



MONMOUTH COUNTY

Local Concept Development Study for Monmouth County Bridge S-32 on Rumson Road (CR520) over the Shrewsbury River Borough of Rumson and Borough of Sea Bright

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER SUMMARY MEETING REPORT

DATE: Wednesday, January 23, 2013
TIME: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Brief Presentation 6:30 p.m.)
LOCATION: Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School, Media Room
74 Ridge Road, Rumson, NJ

ATTENDEES: See attached Sign-In Sheets.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of Public Information Center Meeting No. 2 is to present the project status and schedule, inform the public of the conceptual alternatives and obtain public input and comment on the proposed Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) for Monmouth County Bridge S-32 on Rumson Road over the Shrewsbury River.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. A total of 45 attended the meeting as indicated on the Sign-In Sheets and a total of 13 project team members were in attendance to present information and assist with public questions. The meeting was designed as an open house format with display boards providing bridge condition information, environmental screening, alternatives analysis matrix, the preliminary preferred alternative and results of the community stakeholder meetings. The project team members were available to answer questions. A Project Information Update handout and blank Monmouth County Comment Form were distributed to the general public upon sign-in to the meeting. The Comment Form could be completed and handed in at the meeting or could be faxed, emailed or mailed to Monmouth County.
2. At 6:30 p.m., the brief presentation began with Monmouth County Freeholder John Curly welcoming everyone and opening the meeting on behalf of the Monmouth County. He thanked everyone for their tenacity and sense of community to pull together after super storm Sandy. The County has over nine hundred bridges and is committed to maintaining and replacing them as needed to ensure safety and economic vitality. Freeholder Curly thanked everyone for taking time to attend this meeting and asked Joseph Ettore, Monmouth County Engineer to provide information on the Rumson-Sea Bright project.

3. Joe Ettore welcomed everyone on behalf of Monmouth County, and the cooperating agencies of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. He asked the project team to introduce themselves and then explained that this bridge project is on track. However, the process requires several years and as a movable structure the bridge requires maintenance and repairs that can't wait. Due to its age, some parts are no longer made and must be fabricated. This is one of four movable bridges in the County that requires updating of the traffic gates and load system. These are needed repairs that the Freeholders scheduled to have done this year prior to the summer season.

a. The work was to be done in November, but due to super storm Sandy the work was delayed until next Monday, January 28; and until February 15th the bridge will be closed. However with the recent opening of businesses in Sea Bright, Freeholder Director Thomas Arnone was able to negotiate with the Contractor to work on week days only and open the bridge on weekends. The bridge will close after 9:00 am on Monday and re-open after 4:00 pm on Friday. This work is still expected to be completed by February 15, 2013..

b. There is another rehabilitation contract scheduled to begin shortly which will repair scour damage to the west abutment from Irene; , which was worsened by Sandy. This work will be done from below on barges in the water, so it will not impact roadway traffic directly.

c. This bridge improvement project is a long-term effort utilizing Federal funding and requiring compliance with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) , so comments from the public are invited and appreciated. The County recognizes the importance of this bridge to both local communities and the region.

4. Bruce Riegel, Hardesty& Hanover Project Manager presented information on the project status and photos showing the existing condition of the bridge via a power point presentation which will be posted on the Monmouth County web site.

(a) The existing Rumson Sea Bright Bridge S-32, was built in 1950 and is nearing the end of its useful life. Due to its age, and the extent of repairs needed, it has been concluded that the bridge needs to be replaced.

(b) The project work commenced in November 2011. Field survey work is done and preliminary base mapping and environmental screenings have been completed. The project team, upon coordination with both communities, developed a Project Purpose and Need Statement. Alternatives were developed which met the Project Purpose and Need as well as the goals and objectives of the project while minimizing environmental and Right of Way impacts.

(c) The Conceptual alternatives were discussed at Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2, and based upon that input, the project team determined that a northern alignment (Concept 2) or a southern alignment (Concept 3) were favorable for the new bridge construction. Concepts which minimized any widening of Route 36 (Ocean Avenue) were favorable as well as the cul-de-sac option at Rumson Road and Ward Avenue (to reduce conflicts at this intersection). Concepts which require the new bridge to be constructed with a temporary bridge or a long-term detour were not favorable to either community. New Alternatives were developed using project elements favorable to both communities; which were Concepts 3E & 3F. Bruce explained Concepts 3E and 3F, where Concept 3F can be built in two years rather than three and would provide use of the existing bridge fully until the new bridge is constructed. The cost of Concept 3F is also approximately \$ 11 million less than Concept 3E. As such, Concept 3F was proposed as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).

(d) Bruce also explained in his presentation that the Project Team dismissed Concept 2 due to higher Right of Way costs and the need to displace and relocate residents at the Anchorage Apartments.

(e) There is a 30-day comment period in which the County and agencies are seeking public input. All comments will become part of the Concept Development documentation. The County will ask the local officials of Rumson and Sea Bright for resolutions of support for the PPA to move to the design phase. This CD phase will be completed by April 2013.

5. The meeting was open for any questions or comments. The following questions and comments were noted:

- *Question:* How many feet to the south from the existing bridge is Concept 3F?

Response: The new bridge will be 67.5 feet in width, which is approximately 15 feet wider than the existing. The new bridge would be built 10 feet from the existing, so the shift is an estimated 30 feet difference from Concept 3E and 3F.

- *Question:* Will it be the same type of bridge?

Response: Yes, it will be a movable bridge similar to the existing bascule bridge.

- *Question:* How high would it have to be as a fixed bridge?

Response: It would have to provide a 65-foot clearance similar to the Route 36 Highlands Bridge.

- *Question:* Is there any height difference with the new moveable bridge?

Response: No, the profile or vertical clearance distance from the water, will remain the same.

- *Question:* Will there be any dredging of the river?

Response: Any dredging and maintenance of the river is under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction. There has been no information provided by USACE concerning dredging in this area of the Shrewsbury River. There will be on-going coordination with USACE during the design phase.

- *Question:* Has there been any changes due to super storm Sandy?

Response: There have been a lot of inquiries and some requests to re-evaluate the alternatives given the impacts of the storm.

- *Question:* Does funding change due to Sandy?

Response: The funding for the bridge replacement project comes from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding for transportation improvements. Damages incurred as a direct result of the storm may seek emergency funding through FEMA. The determination is done by the evaluations and the governing agency determination.

- *Comment/Question:* At the June Stakeholders Meeting, the most preferred alternative was the northern alignment if you count the dots, so why isn't it the preferred alternative?

Response: At the meeting in June, stakeholders identified the pros and cons they perceived from each alignment. The actual engineering information, right-of-way, environmental impacts and costs associated with each alternative were not quantified until after the meeting once all the data had been

gathered and then entered into the matrix. It is necessary to examine all the potential impacts and costs as shown in the alternatives analysis matrix to recognize the selection of the preferred alternative is based upon minimizing multiple impacts, not a single element.

Additional Response: As indicated in the Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 Report, the purpose of the dots exercise, was to visually provide indications of support or non-support for alternatives and approach improvements. It is only an indicator to assist the team in the development process as to which alternatives have potential for improvement and those, which are not favored by the communities. It is not intended for decision-making, but as guidance as to what concepts have potential and those that are not favored. It is the information on the alternatives matrix to be entered and analyzed, which will be used by the Agencies to determine a preferred alternative to move forward to design. The Federal agency reviewing this project for funding will examine all elements in the matrix and the comments received from the public as part of the Concept Development documentation.

- *Comment/Question:* With the Anchorage Apartments damaged and no one living there now, can the northern alignment be re-evaluated?

Response: The project team will re-examine any changes due to the storm and due to the large number of comments received regarding community interest in Concept 2, the northern alignment will be re-examined.

- *Question/Comment:* How will the intersection at Rumson Road be an improvement? South Ward is congested for in and out traffic especially with weekend parking. The cul-de-sac makes it worse.

Response: The existing intersection with the five points of access is a safety issue. The cul-de sac proposed at the stakeholders meeting was viewed as having potential for further analysis in the design phase. This improvement is within the Borough of Rumson jurisdiction, so support by the local officials in coordination with the County would be required. Please provide specific comments in writing, which will be helpful and shared with the local officials in addition to the project team and agencies.

- *Question:* What is the boat schedule, timing of the bridge openings?

Response: The amount of bridge openings is determined by the U.S. Coast Guard. The schedule of openings is under their jurisdiction. Any comments concerning bridge openings will be forwarded to the U.S. Coast Guard. There will be continued coordination with them during the design phase.

- *Question:* What is the difference from Concept 3E and 3F?

Response: There is a 30 foot difference since Concept 3F involves building the bridge next to the existing bridge with a 10 ten space between. Concept 3E would involve stage construction where part of the bridge is being built within the existing bridge footprint so there would be only one lane available in each direction and the construction would require 3 years rather than 2 years.

- *Comment/Question:* We are concerned about the traffic so close to the playground in West Park and with the Anchorage Apartments damaged and no one is living there now, can the northern alignment be re-evaluated?

Response: The project team will re-examine any changes due to the storm, however important to recognize that the Anchorage Apartments is a private property that involves right-of-way taking of multiple residential units.

- *Question/Comment:* Will there be methods to reduce noise as a result of the new bridge closer to the West Park neighborhood? Will there be berms in the park? The deck makes a lot of rattle noise now.

Response: Noise mitigation would be studied during the design phase and there is a material used for the bridge deck that could help to reduce noise from vehicles crossing the bridge.

- *Question/Comment:* Why were stakeholders concerned about the reliability of a temporary bridge structure? Temporary bridge structures are used on bridge replacement projects and are safe and reliable.

Response: The community stakeholders comments about ‘reliability’ was not in the structure itself but the narrow width of the lanes and sidewalks given the high volume of vehicles and pedestrians in this area during the summer months and the bridge being needed as an evacuation route. Also, if there were any construction delays, the temporary bridge will have to remain longer. .

- *Question:* With bridge open on weekends, will the repairs still be done within 3 weeks?

Response: Yes, if the contractor begins on Monday, January 28 the work should be completed by February 15th.

- *Question:* With the new bridge, how close will traffic be to the playground in West Park? What type of safety measures will there be?

Response: The playground lies in West Park, which is part of the Green Acres Program. As such any changes must be in compliance with the program. During the design phase, there will be on-going coordination with the community and agencies in developing enhancements in the park and the playground. Sidewalks are proposed as part of the enhancements.

- *Question:* What are the aesthetics?

Response: The new bridge would be an ‘in kind’ replacement, meaning the engineers would design the new bridge to be as similar to the existing as possible. Lighting on the bridge would be part of the design phase with input and coordination between the Boroughs and the County.

- *Question:* What about street lighting? Would you carry the lighting on to Ward Avenue?

Response: Street lighting and landscaping would be part of the design phase with input and coordination between the Boroughs and the County.

- *Question:* Are you on track for April?

Response: Yes, the project team continues to work towards meeting the project schedule of completing the Concept Development phase by April 2013.

- *Question:* Do you have a bicycle lane?

Response: The new bridge will provide bicycle compatibility. It will have eight-foot shoulders in each direction in which bicycles can travel..

- *Question:* Can you put a barrier between? (the cars and the sidewalk/shoulder)

Response: Due to the bridge as a movable structure, it would not be feasible due to the weight and openings of the bridge. Paint striping the shoulders, which is not there currently, may alert motorists and assist in safer passage for bicyclists.

- *Question:* When the old bridge is removed will there be dredging?

Response: Any dredging and maintenance of the river is under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction. There has been no information provided by USACE concerning dredging in this area of the Shrewsbury River. There will be on-going coordination with USACE during the design phase.

- *Question:* What is the height of the bridge from the water and will there be any change?

Response: The vertical clearance on the existing bridge at mean tidal water is 20 feet. There is no change in the vertical height in the proposed design.

- *Question:* Can you place the Matrix and Concept 3E and 3F display maps on the web site?

Response: The Alternatives Analysis Matrix, Concept 3E and Concept 3F, and the typical bridge section indicating the width will be posted on the Monmouth County web site upon approval in addition to the power point presentation.

6. In summary, Martine Culbertson, Meeting Facilitator, encouraged attendees to submit any comments or questions in writing either on the Comment Form, which can be handed in at the meeting or mailed, faxed or emailed to the County. Project team members were available to answer any specific questions for the next half hour around the display boards. The power point presentation and alternatives analysis matrix will be posted to the Monmouth County web site for further viewing and for those unable to attend the meeting.

7. In closing, Joe Ettore thanked attendees for taking the time to attend the PIC and provide comments. Monmouth County is working hard to move this bridge improvement project along in cooperation with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). All welcome community involvement and public input.

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 three (3) working days of receipt. Without notification, these minutes will be considered to be record of fact.

Martine Culbertson

Bridge S32 Community Involvement Facilitator