

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

Third Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
January 7, 2003 – 6:00-8:30 p.m.
Bellmawr Community Center

Draft Meeting Summary

CAC Meeting Attendees

2 Bellmawr Resident
Mt. Ephraim Girls Softball Association
Borough of Bellmawr Highway Department
Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association)
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Mt. Ephraim Resident
Diocesan Administered Cemeteries
Gloucester City Resident
Korman Interstate Business Park
Chair, Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association
Bellmawr Seniors
Bellmawr Baseball
Bellmawr Park Mutual Housing
Trustee, Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust
Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust
Chair, Transportation Committee, Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce
Director, AAA South Jersey Public Affairs

Project Team Attendees

Nick Caiazza (New Jersey DOT)
Scott Deeck (New Jersey DOT)
Bruce Riegel (New Jersey DOT)
Michael Russo (New Jersey DOT)
Michael Greenberg (Dewberry)
Charlie Meidhof (Dewberry)
Lou Robbins (Dewberry)
Arnold Bloch (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)
Karen Rosenberger (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)

Summary of Presentations

Arnold Bloch welcomed attendees, gave a brief re-introduction of the project, and asked for comments on the summary of the November 2002 CAC meeting. There were no comments on summary content.

Mike Russo discussed the status of the Environmental Coordination. He explained what has happened since the November 2002 CAC meeting and highlighted meetings of importance scheduled in the near future:

- The purpose and need statement was approved.
- NJDOT is providing information to DVRPC to keep them up to date on project related issues.
- An Agency Coordination Meeting was held on December 17, 2002.
- An additional Agency Coordination Meeting is expected in late January.
- A partnering Meeting was tentatively scheduled for March.
- The need for a fourth CAC meeting is being discussed.

Charles Meidhof reviewed additional initial alternatives that had been created since the November 2002 CAC meeting. A revised alignment for Alternative A included “pinching” in the I-76/Rt 42 mainline to help with residential impacts and eliminate a weave, as per a suggestion at the November 2002 CAC meeting. Several other similar alternatives could be altered in the same way once the revision is fully completed. The preliminary impacts will be discussed as the revisions are made.

A working drawing of Alternative D was shown to include a tunnel option. Any tunnel alternative would have similar Right of Way (ROW) impacts as the surface alternatives they were created from. The reason for this is that the construction of the tunnel would likely utilize a cut and cover construction technique for most of its alignment.

Mr. Meidhof also reviewed a ROW impacts chart. The chart contained the preliminary impacts that each initial alternative might have on residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational properties. Impacts were considered within 50 feet of construction. A wetlands impact chart was also shown, similarly showing preliminary impacts of both freshwater and tidal wetlands for each initial alternative. DEP wetlands records were used to identify areas. Impacts were considered within 50 feet from the pavement edge.

Lou Robbins presented two photos of a three-level overpass system, as examples. Since many of the initial alternatives have a three-level overpass, the pictures were shown to give the group an idea of how high the structures might be.

Mike Russo discussed an e-mail he received regarding the missing moves project. Mr. Russo explained that a Transportation Investment Study (TIS) study was completed in the mid 1990s and two projects emerged: the Missing Moves project and the I-295/I-76/Rt 42 Interchange Reconstruction. They are independent projects. The Missing Moves project is progressing on its own. The TIS examined other modes such as HOV lanes, park and Ride options, and rail, but found that they do not address the purpose and need of the I-295/I-76/Rt 42 Interchange Reconstruction Project.

Following these presentations, Mr. Bloch moderated an open discussion.

Summary of Question and Answer Session

- Several committee members reported that they had presented the initial alternatives to their groups. All of the members noted that their groups agreed that something needed to

be done at the interchange. No groups voiced any objections to the alternatives being considered.

- One member wanted property taxes to be considered in the impact matrix. The NJDOT Project Team responded that ROW impacts would cover this issue sufficiently at this time, but will be further addressed during the EIS phase. In many cases, the ROW impacts are likely to affect the same property regardless of the alternative.
- Members were pleased that NJDOT was giving attention to the I-295/I-76/Rt 42 Interchange. Also, one member relayed positive feedback regarding the elimination of Al Jo's curve and the reclamation of green space. Mr. Russo explained that there might be a trade off between space and structure. If a tunnel option is pursued, Al Jo's curve might be upgraded and used as a ramp.
- Interest was raised as to whether The Creek Road Bridge would be widened. The NJDOT Project Team responded that existing lanes on Creek Road will be adequate without I-295 traffic. Currently, the weave makes it difficult. When the weave is taken out of I-295, it will improve flow.
- Another member expressed concern about sun glare entering the proposed tunnel. Examples of lighting techniques for safety on Route 29 were then discussed.
- Another CAC member wished to add constructibility criteria to the impact matrix with three subsets. These could include safety, number of conflict points, and duration of construction.
- A CAC member was interested in a new alternative, which aligns I-295 along the New Jersey Turnpike Authority's ROW south of the Woodcrest Station exit. The NJDOT Project Team reported that it will look into this possibility.

Summary of Upcoming Events

Mr. Bloch reviewed the next steps in the project. There likely will be a Partnering Session in February 2003. Three members of the committee volunteered to attend – Peter DiGiambatista, Joseph Bloomer, and Harry Moore. *(Subsequent to the CAC meeting, the partnering session has been postponed until Spring 2003.)*

There likely will be a Public Information Center (PIC) in March 2003. This will be the first opportunity for the general public to view each alternative. The group wanted a strong attendance for the meeting, so several means of advertising for the event were suggested. These suggestions included newspaper ads (including the Courier Post, the Gloucester City News, and the Gloucester County Times), a VMS board located on I-295, cable TV bulletins, mailers, pamphlets at PATCO stations (including Woodcrest, Ferry Ave., and Haddonfield), Church bulletins, announcements at planning boards/councils, using Balset's Guide to Local Media, and sending home pamphlets with schoolchildren. *(Subsequent to the CAC meeting, the PIC has been postponed until Spring 2003.)*

The group preferred to hold off on the next CAC meeting after the PIC. Mr. Bloch also noted that the DOT team is willing to come out and present to any group if necessary.

Mr. Robbins concluded by adding that when the two tunnel alternatives are completed, the group will be notified and the files will be posted up on the website for comment.