Portfolio, distributed to attendees. She reviewed the Draft List of Community and Agency Stakeholders as part of the community outreach process.

- (a) This is a draft list and the team is looking for input from the communities to identify any entities and organizations or individuals interested to participate at one more community stakeholder meeting and one or two public meetings during this phase of the project.
- (b) The Stakeholder Survey Summary in the Project Portfolio provides the input and comments received to date and is helpful information to develop the Project Purpose and Need Statement as well as the project goals and objectives.
- (c) The project will have a website for sharing of information on the bridge project. The site will be maintained by the Project Team and at completion of the LCD phase, it will be turned over to Union County to be maintained.
 - The website will include information similar to the project information sheet, meeting announcements and reports, photos, contact information, and opportunity to submit comments and questions.
 - Meeting announcements will be in English, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian.
- (d) The meeting was opened for questions and comments to identify the issues and concerns in the project study area. These comments will help the project team develop the project purpose and needs statement. The following discussion items were noted on newsprint at the meeting:

Input / Comments *(taken on newsprint)*

- Vertical Clearance to be determined
- Rehabilitation vs. replacement vs. another bridge as alternatives
- If there is another bridge structure, it may mean greater environmental impacts and more right of way needed
- Currently with bridge closed, there is limited emergency response
- Employees travel time is greater, less mobility
- When is right-of-way notified? What's the timing and procedure?
 - In this CD phase, there is an estimate of the amount of right-of-way impact associated with each alternative for comparison and analysis
 - The right-of-way process does not occur until in the Design phase and owners would be notified with an appraisal time of 18 to 24 months
- When the bridge was in operation - to use it, one had to wait their turn and the sight-distance with the angle was dangerous, hard too for fire and OEM
- The bridge is narrow - 18 foot roadway

- The draft in the river is sufficient for small craft, not sure for large vessels - limited clearance due to overhead utilities
- Hydrants - to examine fire department needs and river/water access location(s)
- Fourteen employees do walk - there are traffic back-ups on South Front Street
 - need to examine traffic flow in the area, at certain times severe back-ups since the bridge has been closed
- Impacts during construction are not compensable, however the County will work with the City and community to minimize impacts
- No build is option - no bridge in this location
- Need to determine the marine traffic on Elizabeth River especially between the South Front Street Bridge area and the First Street Bridge
 - looking to obtain comments on past, present and future water use
 - U.S. Coast Guard has jurisdiction of the Elizabeth River and the determination of the vertical clearance of the bridge
- Impacts traffic flow
 - very tight, need to wait to cross bridge
 - two sides are businesses, waiting for traffic
- Train containers block Bayway Avenue and traffic builds up, only one way in and out
- Drainage concerns, flooding occurred on the bridge – it is tidal water
- Pedestrian and bike path connection to the Goethals Bridge - a new bicycle pedestrian walkway is in the design - need connectivity
- Opportunity to connect - Multi use, cyclist, recreational, and employment - walking and biking
- One-way only and need to obtain second access means
 - Size of loads – important for company
- Right from South Front Street and left at Bayway – long winding road, the bridge would ease traffic flow and mobility, better access and safety
- Police / Fire response with bridge connection - important, improve response time greatly
- Snow clearance issue – “dead end” on both sides causes problems for service and turn-around
- Improve traffic flow with bridge in service - Bayway and South Front Street
- Trucks – do u-turn, poor access, less safe

- Restoring existing bridge – safety hazard, rain freezes - hazardous driving
- Need for two standard lanes and shoulders - for safety and mobility
- Lighting important for safety and visibility near river and park
- Safe passage for cars, trucks, pedestrians, bikes and boats below
- Navigational activity - need to know how many and types of vessels to determine clearance and - bridge improvement needs on the water (fenders, lighting, signage)

6. Closing Comments - Feedback

In summarizing, Martine asked attendees to provide feedback and closing comments. The following items were noted on newsprint:

Feedback / Action Items

- This is a new project team doing this bridge study.
- Walk and bike to work and recreation important considerations for this bridge crossing.
- Keep multi modes in mind.
- Look to connect to the East Coast Greenway - cycling to parks and recreational areas.
- Fire Apparatus – 6 foot – 16,000 lbs. - be sure to accommodate fire emergency vehicles.
- Okay to submit Wish List - importance of the needs to be met for a the bridge crossing.
- Vascular, Movable Bridge different types – wire impact – 32 feet height.
- Utilities to be examined as part of the process, Federal funds are not used for relocation.

7. Closing Comments – Next Steps

Bruce Riegel thanked attendees for their comments. The next steps will be for the project team to continue to gather data, and hold the public meeting for additional input. The Project Team will then develop the draft purpose and need statement; after which the team will then develop conceptual alternatives to present at the next set of stakeholder and public meetings in the fall as listed on Project Information Sheet.

Any questions, please contact Paul Leso, Union County Supervising Engineer and Project Manager, or Bruce Riegel, the H&H Project Manager. Meeting minutes will be provided and distributed by Martine Culbertson upon Project Team and County approval. The power point presentation and

meeting reports will be posted to the web site and we will notify everyone once the web site is available.

In closing, Paul Leso thanked the City of Elizabeth for hosting the meeting and the attendees for their comments. He noted the importance of community input as valuable in helping to find the right solution for the South Front Street Bridge. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. H&H will continue bridge, roadway and traffic analysis in coordination with Union County and City of Elizabeth.
2. Attendees to review Draft Community Stakeholders List, Stakeholders Survey Summary and Project Portfolio Handouts; and provide any comments and updated contact information; attend Public Meeting on April 2nd if possible.
3. Martine Culbertson will provide meeting minutes, update Community Stakeholders List, notify Stakeholders of web site availability, and schedule the Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 and Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting in the Fall 2014.

NEXT MEETING

Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2013

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Location: City Hall, Council Chambers, City of Elizabeth, NJ

We believe the foregoing to be an accurate summary of discussions and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to the minutes within three (3) working days of receipt. Without notification, these minutes will be considered to be record of fact.

Martine Culbertson
Community Involvement Facilitator
NJTPA Union County South Front Street Bridge Project



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Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

*City Hall, Third Floor, Council Chambers,
50 Winfield Scott Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ, 2:00 p.m.*

AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Union County South Front Street Bridge over the Elizabeth River to develop the project purpose and need.

- I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*
 - Project Overview & Background
 - Local Concept Development (LCD) Process

- II. *UNION COUNTY SOUTH FRONT STREET BRIDGE OVER THE ELIZABETH RIVER*
 - Project Status and Schedule
 - Data Collection, Bridge and Traffic Analysis
 - Environmental Process - Screening
 - Community Stakeholders - Survey Summary

- III. *DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS*
 - Community Input - Purpose and Need
 - Action Items –Public Information Center Meeting
 - Closing Comments