



meeting minutes

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JOB No.: 00481.7000

DATE: February 15, 2006

TO: File / NJDOT Attendees

FROM: Bernie Tetreault

SUBJECT: 1/26/06 Public Information Center: Route 183 Over NJ Transit & Netcong Circle

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) held the above Public Information Center (PIC) at Netcong Borough Hall, 23 Maple Avenue, between 4:30 PM and 7:30 PM to seek public input on the above project. Prior to the PIC, NJDOT had mailed the attached announcement to all residents adjacent to the Project (copy attached). A 1"=30' scale color-rendered display board depicting the Proposed Project, which is currently in the Preliminary Design phase, was available for review and comment by the public. Representatives attending the PIC on behalf of NJDOT were as follows:

NAME	AFFILIATION	PHONE No.
Al Eugene	NJDOT Project Manager (PM)	609-530-3791
Camille Fernicola	NJDOT Community Relations	609-530-8037
Bernie Tetreault	Taylor Wiseman & Taylor PM	856-235-7200-Ext 1402
Scott Moore	Taylor Wiseman & Taylor (TWT)	856-235-7200-Ext 1415
Tom Harriott	Earth Tech (Subconsultant to TWT)	973-338-6680-Ext 202

Camille Fernicola provided an Attendance List and requested that all persons who attended the PIC sign in with their name and address (copy attached). Issues brought up at and after the PIC are described as follows:

Comments at Public Information Center

1. Netcong Borough Mayor Nicholas Pompilio appeared prior to the start of the PIC to pose questions regarding the proposed sidewalk and drainage. In particular, he was concerned about the lack of sidewalk along the north side of Route 46 between Main Street and Route 183, which had been provided on previous design schemes presented to Netcong. Bernie Tetreault explained that sidewalk could also be provided for this area within the Route 183 Project Limits. However, the RBA Group (who is the engineering consultant for the adjoining Route 46/Main Street, which is also currently under design for NJDOT) had indicated that there was insufficient room for sidewalk on this side of Route 46 within their Project. Since the Mayor indicated he wanted to have sidewalk on this side continuous from Main Street to Route 183, he was referred to Al Eugene, who is also the NJDOT PM for the Route 46/Main Street Project. Al Eugene indicated that he would discuss this further with RBA. The Mayor also asked why sidewalk was not provided along Route 183 Northbound just before and along the proposed ramp connecting to Route 46 Eastbound, and why it was instead rerouted in front of the abandoned gas station to connect with sidewalk along Route 46. Bernie Tetreault explained that, due to steep roadway profile in this area, a sidewalk constructed adjacent to the curb as requested by Netcong would exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for maximum grade. In regard to drainage, it was noted that water that flows on the west side of Route 183 just below I-80 crosses under Route 183 south of McMullen Street to the east side of the road, where it flows into a separate drainage system upstream of the Project. This drainage system is therefore not affected by the Project. Bernie Tetreault indicated to the Mayor that any improvements to the drainage system east of Route 183 would need to be discussed with NJDOT and probably addressed under a separate project.



2. Several attendees asked what the most significant difference was between the current design and those presented at several PICs on the project prior to 2001. Bernie Tetreault explained that there were comments at these previous PICs expressing concerns regarding the straight alignment of Route 183. The current design provides a reverse curve alignment for Route 183 in this area on relatively tight radii in an attempt to reduce speeds, especially for Northbound traffic approaching the Borough. Basically, the proposed design provides about the same alignment for this direction as that currently in place for Route 183 Southbound.
3. In response to questions posed by some attendees regarding the reasons why the existing Netcong Circle is being eliminated, Bernie Tetreault explained that the original driving purpose of the project is the Route 183 Bridge over NJ Transit, portions of which are over 100 years old and which was last widened and improved about 75 years ago. The bridge has significant deterioration and is in need of replacement. However, its lateral and horizontal clearance envelope over the railroad tracks is substandard, especially so if the railroad is restored to a two-track design and electrified via overhead catenaries in the future as being considered by NJ Transit. As a result, the track clearance envelope and design of the replacement bridge require the profile of Route 183 to be raised. However, the existing Route 46 Westbound Bridge over Route 183 Southbound, located just south of the NJ Transit Bridge, already has substandard vertical clearance. Replacing this bridge with a new, higher bridge is not feasible due to the close proximity of the Netcong Circle to the east and steep grade on Route 46 to the west. Replacement of the Circle with its modern equivalent (a "Roundabout") is not practical due to the steep grades on the roadways in this area, offset alignment of Route 183 north of the Circle, and restricted room available. Therefore, a more traditional signalized at-grade four-legged intersection is proposed to replace the Circle. Elevation of Route 183 will be increased, especially at the south end of bridge, to tie in with the elevation of Route 46 at the intersection.
4. In response to questions posed by owner (Sharon Rosenquist) of residence at Block 27-Lot 14 (52 Maple Avenue), it was noted that the existing lane configuration and design of Route 183 at its intersection with Maple Avenue/Allen Terrace was not being revised. The owner expressed concern about traffic currently exceeding the posted 30 MPH speed limit along Route 183 and that it is a hazard to the school children crossing at this intersection. Bernie Tetreault noted that the current, reverse curve design should discourage excessive speed more than the earlier schemes for these improvements did. (Ms Rosenquist subsequently provided comments to Camille Fernicola via E-mail)
5. Questions were posed by residents and Borough Officials as to whether a traffic signal would be installed on Route 183 at the Maple Avenue/Allen Terrace intersection. Bernie Tetreault noted that traffic counts had been conducted but that the low volumes on the Maple Avenue and Allen Terrace approaches did not meet the signal warrants from the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
6. Several persons and Borough Officials asked why it was suggested that Allen Terrace be revised to a one-way traffic pattern away from Route 183. In response, Bernie Tetreault noted that the proposed improvements correct the excessive widening present along Route 183 Northbound south of the intersection. Additionally, Allen Terrace does not correctly align opposite Maple Avenue. However, the historically-eligible property (Block 11-Lot 6) at the northeast corner of the intersection (signed as the "Hugh Allen Mansion") cannot be impacted without creating issues with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Avoiding this property does not allow for correction of the existing misalignment or improvement of the existing tight radius on Allen Terrace at the approach to Route 183. These conditions, combined with the steep grade on Allen Terrace lead to the consideration of conversion to one-way away from Route 183. Traffic currently approaching Route 183 would be diverted to Prospect and Allen Streets to access Route 183 at the existing signalized intersection. However, some attendees said that they had concerns about this route (angle of Prospect Street at its intersection with Allen Street, adding to traffic back-ups on Allen Street approach to signal). Based on these objections, it appeared Borough Officials did not look favorably on the one-way conversion.
7. Owner (Pinelopi Sikolas) of two apartment houses at Block 8-Lot 11 (47 Ledgewood Avenue) expressed concern over the elimination of the existing loop driveway/parking area present at her property on the southeast corner of Route 183/Stoll Street. She indicated that the depicted revision would not allow sufficient room for parking of her tenant's vehicles. Bernie Tetreault noted that grading was part of the reason for the current design, along with the fact that the loop driveway/parking area being removed was located within the Right-of-Way (ROW) of Route 183. He indicated that this area would be investigated further if so requested by NJDOT. Al Eugene advised Ms Sikolas that she will be contacted by letter from the NJDOT Office of Access Design within the next few months regarding their driveway modifications. Right-of-Way issues will be dealt with separately from access through the negotiation/acquisition process that should begin in about one year from now.



8. Owner (Charles Howering) of residence at Block 27-Lot 17 (46 Ledgewood Avenue) asked that further traffic studies be performed to confirm the need for replacing the Route 183 Bridge Over NJ Transit, and indicated a preference for creating a dead end on Route 183 north of the bridge.
9. Owner (Biagio George) of residence at Block 28-Lot 2 (5 Wiltop Road) asked why their driveway and garage on the west side of Route 183 was being eliminated. Bernie Tetreault responded that the driveway's location on the inside of a horizontal curve, combined with the proposed retaining wall, does not provide adequate sight distance for safe vehicular egress. In response to further questions on what would happen to the garage, which is located in the basement of the house, it was noted that it would need to be closed off and the existing walled area backfilled flush to the ground elevation on top of the existing retaining wall present on both sides of the driveway and along Route 183. Bernie Tetreault further noted that their property is the only one in this area having frontage along both Route 183 and Wiltop Road that has driveway access to both roadways (all other properties in this area only have access from Wiltop Road). NJDOT proposes to build a new, larger driveway along Wiltop Road to replace the existing one already present on this street and eliminate the driveway along Route 183. Bernie Tetreault noted that NJDOT Right-of Way negotiators will compensate for the damages they determine to be involved with the revisions to this property. Al Eugene advised Mr George that he will be contacted by letter from the NJDOT Office of Access Design within the next few months regarding their driveway modifications. Right-of-Way issues will be dealt with separately from access through the negotiation/acquisition process that should begin in about one year from now.
10. Owner (Ben Dellamo) of business (Motion Auto Body) at Block 42-Lots 10 & 10.01 (111 Ledgewood Avenue) said that the ROW taking depicted along the north side of Route 46 was not anticipated under his site plan recently approved by the Borough. In response to his request for more information concerning proposed impacts, Al Eugene provided a draft copy of the access cut-out that TWT had prepared for the property. This cut-out incorporated information on his proposed site improvements, which TWT was not made aware of until 10/25/05. Site plans were sent to TWT by the Borough Engineer on 10/25/05. The owner indicated that he would delay starting his site improvements until he talked to his architect and determines if he can adjust his building improvements to better coincide with NJDOT roadway widening, thereby minimizing later disruptions to his business. He also asked if NJDOT could acquire the adjacent land west of his property from NJ Transit as a possible parking cure. Al Eugene indicated that he would have TWT contact NJ Transit regarding this. Al Eugene advised Mr Dellamo that he will be contacted by letter from the NJDOT Office of Access Design within the next few months regarding their driveway modifications. Right-of-Way issues will be dealt with separately from access through the negotiation/acquisition process that should begin in about one year from now.
11. Susan and Douglas Zellman of the Lake Musconectong Regional Planning Board requested information on the drainage analyses performed for the project. Their organization has great concerns regarding additional silt being deposited in the lake by the proposed improvements. Bernie Tetreault responded that the project must meet NJDEP requirements for stormwater management. However, it was noted that stormwater flowing out of this Project then flows into the adjoining Route 46/Main Street Improvement Project, which in turn will discharge via the existing closed drainage system in Netcong into Lake Musconectong.
12. Leigh Ann Von Hagen (Alan M Voorhees Transportation Center/Edward J Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy/Rutgers University) informed Bernie Tetreault that the Project was located within the "High Point to Cape May Bicycle Touring Route". In response to her question as to how this can be provided for in the Project, it was noted that shoulders are provided along both Route 183 and 46. Bernie Tetreault further noted that bicycle lanes had been addressed by TWT on projects designed for Burlington County, but that NJDOT Traffic Signal & Safety Engineering (TSSE) would need to provide information on the striping that they would find acceptable on a state highway. She also asked about improvements for the school crossing at the Route 183 intersection with Maple Avenue and Allen Terrace, particularly north of the intersection along Route 183 south. In response, Bernie Tetreault noted that this is outside the current project limits as defined by NJDOT. In reply to Ms Von Hagen's further question regarding if improvements had been investigated for the north side of the intersection, Bernie Tetreault noted that upgrades were considered including narrowing of Route 183 to provide a consistent width along the east side and provision of a channelizing island at the northwest quadrant. However the historic issues regarding the Hugh Allen Mansion (previously detailed in these Minutes) were described to Ms Von Hagen, and it was noted that based on this, NJDOT had decided to set the project limits at the south side of this intersection. Finally, in response to questions she raised regarding retention of the existing Netcong Circle, the various geometric reasons (previously detailed in these Minutes) were described. (Ms Von Hagen subsequently provided comments to Camille Fericola via E-mail)



13. Zenaida Mendez of the (Morris County) Central Record was in attendance at the meeting, and interviewed several attendees (information in 1/27/06 Article)

Subsequent to Public Information Center

Several persons requested a reduced-sized copy of the color-rendered plan depicted on the display board. TWT provided an electronic copy of this to Camille Fernicola, who in turn sent it to these persons. Written comments and information provided to NJDOT since the PIC are itemized below (copy of each of these, along with the Attendance List for the PIC, is being attached to these Minutes by NJDOT):

- 1/27/06 Newspaper Article by Zenaida Mendez of the (Morris County) Central Record
- 1/29/06 E-mail from Sharon Rosequist to Camille Fernicola
- 1/30/06 E-mail from David Kunz of Sussex County, providing GIS information on Drainage Inlets (as requested by Susan Zellman)
- 2/1/06 E-mail from Scott Moore of TWT to Camille Fernicola, forwarding a 1/29/06 E-mail from Joe Ferrucci
- 2/2/06 Letter from Richard Stein (of Laddey, Clark & Ryan Attorneys at Law, representing Ben Dellamo) to Al Eugene
- 2/3/06 E-mail from Leigh Ann Von Hagen to Camille Fernicola
- 2/3/06 E-mail from Marvin Joss (Netcong Administrator) to Leigh Ann Von Hagen, copied to Camille Fernicola
- 2/7/06 E-mail from Emil Donatello to Camille Fernicola

We believe the foregoing minutes to be an accurate summary of the meeting and related decisions and commitments. Failing written notification to the contrary, after ten days of the date of this Memorandum, will consider these minutes a statement of fact.