



Route 52 Causeway Bridge Replacement Somers Point Circle Elimination

Ocean City, Cape May County / Somers Point, Atlantic County

The New Jersey Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Route 52 Causeway Community Partnering Team, held two (2) Public Information Centers (PIC's) to present information about the proposed bridge replacement project. The Public Information Centers (PIC's) were conducted as part of the continuing efforts to refine the causeway design and to coordinate with the local communities.

The two meetings were held in the communities where the project will be undertaken. One PIC was held on May 20, 2003 at the Ocean City Intermediate School in Ocean City; 105 people were in attendance. The second PIC was held on May 28, 2003 at Somers Point City Hall in Somers Point; 208 people were in attendance.

Questionnaires were distributed and public comments solicited at each of the meetings. The questionnaires requested opinions and comments regarding the shape of the piers to support the causeway, the style of the pedestrian railings, and the design of the bridge lighting. There was an additional section for general comments about the project.

Two choices of pier design have been proposed – a Y-shaped design and an I-shaped design. Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to state a preference for one or the other or to choose an “indifferent” response to the shape of the piers. Questionnaire responses were mixed and based on perceived aesthetics of the pier shape.

The proposed pedestrian railing styles are either contemporary or traditional. Again, responses were mixed and based on individual taste. Several respondents also noted what they believed were safety or maintenance advantages of one design over another.

The options listed in the questionnaire for bridge lighting were the most varied, and included an opportunity to rank the styles in order of preference. Some respondents did indeed rank each in order from one to four, while others chose just one or two preferred lighting options.

Four options were listed for lighting design: Option A – Row of Dots Concept, Option B – Lighted Ribbon Concept, Option C – Lighted Piers Concept, and Option D –

Row of Dots & Lighted Pier Concept. Comments regarding the lighting design were based on perceived aesthetics and safety considerations both for bridge travelers and boaters beneath the bridge. Consideration was also given to costs for operation and maintenance.

In addition to the questionnaires, comment sheets were also made available to attendees at the public sessions. Many attendees filled out the public comment sheets and additional forms were taken away and mailed back.

The types of comments were varied and dealt with both concerns and suggestions. Some respondents offered positive support for the proposed bridge replacement project, while others were opposed to the project in its entirety. Many comments dealt with specific elements of the bridge location and its design. Traffic concerns were raised, as were concerns for pedestrian and bicycle safety. Issues related to the construction process and environmental factors were also mentioned by several individuals. Overall the comments were constructive and well thought out.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Community Partnering Team will continue to work with the local communities to develop a final design and move forward with the Route 52 Causeway Bridge Replacement project. Ultimately the goal of the project is to improve traffic circulation and provide benefits to the local towns, Atlantic and Cape May Counties, and the entire State of New Jersey.