



COUNTY OF BERGEN / COUNTY OF ESSEX
Local Preliminary Engineering Phase for
Kingsland Avenue (Avondale and De Jessa Memorial) Bridge
over the Passaic River
Township of Lyndhurst and Township of Nutley, New Jersey



COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1
MEETING REPORT

DATE: Tuesday, April 25, 2023
 TIME: 2:00 p.m.
 LOCATION: Online via Microsoft Teams
 ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
Jose	Antunes	Passaic River Rowing Association
Jennifer	Brienza	Lyndhurst resident
Martin	Capiraso	Lyndhurst resident
Mohamad	Chabayta	Valley National Bank
Robert B.	Giangeruso	Mayor, Lyndhurst
Eric	Granholm, P.E.	Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission
Johanna	Heine	NJ TRANSIT Bus Service Planning
Brian	Intindola, P.E., P.P., CME, CPWM	Township Engineer, Lyndhurst
Matt	Kuczek	Three County Volkswagen
Bianca	Lantigua	Valley National Bank
Karen Gutierrez	Lojo	Office of the Mayor & Township Council, Belleville
Karen	McDermott	Lyndhurst resident
Evelyn	Nunez	Lyndhurst resident
Steve	Rasczyk	Lyndhurst resident
Don	Schlosser	
Frank J.	Venezia	Lyndhurst High School
Roy	Woodford	
Lt. Paul	Haggerty	Lyndhurst Police Department
Lt. Nick	Coviello	Lyndhurst Police Department
Chief Richard L.	Jarvis	Lyndhurst Police Department

PROJECT TEAM		
First Name	Last Name	Title
Joseph	Baladi, P.E., P.P., CME	Division Head – Planning/Project Manager, Bergen County Planning & Engineering
Martin	Maver, P.E.	Principal Engineer-Bridges, Bergen County Planning & Engineering
Peter	Botsolas	Senior Advisor to the County Executive, Bergen County
Adam	Camerlengo	Engineering Aide, Bergen County Planning & Engineering
Luis E.	Rodriguez	Assistant County Engineer, Essex County Division of Engineering
Bruce	Riegel, P.E.	Project Manager, Hardesty & Hanover
Brian	Medino, P.E.	Deputy Project Manager, Hardesty & Hanover



PROJECT TEAM		
First Name	Last Name	Title
Matthew	Witkowski, P.E.	Traffic Engineer, Hardesty & Hanover
Megan	Lawlor, P.E.	Highway Engineer, Hardesty & Hanover
Sue	Quackenbush, PWS	Environmental Specialist, Davey Resource Group
Melyssa	Garcia	Senior Environmental Scientist, Davey Resource Group
Paul	McEachen, RPA	Principal Senior Archaeologist, Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.
Martine	Culbertson	Community Involvement Facilitator, M.A. Culbertson, LLC
Val	Aylesworth	Project Assistant, M.A. Culbertson, LLC

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule for the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Kingsland Avenue (Avondale and De Jessa Memorial) Bridge Replacement over the Passaic River from community stakeholders (see attached Agenda).

ONLINE MEETING GUIDELINES

Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, welcomed participants to the online meeting and noted the following meeting guidelines:

- a) Contact information was provided and posted in the Chat for anyone experiencing audio or visual technical difficulty.
- b) Questions or comments could be typed into the Chat and would be addressed by the Project Team during the Q&A portion of the meeting.
- c) The meeting was recorded to assist in creating a meeting summary report for Project Team use only. The recording will not be posted to the project website.
- d) Some Project Team members' cameras were on during introductions as a courtesy while welcoming participants. Attendees could have cameras on during introductions. During the presentation, to maintain focus on the presentation slides, cameras would be off and everyone, except the presenter/speaker, would be muted. Cameras could be turned on again during the Q&A session.
- e) Meeting would be adjourned once Q&A was completed with all questions addressed, Next Steps were presented and Closing Remarks were made.
- f) Muting/unmuting and raising/lowering hand instructions were provided for those participating via phone (audio only).

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome & Introductions

Martine introduced the Project Team via a presentation slide listing the key individuals by their affiliation. After introductions of the Project Team, Martine explained that due to the large number of attendees and for efficient use of time, participants would be asked to introduce themselves and their affiliation during the Q&A session when providing comments or asking questions.

2. Opening Remarks

Joseph Baladi, Bergen County Division Head – Planning and Bergen County Project Manager for this bridge replacement, welcomed everyone on behalf of Bergen County and their Board of Commissioners. He thanked participants for their interest in this bridge project and in attending today's meeting. Bergen County has completed the Local Concept Development (LCD) Study and the bridge is to be replaced. The project is now in the LPE phase.

- a) This is an essential bridge crossing and an important bridge replacement project. The County would like to see the design advance as efficiently as possible and appreciates the support provided by both municipalities.
- b) The LPE phase contract was awarded to the Hardesty and Hanover (H&H) Design Team. H&H then presented the project overview and information on the LPE phase.

3. Project Overview – LPE Phase

Bruce Riegel, H&H Project Manager, presented the project overview of the Local Capital Delivery Process. When using Federal funding for transportation improvements, there are specific phases and steps to be implemented. He provided the project schedule and discussed key schedule dates, scope of LPE phase work, and the fixed bridge plans as determined as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) at the close of the LCD phase.

- a) Project Status and Schedule was provided, indicating key anticipated dates for each major milestone phase:
 - The LPE phase began in August 2022 and the estimated completion is Spring 2024.
 - The Final Design (FD) phase that includes final design plans, environmental permits and completion of the right-of-way process is anticipated from Summer 2024 to Summer 2026.
 - Provided all right-of-way and permits are secured, the Construction phase is estimated to begin Fall 2026 and be completed by Spring 2028.
- b) The LPE work effort involves completing the environmental documentation (Categorical Exclusion) and the preliminary engineering studies, plans and reports. The overall purpose of the bridge replacement project is to address the structural, geometric, and operational deficiencies and to provide safe, efficient, and reliable passage for all users and modes of transportation.

4. Bergen County Kingsland Avenue (Avondale and De Jessa Memorial) Bridge over the Passaic River

Bruce Riegel and Brian Medino, H&H Deputy Project Manager, presented, via PowerPoint slides, the proposed fixed bridge replacement and approach roadway intersection improvements with associated environmental considerations, which received resolutions of support from the municipalities and the Counties.

Bruce Riegel noted that the critical path items for this LPE phase schedule are primarily environmental studies/documentation as well as coordination with regulatory agencies.

- a) The approved Project Purpose and Need Statement with the goals and objectives and the key criteria determined during the LCD phase were presented, which resulted in the selection of a new fixed bridge replacement.
- b) Brian Medino presented the fixed bridge replacement structure and associated improvements at the approach roadway intersections:

- The new bridge will be wider (total width 78 feet) to accommodate an additional westbound lane so there will be two lanes eastbound and three lanes westbound with 6-foot sidewalks on both sides.
 - The outside lane on each side will be 15-feet in width with shared use of vehicle and bicycle compatibility.
 - There will be approach roadway intersection improvements including traffic signal phasing, pedestrian countdown heads, painted cross walks and ADA-compatible curb ramps to enhance pedestrian safety and mobility.
- c) Renderings were provided to show what the new bridge would look like from an aerial view and from a river view. The aerial view shows the bridge cross section with number of lanes and sidewalks. These images were created to assist in visualizing the new bridge and are posted on the project website for the public to view.
- d) A list of the LPE work effort provided information on the engineering and environmental steps which are on-going during this phase of the project. The steps are required by the Federal process to develop the preliminary engineering plans and environmental resources documentation.
- e) A proposed detour route was presented because the existing bridge cannot remain open to traffic during replacement. This is due to the swing span truss structure. The bridge will be closed and there will be a detour route anticipated for an estimated eighteen (18) month duration. There will be continued coordination with both municipalities and the Counties to review further details regarding the proposed detour plan to ensure safe alternative travel for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists during construction.
- f) The environmental screening done during the LCD phase was presented showing an environmental resources constraints map. A review of the environmental documentation to be completed during the LPE phase was provided. The tasks include the environmental and cultural resource studies required during this phase in order to obtain the necessary permits during the FD phase and for Construction.
- g) Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator from M.A. Culbertson, LLC, presented Community Involvement meetings from the prior LCD phase and those held and anticipated for the LPE phase.
- Dates of previous LCD phase outreach meetings with local officials, community stakeholders, and the public information center meetings were provided.
 - Future online meetings will be scheduled to share project information and obtain input as the preliminary design progresses.
 - The current LPE phase is mainly to advance the PPA and develop more details regarding the footprint for the bridge replacement and approach roadway intersection improvements and to identify right-of-way and environmental impacts to mitigate. The right-of-way process to discuss any temporary or permanent easements directly with property owners would occur during the FD phase, when the County would be authorized with Federal funding to negotiate with individual property owners.
 - The project website contains past LCD phase information and current LPE phase progress. Please visit the website to view Recent News and can submit comments on the Contact Us page: www.kingslandavenuebridge.com
 - Joe Baladi is the key contact as the Bergen County Project Manager and the project email address for any questions/comments is kingslandavenuebridge@gmail.com

- Any questions or comments for Luis Rodriguez, Essex County Assistant Engineer, can be submitted to same project email address: kingslandavenuebridge@gmail.com

5. Community Input – Comments & Questions (Q&A Session)

At the end of the presentation slides, the meeting was opened for community input by participants.

- Comments and questions in the Chat box were read first, as they were received.
- Participants were asked to use the Raise Hand option and unmute to verbally share comments and questions.
- Those connected by phone audio were invited to unmute if they wished to provide comments or questions.
- Q&A continued with additional questions entered into Chat and participants with raised hands and unmuting.

The following questions and comments were addressed during Q&A:

a) Southern detour route consideration

Comment: The Lyndhurst Township Engineer indicated the NJDOT and the Township of Belleville are planning an improvement affecting the southern detour route on the Belleville side. The improvement will allow a direct left turn from Main Street onto Route 7 (Rutgers Street). It is anticipated that the new direct left will be installed prior to the implementation of the construction detour route.

Response: The Project Team will review the timing of that improvement project and take into consideration any traffic impacts that may be related to the proposed detour plans for the bridge replacement. The detour route shown in the presentation is one alternative and other possibilities will be reviewed. The Project Team appreciates feedback on alternative detour routes.

b) Consideration for waterway users

Comment/Question #1: Recreational users of the river, such as crew/rowing teams, currently have an up channel and a down channel allowing two-way travel. The presentation slide with the river view rendering shows only one channel, which may create a bottleneck for crew boats. Two boats need to be able to pass side-by-side in main channel or use other areas between the piers.

Response #1: The Project Team will coordinate with the crew representatives to determine the width needed for two boats to pass simultaneously and also determine the largest width the piers could be placed from each other. The main waterway channel is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard, who will review the proposed main channel width for approval and will provide the permit needed for the bridge replacement.

Question #2: The detour for land traffic (pedestrian and vehicle) was discussed, but what will the case be water traffic, recreational and non-recreational?

Response #2: The navigational waterway channel of the Passaic River will remain open to boaters and mariners. If there are any temporary closures during construction, the Project Team would notify the municipalities and any mariners or boaters noted on our project contact list. The navigational channel is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard and they would post a Local Public Notice to Mariners on their website for any disruption of access to the navigable channel.

Note: *It would be helpful to know the extent of the crew/rowing season and other activities for which the river is used.*

c) Construction timing

Questions: When will the construction phase begin? Are there any obstacles anticipated?

Response: The anticipated start of the Construction phase is Fall 2026 with an estimated eighteen (18) months duration for the bridge detour and building of the new fixed bridge. The Project Team is working on environmental documentation and with the State Historic Preservation Office since the bridge is historic. Environmental permits may limit the Contractor's water access, which may impact the timing and duration of construction. Tentatively, the estimated timing of the bridge replacement is to be completed by Spring of 2028.

d) Effects of construction on local businesses

Question: What would happen to the businesses around this area?

Response: Access to all existing driveways for residents and businesses will be maintained during the construction phase. The Project Team is minimizing any right-of-way needed to replace the bridge. During the Construction phase, any temporary disruption to traffic and access would be posted to the project website for motorists to allow extra time when in the area of construction activity.

e) Concerns about damage to homes

Questions: What systems are in place for homeowners who might experience damage to their properties during construction of the project? In your experience, how likely is damage and in what proximity to the construction did/might that occur?

Response: Vibration monitoring will be part of the construction contract. The Contractor will provide pre-construction surveys of properties within a defined radius from the bridge project area. The Contractor on bridge replacement projects looks to minimize any damage to the surrounding environment. That is the case on all transportation projects where the intent is to construct with minimal impacts. Any potential damage would be submitted to the Contractor for processing.

f) Utilities (Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission)

Question: Will there be vibration monitoring on the Nutley side for utilities and their protection, given our assets were constructed about 100-years ago? We can provide our vibration monitoring requirements, if needed.

Response: The Project Team has begun coordination with the utility companies and agencies during the LPE phase. The coordination will continue during the FD and Construction phases. The Project Team would appreciate receiving any vibration monitoring information as well as maps of the utility locations in the vicinity of the bridge.

g) Local Concept Development Study and funding

Question: Is the study complete and was the money allocated?

Response: The LCD phase was completed in June 2020 with Federal funding. The State and Federal agencies concurred on the recommended PPA to replace the existing bridge with a new fixed span bridge. Federal funds have been provided to implement and complete the LPE phase of the project. It is anticipated that funds would be allocated at the appropriate time needed, to implement FD and Construction of the bridge replacement, respectively.

6. Next Steps

In summary, the next steps are the engineering and environmental studies to help further advance the preliminary design for the bridge replacement and associated approach roadway improvements.

The next outreach meeting will be an online Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting. The meeting will be scheduled when preliminary engineering plans and environmental studies have been further advanced and are ready to present to the general public for input. Community stakeholders are welcomed to join the PIC Meeting as well as members of the general public.

In the meantime, the project website will provide information for those interested in the project. The website includes a form to submit questions and comments. Communication with the Project Team is possible via the project email address (kingslandavenuebridge@gmail.com).

7. Closing Remarks

The Mayor of Lyndhurst, Hon. Robert Giangeruso, thanked the team for the presentation and the opportunity to share with the community. However, he also expressed his frustration at the length of time it takes to design and replace the bridge. Their effort to address the traffic and bridge issues dates to 2006.

- The Project Team noted that specific steps and phases have been progressing since 2016 as directed by the Federal process implemented at that time. They are required in order for Bergen County to receive Federal funding for the bridge replacement.
- The program requires reviews, approvals and concurrence from a number of State and Federal agencies. FHWA approval for advancing the project was dependent on U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) clearance for a fixed bridge replacement, instead of a moveable bridge, in this location. Bergen County waited more than a year after the LCD phase was completed for USCG pre-determination approval of the vertical clearance.
- Time was then needed to advertise the Request for Proposals (RFP) and award the LPE phase of the project.
- Please note that bridge replacement or repair efforts which occurred during Superstorm Sandy, were an exception due to the emergency nature, however they still had to comply with State and Federal requirements.

Peter Botsolas, Bergen County Senior Advisor to the County Executive, expressed the strong commitment, which the County Commissioners have in making this bridge replacement happen. It is an important priority for Bergen County and they will continue to support this project advancing as soon as possible, while meeting the requirements for Federal funding.

Luis Rodriguez, Assistant County Engineer of Essex County and Essex County Project Manager for this project, extended appreciation to everyone on behalf of Essex County. The success of this meeting and the project is supported by Essex County Commissioners. They also support efforts to advance this bridge replacement from design to construction.

In closing, Joseph Baladi, Bergen County Division Head – Planning and Bergen County Project Manager, thanked local officials and the attendees for their time and participation in today's meeting. The valuable input provided by participants is appreciated and is helpful with continued support from the communities and officials.

Bergen County supports connectivity for all modes of transportation. The County will continue to coordinate with the Township of Lyndhurst and the Township of Nutley to complete this LPE phase

and manage this project through design and construction of the new bridge and needed improvements.

The meeting adjourned by 3:10 p.m.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. The Hardesty & Hanover Team will continue the engineering and environmental studies and continue coordination with utilities.
2. A meeting summary report will be posted on the project website, with the presentation pdf file, after review and approval by Bergen County and Essex County.
3. Public Information Center (PIC) meeting notice letters will be provided a minimum of two weeks prior to the determined meeting date. The PIC notice letters will be mailed to property owners within 500' of the project limits and to community stakeholders who provided a mailing address at prior outreach meetings. The PIC meeting notice will also be distributed by email blast to all on the project contact list who provided an email address.
4. Please submit any information you wish to share with the Project Team via the project email address: kingslandavenuebridge@gmail.com

NEXT MEETING

Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1

Date: Fall 2023/Winter 2024 - *To be determined (TBD)*

Time: *TBD*

Location: *Online - Teams meeting link to be provided*

We believe the foregoing to be an accurate summary of discussions and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to the minutes within five (5) working days of receipt. Without notification, these minutes will be considered to be record of fact.

Kingsland Avenue (Avondale and De Jessa Memorial) Bridge Replacement Project Team





COUNTY OF BERGEN / COUNTY OF ESSEX
Local Preliminary Engineering Phase for
Kingsland Avenue (Avondale and De Jessa Memorial) Bridge
over the Passaic River
Township of Lyndhurst and Township of Nutley, New Jersey



Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule for the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Phase, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Kingsland Avenue Bridge Replacement over the Passaic River from community stakeholders.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- Project Overview & Update
- Local Project Delivery Process - Local Preliminary Engineering Phase

II. BERGEN COUNTY KINGSLAND AVENUE (AVONDALE & DE JESSA MEMORIAL) BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

- Project Status and Schedule
- LPE Work Effort – *Surveying and Bridge Structure*
- Environmental Process – *CED and Cultural Resources Study*
- Community Involvement – *Project Website and Public Outreach Meetings*

III. DISCUSSION

- Q & A - Community Input - *Interests, Issues, Improvements*

IV. NEXT STEPS

- Public Outreach:
Website Updates; Public Information Center (PIC) online - Fall 2023/Winter 2024
- Project Website: www.kingslandavenuebridge.com
- Project Email: kingslandavenuebridge@gmail.com
- Feedback and Closing Remarks

