



COUNTY OF BERGEN / COUNTY OF ESSEX
Local Concept Development Study for
Kingsland Avenue (De Jessa Memorial) Bridge
Township of Lyndhurst and Township of Nutley, New Jersey



PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER MEETING NO. 2 - LYNDHURST
SUMMARY REPORT

DATE: Thursday, December 12, 2019
TIME: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Lyndhurst Senior Citizen Center
250 Cleveland Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ
ATTENDEES: Sign-In Sheets (*available upon request*)

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of the Public Information Center meeting is to inform the public of the Purpose and Need Statement and to solicit public input and comment on the conceptual alternatives and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) for bridge improvements. This meeting was conducted in conformance with Federal and State regulations

MEETING SUMMARY

1. A total of eighteen (18) individuals signed-in at the Public Information Center (PIC) meeting in the Township of Lyndhurst from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thirteen (13) project team members were in attendance.
2. The meeting was designed as an open house format with display boards to provide project information for viewing by the general public and to provide reference in addressing any questions from the public.
3. Two handouts were available at the sign-in table: (1) PIC Project Information handout and (2) blank PIC Comment Form, which were distributed to the general public upon sign-in to the meeting (*handouts attached*). The PIC Comment Form could be completed to hand in at the meeting or could be faxed, emailed or mailed to the Bergen County Project Manager Joseph Baladi, PE or to the Essex County Project Manager Luis E. Rodriguez.
4. The project display boards presented during the open house included: (1) aerial map of each of the conceptual alternatives and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative, (2) cross sections of the existing and proposed new bridge, (4) bridge profiles indicating possible heights of the bridge over the Passaic River for accommodating marine traffic and (3) environmental screening map indicating resources and constraints.
5. A screen presentation area was available with seating for viewing the PowerPoint presentation, which was presented at 2:30 p.m. After introductions from the Project Team, Mayor Giangeruso of Lyndhurst welcomed everyone on behalf of the Township.
 - (a) The Mayor noted that they have been discussing and studying the bridge since 2006 and the that bridge improvements are long overdue. The bridge is very old and there is concern that someone



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may get injured when the intersections are so badly congested each day and drivers have no patience or courtesy. The Township is interested in any way to obtain improvements to relieve the traffic situation.

- (b) Joseph Femia, Bergen County Engineer, thanked everyone for coming to the public meeting and Mayor Giangeruso for opportunity to present the information to the community. The Bridge Study has taken too long and Bergen County is pleased that the NJTPA finally received a letter from the U.S. Coast Guard for the vertical clearance over the river, so the County can now move forward in recommending replacing the old bridge with a fixed bridge that can better handle the traffic volumes. Now that the team has received answers from the Federal agencies, we can move the project forward with approval using Federal funding.
 - (c) Joseph Abruscato asked to express comments concerning the bridge introducing himself as a resident and former Lyndhurst Commissioner. Mr. Abruscato noted that the Kingsland Avenue Bridge is in disgraceful condition with backups that have been going on for 10 to 15 years and he feels it is dangerous and is very concerned that if the bridge should collapse people could be fatally injured. Residents can't get out of their driveways with the traffic that backs up worse since a second signal was placed in Nutley at Route 21 ramps. He is also concerned about access for ambulances and fire trucks.
 - (d) Martine Culbertson, Meeting Facilitator, responded that the County had received Mr. Abruscato's letter and it would be included in the 30-day comments period of written comments received. Bruce Riegel noted that the bridge rating is poor, however all bridges are inspected by the State every two years and the Kingsland Bridge is currently open to all traffic and is not load posted. If the bridge's condition were to worsen, it may need to be load posted, meaning weight restricted to only cars or small trucks. The frequency of inspections could change to six months or annually if conditions warrant. Currently the bridge is inspected every two years and is open to all vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians.
 - (e) Comments were expressed by another individual suggesting that NJDOT or who ever is responsible to consider placing painted arrows on the roadway in the area of the underpass of Route 21 so drivers know which lane to be in. There is road rage but roadway striping may help for drivers to be clear which lane to be in.
 - (f) Martine Culbertson thanked individuals for their comments and asked that they and other attendees to please complete the PIC Comment Form to provide written comments that the Project Team can review and forward to the agencies who may have jurisdiction over the signals and roadway improvements beyond the bridge study project limits. This project will take into consideration the comments in proposing bridge and approach roadway intersection improvements. The Project Team will coordinate with the jurisdictional agencies responsible for any short-term improvements that may be possible.
6. Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, provided project information via power point presentation slides with the following key points. The presentation slides are available on the project web site: www.kingslandavenuebridge.com under Community Outreach documents.



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- (a) Currently, the project is in the Local Concept Development (LCD) phase, shown in blue on the Local Project Delivery Process. The table shows all the phases and list of the elements of each phase.
 - (b) The Concept Development Flow Chart shows the steps that have been completed including data collection, establishing a Purpose and Need Statement, developing conceptual alternatives and a comparison matrix analysis to recommend a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) to move forward to the preliminary engineering and final design phases.
 - (c) Slides provided photos and information on the project site and the condition of the existing bridge based on recent Bridge Inspection Reports.
 - (d) The LCD schedule is listed on the backside of the updated Project Information handout distributed at the meeting and it is posted on the project website. With each phase requiring an estimated 18 to 24 months, construction of the new bridge at least five years from the close of the LCD Study.
7. Lynn Alpert, Senior Architectural Historian from RGA (*formerly Richard Grubb & Associates*), explained that part of the screening conducted during the Bridge Study includes identification of any cultural resources such as archeological or historic features within the study limits.
- (a) The bridge itself is a potential element eligible for the National Historic Register which will be addressed in the design phases in coordination with the permitting agencies such as the NJDEP and NJSHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) to develop a cohesive plan for the bridge improvements that minimizes or mitigates any potential adverse impacts.
 - (b) As a historic bridge eligible for the National Historic Register, the bridge's history would be documented, photographed and based upon agency review, may include an interpretive display or sign of the existing bridge.
8. Rob Piel, Environmental Project Manager, from Amy Greene Consultants, explained the environmental process and the screening conducted during the Bridge Study. The environmental constraints screening map display board identifies the environmental resources and permits required for the proposed improvements.
- (a) Any transportation project receiving Federal funding must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. 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.
 - (b) The screening of environmental resources helps to determine the permit requirements needed during the design and construction phases. It also identifies any resources that require further investigation or studies to determine adverse impacts. The Passaic River is a known superfund clean-up site under the jurisdiction of the EPA which is currently underway. The screening for the bridge study has been completed and no significant or critical items were found that would require additional effort or impact to the project schedule.
9. The Bridge LCD Study also included a Navigational Study of the Passaic River, which Bruce Riegel provided an overview via slides. The results of the Navigational Study were presented to the Federal
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Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and identified commercial and/or recreational users of the river for determining the navigational clearances needed for vessels needing to pass beneath the bridge.

- (a) The USACOE's Navigational Study for the USEPA's Lower Passaic River Restoration Project was also included in the NJTPA's Navigation Impact Report.
 - (b) For the Kingsland Avenue Bridge, the Navigation Impact Report concluded that the Passaic Valley Sewer Commission (PVSC) uses the river and has skimmer vessels that clean debris from the river for the recreational users and needs at least 16' clearance to navigate under bridges at high tide. However, there are alternative skimmer vessels that need less than 12' vertical clearance, which would allow the bridge to be replaced with a fixed bridge vs. a movable bridge, which is much less costly to construct and maintain.
 - (c) The USCG will permit a replacement fixed bridge providing 12' vertical clearance if PVSC is provided a new vessel that meets this clearance requirement.
10. Bruce Riegel then noted the input received from the community outreach meetings held to date in developing conceptual alternatives to meet the goals and objectives listed in the approved Purpose and Need Statement (*distributed at Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 in 2017 and is posted on the project web site*). Input comments received at the prior round of community outreach meetings were presented via slides that included: Local Officials meetings, Community Stakeholders meetings and prior Public Information Center meetings sessions.
11. Brian Medino, Project Engineer from Hardesty & Hanover, provided an overview of each of the Conceptual Alternatives developed and referred to the completed comparison of alternatives matrix display board.
- (a) Brian explained for each new bridge alternative, the cross section would be six-foot sidewalks, two travel lanes in the eastbound direction and three travel lanes in the westbound direction. The outside lanes will be 15' wide to accommodate bicyclists. The recommended bridge roadway section supported by both Counties is for three lanes westbound and two lanes eastbound.
 - (b) The display boards at the meeting show the existing and new bridge cross sections as well as the bridge profile (height of the bridge) and the proposed preliminary traffic detour plans.
 - (c) The completed comparison of alternatives matrix was presented with Brian Medino explaining why other conceptual alternatives were dismissed and why the (Concept 3C) Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) is recommended as best meeting the project needs and is most beneficial while minimizing adverse impacts.
 - (d) There was a brief review of the proposed traffic detour plan as it is not possible for the bridge to remain open during construction. The detour plans will be discussed and developed in more detail during the design phase once additional engineering is completed along with traffic analyses. The duration of the construction is estimated to be 18-24 months.
12. Below are the questions and comments received by attendees during and after the presentation, noted by Project Team members as follows:
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- *Question #1:* What is the significant impact to the project if the bridge is eligible on the State Historic Register?

Response #1: The Section 106 process is required for this bridge project, so the required studies, and appropriate documentation will be completed in the next phase (Preliminary Engineering) will include a Memorandum of Agreement for mitigation; which could involve photographs and a possible public interpretive sign. The project team doesn't anticipate any delays in the schedule with completing the Section 106 process as part of the overall work schedule.

- *Comment/Question #2:* I attended prior outreach meetings and wish to know what has happened since the last set of meetings where stakeholders looked at concepts. What's new?

Response #2: The engineering and environmental data was entered into the comparison of alternatives and presented to local officials and now community stakeholders and the public to obtain input on the recommended Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) Concept 3C (*green shaded column on the matrix*) and with support by the communities and agencies, it could be advanced to the local preliminary engineering phase.

- *Question #3:* With four years to construction are there other environmental considerations that may take longer or delay the project?

Response #3: The environmental constraints screening indicates there are no environmental issues that would impact the schedule for the project.

Additional Response #3: The determination of the vertical clearance by the U.S. Coast Guard from the Navigational Impact Report (NIR) completed for the project caused the nearly two-year delay. The 16' skimmer was a controlling factor for the fixed bridge clearance, however the bridge can have a 12' fixed vertical clearance using an alternate vessel. The USCG determined that one channel is acceptable with the new fixed bridge replacement as opposed to the two existing channels with the swing bridge.

- *Comment/Question #4:* Cars shift lanes often on the Park Avenue side. Could you please look into doing stripping on the roadway near the underpass now?

Response #4: The Project Team will forward this suggestion to NJDOT and Essex County to see what may be possible in the short term. Please provide written comments to support this request, which agencies will review and have on record, to enhance the verbal coordination.

- *Comment/Question #5:* Need to examine the detour route for issue in Belleville. They have requested a light form NJDOT at Main & Little. This needs to be examined with now more traffic occurring with the proposed closing the Kingsland Avenue Bridge for construction. There are a high number of accidents on Stevens to cross the bridge. Could you please look into doing stripping on the roadway near the underpass now?

Response #5: Please provide written comments to support this request, which the Project Team will then forward to NJDOT and have discussions in coordination with the agencies for further discussion during the design phases when more information will be developed on the proposed detour route(s).

- *Comment/Question #6:* The Belleville Bridge was closed for repairs and maintenance. Could all work be done on that bridge before the Kingsland Avenue Bridge is closed?



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Response #6: The Counties and cooperating agencies look to schedule construction project so to minimize overall traffic impacts not only to ease congestion if possible, but all for emergency access. There will be on-going coordination with traffic safety and OEM providers during the design phases to ensure traffic staging and mitigation plans are reviewed and approved to be implemented during construction. Any written comments regarding the proposed detour plans are welcome to assist in future coordination on this subject in the design and construction phases.

• *Comment/Question #7:* The Belleville Bridge was closed for repairs and maintenance. Could all work be done on that bridge before the Kingsland Avenue Bridge is closed?

Response #7: The Counties and cooperating agencies look to schedule the construction project to minimize overall traffic impacts; including emergency vehicle access. There will be on-going coordination with traffic safety and OEM providers during the design phases to ensure traffic staging and mitigation plans are reviewed and approved to be implemented during construction. Any written comments regarding the proposed detour plans are welcome to assist in future coordination on this subject in the design and construction phases.

• *Comment/Question #8:* The traffic volumes are so bad now. How much of an increase is expected that the bridge replacement can accommodate?

Response #8: The traffic studies were done as part of this phase and look at a 20-year span of growth and development. The proposed improvements will help relieve some of the traffic congestion by widening the bridge, however there are limitations on each side of the river with properties that prevent creating an even wider structure.

• *Comment/Question #9:* Can the traffic signals be better phased to help with car flow?

Response #9: The three traffic signals will be upgraded with ITS features as part of the design improvements when the bridge is replaced. The Project Team has a coordination meeting with both Counties and the NJDOT to see what adjustments are possible with the three traffic signals that are under three different jurisdictions to see if short-term improvements may be possible.

13. At the end of the presentation, Joseph Femia, Bergen County Engineer noted it is a long process but the County is hopeful the project will progress to replace the bridge as soon as possible with Federal funding. Mayor Giangeruso thanked attendees for their time and the Project Team for presenting the project information and listening to community concerns. Attendees were encouraged to take copies of the handouts to share information with others. The 30-day comment period ends as of Friday, January 17, 2020 for the purpose and need. The next step will be to request letters of resolution of support by the Township of Lyndhurst, the Township of Nutley and both the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Bergen County and of Essex County.
14. The attendees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to view and comment on the bridge study and possible bridge improvements. The presentation, display board images and handouts will be available under Community Outreach on the project web site: www.kingslandavenuebridge.com
15. The PIC meeting session open house adjourned at 4:00 p.m.



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16. Two (2) completed PIC Comment Forms were received at the meeting (2-4 p.m.).

Additional Notes:

17. During the 30-day public meeting comment period, a total of thirteen (13) submitted written comments were received, which ended on Friday, January 17, 2020. The PIC Comments received are in a separate file on the project web site with the personal contact information marked out (redacted). The PIC Meeting Summary Reports and PIC Comments Received files are posted on the project web site under the Community Outreach section.

18. Please note that any responses to PIC comments are reflected in the Frequently Asked Questions on the project website (www.kingslandavenuebridge.com). The input from the comments received at the meeting and via email were on the PPA proposed bridge improvements, approach roadway intersections and/or proposed traffic detour plans.

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

Kingsland Avenue Bridge LCD Study Project Team