

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
I-295/I-76/Route 42 Interchange Reconstruction**

Second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
November 21, 2002 – 6:00-8:30 p.m.
Bellmawr Community Center

Meeting Summary

CAC Meeting Attendees

Bellmawr Resident
Bellmawr Resident
Gloucester City Senior Citizens Association
Mt. Ephraim Girls Softball Association
Borough of Bellmawr Highway Department
Borough of Bellmawr Sewer Department
Chair, Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Camden Co. Council on Economic Opportunity
Mt. Ephraim Resident
Dir., Diocesan Administered Cemeteries
Gloucester City Resident
Senior Citizens United Community Services of Camden County
Korman Interstate Business Park
Chair, Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association
Gloucester County
Diocese of Camden
Bellmawr Seniors
Bellmawr Baseball
Bellmawr Park Mutual Housing
Trustee, Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust
Gloucester City Resident
Chair, Transportation Committee, Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce
Director, AAA South Jersey Public Affairs

Project Team Attendees

Bill Beans (New Jersey DOT)
Nick Caiazza (New Jersey DOT)
Scott Deeck (New Jersey DOT)
Patricia Feliciano (New Jersey DOT)
Meredith Hammond (New Jersey DOT)
Steven Maslow (New Jersey DOT)
Bruce Riegel (New Jersey DOT)
Michael Russo (New Jersey DOT)
Jackie Gaskill (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Mike Greenberg (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Kirt Ladwa (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Charlie Meidhof (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Lou Robbins (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Arnold Bloch (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)
Karen Rosenberger (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)

Summary

Arnold Bloch welcomed everyone and presented the objectives of the meeting:

- To receive input about previous items given to the CAC.
- To present the evaluation criteria/process for initial alternatives
- To present the initial alternatives
- To discuss CAC member reactions to the new material
- To charge the CAC with the goal of obtaining further input from the public on the new material.

Mr. Bloch asked if there were any comments on the draft summary of the previous meeting—there were none. He presented the tentative schedule for upcoming meetings: possible CAC meetings in early January and March were discussed, as well as a public information center in the spring. He then confirmed that everyone received updated materials for their Resource Books. He also asked if there any comments on the draft Purpose and Need Statement—there were none.

Lou Robbins discussed the project Flow Chart. He then described the Evaluation Criteria and process for winnowing down the number of initial alternatives to a fewer number that will be studied in depth in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Bill Beans then discussed the nine initial alternatives and briefly described the rational for each alternative plus some potential impacts/advantages of each.

Following the Question/Answer and Comment session, Mr. Bloch reminded everyone to seek input from others about the evaluation criteria/process and the initial alternatives.

Summary of Question and Answer Session

- One CAC member asked if the same information on the project was available to public officials. Lou Robbins responded that they receive essentially the same information at Local Official's Briefings. He noted that such a briefing was held on November 12, where local officials were presented with the same information about evaluation criteria/evaluation process and the initial alternatives.
- Concern was expressed about the proposed design speed limit on ramps being lower than the speed limit on the mainline (45 MPH design vs. 60 MPH design). In reply to the question, Lou Robbins indicated that increasing the speed limit would mean increasing the radius of the curve, which would have more impacts, specifically, property takings or impacts to natural resources, which NJDOT was seeking to avoid. Mr. Robbins also indicated the recommended standard design speed for direct connection ramps between main line roadways was 35 to 50 MPH. and that NJDOT always designs for a higher than posted speed. For example, a ramp with a posted speed of 40 MPH would be designed for 45 MPH. Our proposed design speed for direct connect ramps on this project is 45 MPH.
- A CAC member asked what the cost of construction per lane/foot was estimated to be, and whether the cost would be included in the evaluation matrix. Mr. Robbins noted that at this time the detailed engineering required to produce a good construction cost estimate had not been performed, and that cost would not be part of the evaluation matrix.
- One member asked how NJDOT evaluates ROW impacts and if NJDOT accounts for whether a building is owned or leased. Mr. Robbins replied that at this level of screening no such distinction would be made. Mike Russo explained that there is a different acquisition process for compensating renters vs. property owners. Bill Beans added that during the EIS, a detailed evaluation could be considered.

- A question was asked about the evaluation of wetland values and whether NJDOT was evaluating wetlands by acres of wetlands removed or by considering the impact of wetland losses to local residents. Lou Robbins replied that tidal and non-tidal wetlands have different resource values, and that both the acreage and value are evaluated during wetlands consideration. Nick Caiazza said this issue would be more carefully evaluated in the EIS, which will evaluate potential flooding issues, and water flow impacts resulting from wetland losses. Additionally, Mike Russo said NJDOT would explore options to enhance wetland areas wherever possible, and noted that there may be opportunities for habitat restoration in the area of AIJo's Curve.
- Concern was raised about the evaluation of noise and air pollution. Mr. Robbins responded that studies are not currently being done, but will begin with the EIS phase. NJDOT plans to create noise simulations that will use actual roadway noises to illustrate the current conditions and show comparisons to calibrated noise levels after noise walls are installed.
- One member asked why the Missing Moves project was not included with this reconstruction project. Mr. Robbins noted that the two projects serve different purposes, and required different levels of evaluation of impacts. The Missing Moves project can also be constructed sooner, offering more immediate improvements.
- One member wanted to know if there were graphic examples of a 1500 ft. viaduct, since some of the alternatives show large viaducts. Lou Robbins responded that NJDOT would show examples at the next meeting, but that members could consider that I-95 south of Philadelphia is a three-level viaduct, Rt. 29 in Trenton is a viaduct greater than 2000 ft, and that the Atlantic City Expressway from Routes 52 to 42 is much smaller, about 300 feet.
- One member wanted to know why the maps of the initial alternatives were not oriented with north oriented to the top of the page. It was explained that the alternatives were mapped with North to the right (which is a technically acceptable alternative to North being at the top) in order to fit in adequate study area information on one sheet (or one board)
- Concern was expressed that Ramp A, which is common to all initial alternatives, would impact the community negatively and should be removed completely. Charles Meidhof explained that the main area of focus has been I-295; therefore, at this point, NJDOT hasn't considered relocating other roadways in the study area, such as Rt. 42 (which could potentially obviate the need for Ramp A). However, there may be opportunities to change the ramps on Route 42. Mr. Russo reiterated that there are definite opportunities to tweak the schemes to minimize impacts. One member asked if accident ratings for each alternative had been considered. Mr. Robbins replied that all alternatives would be designed to be safe. All options eliminate the need for weaving movements, which is currently the most dangerous part of the roadway configuration.
- A comment was made that there is a lot of development near Rt. 42. Team members responded that this would be considered in the development and analysis of alternatives. For example, new two-lane ramps would accommodate traffic volumes estimated to occur by the year 2030.
- One member informed the group that there are 3098 graves in each cemetery quadrant and asked what kind of structure would be considered for Alternative I, which passes through the cemetery. Mr. Beans said that this has not been determined yet.
- One member asked if weaving movements from the exit ramps at Route 168 and Leaf Avenue were taken into consideration. Mr. Robbins replied to the question saying that the project team is doing a study on Origin and Destination (O&D), which will assess the severity of the problem. Constructing improvements to provide a safe weave will be a major consideration.

- Construction duration was raised. A member wanted to know if duration would be considered in the alternative screening. Lou Robbins noted that this is one of the considerations in the evaluation criterion “constructability”.