



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 - NUTLEY
SUMMARY REPORT

DATE: Thursday, December 12, 2019
TIME: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Nutley Parks & Recreation Building, Room 300
44 Park Avenue, Nutley, 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 thirteen (13) individuals signed-in at the Public Information Center (PIC) meeting in the Township of Nutley from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 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 County of Bergen Project Manager Joseph Baladi, PE or to County of Essex 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 6:30 p.m. After introductions from the Project Team, Mayor Joseph Scarpelli of Nutley welcomed everyone on behalf of the Township.
 - (a) Mayor Scarpelli expressed his appreciation for those attending the meeting and impressed with those who are attending both sessions for their support for the bridge study. The Mayor noted that



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the bridge and traffic issues have been discussed and studied for years so hopefully the bridge improvements, which are much needed, will help solve the traffic concerns.

- (b) David Antonio, Essex County Project Manager, thanked everyone for coming to the public meeting and for the opportunity to present the information. The County of Essex is looking to fix the bridge and related problems concerning traffic as the Mayor expressed. Essex County is pleased that the NJTPA received the U.S. Coast Guard letter for the bridge vertical clearance over the river, so the project can move forward.
 - (c) Martin Maver, Bergen County Project Engineer, also thanked attendees for participating in this meeting. He noted it is a long process, but necessary when using Federal funding. The County is hopeful the project will progress to replace the bridge as soon as possible now that the team has received answers from the Federal agencies, the project will move forward with approval using Federal dollars.
 - (d) Martine Culbertson, Meeting Facilitator, explained that the purpose of this public meeting is to present the concepts developed at prior outreach meetings for bridge improvements and to compare each as displayed in the completed alternatives matrix to recommend the alternative concept that best meets the needs while minimizing impacts. She explained the project information handout provides the schedule and web site address and the PIC Comment Form is 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 can coordinate with the jurisdictional agencies responsible for any short-term improvements that may be possible concerning traffic signals.
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.
- (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 the new bridge replacement is will commence at least five years from the close of the LCD Study.



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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 that as part of future phases 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 a 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 determines the permit requirements needed during the design and construction phases. It also identifies 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 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 cleans 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.
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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 section 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 (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:

- *Question #1:* Is all the information on the web site?

Response #1: The power point presentation, display boards of each concept including the PPA (Preliminary Preferred Alternative), the alternatives comparison matrix and the environmental constraints map will be posted to the project web site after the public meeting. The handouts and other community outreach documents such as the environmental constraints map, meeting reports and information presented at the prior outreach meetings are also posted on the web site. It is also possible to submit written comments online.

- *Comment/Question #2:* With the bridge replacement improvements 4 to 6 years away, what can be done now? Can't the traffic signals be done now to help deal with the traffic?

Response #2: The Project Team has a coordination meeting with both Counties and the NJDOT in January 2020 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. In the future condition with the replacement of the bridge, it will be wider to accommodate more traffic capacity and the three



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traffic signals will be upgraded with ITS features as part of the design improvements when the bridge is replaced.

- *Question #3:* How will we know the outcome of the traffic signals coordination meeting?

- *Response #3:* As follow-up to the traffic signals coordination meeting, the project team will post on the project web site under Recent News, an update on traffic signal discussion and if short-term traffic signal improvements are feasible and can be implemented.

- *Question #4:* What kind of impact to the project is it if the bridge is eligible on the State or National Historic Register?

- *Response #4:* The Section 106 process is required for this bridge project with the required studies and documentation being completed in the next phase (Preliminary Engineering). The project team doesn't anticipate any delays in the schedule with completing the Section 106 process as part of the overall work schedule.

- *Question #5:* What is the current clearance under the bridge and what will it be when replaced?

- *Response #5:* The vertical clearance under the bridge will go from 7' MHW (mean high water) in the closed position to 12' over MHW with a fixed bridge. With the completion of the requested NIR (Navigational Impact Report), the U.S. Coast Guard made the determination for the vertical clearance. The 16' skimmer was a controlling factor for the fixed bridge clearance however, the new bridge can have a 12' fixed vertical clearance provided and an alternate vessel is procured by the Passaic Valley Sewer Commission. The U.S. Coast Guard also determined that one 75' channel is acceptable for navigation with the fixed bridge as opposed to the two existing channels with the current swing bridge.

- *Question #6:* Will the roadway under Route 21 be wider?

- *Response #6:* The roadway will be approximately 3' wider to accommodate a pedestrian sidewalk. A 6' sidewalk is preferred for pedestrians.

- *Question #7:* How many times did the bridge open?

- *Response #7:* The County bridge operators maintain the bridge logs. From 2012 – 2014, the logs indicate there were no bridge openings. In 2015 there was dredging activity so there were openings for the barges doing clean-up work. There have been no bridge openings for the past 3 to 4 years.

- *Question #8:* Is there more dredging planned?

- *Response #8:* There are no current plans since the Passaic River in the vicinity of the Kingsland Avenue Bridge has been de-authorized. The EPA will be completing clean-up work in the lower Passaic River in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as dredging is under their jurisdiction. De-authorization means that the Army Corps is no longer maintaining the river channel.

- *Additional Response#8:* The Passaic River water will still have recreational boating activity. Navigation of the Passaic River is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard. The U.S. Coast Guard maintains the navigable channel along the river.

- *Comment/Question #9:* There is poor lighting in the underpass and where left turns are done on to Route 21, is a constant dangerous area. Can NJDOT do something to be safer?



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Response #9: The Project Team will share this comment with NJDOT during the team's coordination meeting with both Counties and the NJDOT in January 2020 to see what action needs to be taken.

Additional Comment#9: It is very help if this comment is submitted in writing so the Project Team can forward it and other such concerns to the appropriate jurisdictional agency.

13. At the end of the presentation and after questions were answered, the project team was available to answer additional questions and share information regarding the display boards and the presentation.
14. David Antonio, on behalf of Essex County thanked everyone for their input. He noted that it appears from comments during the open house that most are in favor of the bridge replacement and the County will work with the other agencies to see what interim relief may be possible with regards to integration of the traffic signals.
15. 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.
16. The attendees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to view and comment on the bridge study and the proposed intersection improvements. The presentation, display board images and handouts will be available under Community Outreach on the project web site: www.kingslandavenuebridge.com
17. The PIC meeting session open house adjourned at 8:00 p.m.
18. Three (3) completed PIC Comment Forms were received at the meeting (6-8 p.m.).

Additional Notes:

19. 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.
20. 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
