



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 NO. 1 MEETING REPORT

DATE: Monday, February 27, 2012
TIME: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Brief Presentation 2:00 p.m.)
LOCATION: Borough of Sea Bright Municipal Building, Gymnasium
1164 Ocean Avenue, Sea Bright, NJ
ATTENDEES: Sign-In Sheets available upon request

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this Public Information Center Meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input from the general public regarding community issues and interests associated with County Bridge S-32 on Rumson Road over the Shrewsbury River.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. A total of 51 individuals 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 and environmental screening. The project team members were available to answer questions. A Project Information Sheet 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 2:00 p.m. Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator began the presentation welcoming everyone on behalf of Monmouth County, and the cooperating agencies of North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.
3. After introductions by the project team members and attendees, Jon Moren, Monmouth County Principal Engineer, Bridges, provided information on the existing Rumson Sea Bright Bridge S-32, which was built in the early 1950s and is nearing the end of its life. Due to the age, the maintenance and repairs are escalating and it is time to examine whether the bridge is in need of major rehabilitation or replacement.

4. Sarbjit Kahlon, Principal Environmental Planner from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) is the Program Manager for this Study. She explained that the project is currently in the Local Concept Development phase, which will define the purpose and need, develop alternatives to meet those needs, and identify the Preferred Alternative for the next phases. If the No Build Alternative is not the preferred alternative, then, the project will move forward to the next phases of work: preliminary engineering and then to final design and construction. NJTPA will administer and oversee the project. Monmouth County will manage the project activities as the technical lead, working with the consultant team, led by Hardesty & Hanover (H&H). NJDOT will coordinate the environmental process.

5. Bruce Riegel, Hardesty& Hanover Deputy Project Manager presented information on the project status and photos showing the existing condition of the bridge.

(a) 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 is currently obtaining information on utility facilities in the project area and new traffic counts will be collected during the summer season to reflect seasonal traffic.

(b) Any transportation projects receiving Federal funding must follow the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. When analyzing alternatives, the project team will look to avoid environmental resources and if not, then to minimize and provide any mitigation. The environmental resources include wetlands, sensitive areas, air, noise, hazardous or contaminated sites, parks, open space and cultural resources such as historic structures and facilities. Community involvement is part of the environmental process.

(c) Input is needed now from the stakeholders and the public in developing the Project Purpose and Need. Bruce then provided information on the project schedule, which is listed on the Project Information Handout and on the Power Point presentation which will be posted on the Monmouth County web site. The Concept Development Phase is scheduled to be completed by April 2013 with a preferred alternative.

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

• *Question:* Can there be less bridge openings? There are severe back-ups especially in the summer.
Response: US Coast Guard controls/sets the bridge opening schedules. The project will examine what clearance, the profile and the amount of openings as part of the alternatives analysis.

• *Question:* What does it mean to be load posted?

Response: It means the bridge can only carry a certain weight. Above that weight limit the steel beams can not handle it. The weight limitation may prevent certain trucks and buses from using the bridge.

• *Question:* Will the new bridge be movable or fixed?

Response: It's too early in the process to determine the bridge type. The purpose of this meeting is to identify the problems and needs. Based upon the purpose and need statement, then alternatives such as rehabilitation or replacement will need to be evaluated and if replaced is selected what type works best.

- *Question:* Is the Army Corps and Coast Guard involved in this project?

Response: Yes, the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard are involved in the project as part of the Environmental Process. There will be an on-going coordination with both agencies.

- *Question:* Will transportation continue during construction?

Response: Maintaining traffic by keeping the bridge open during construction will be examined and added to the purpose and need statement for the project.

- *Question:* A bridge built in the 1950's doesn't seem that old. Was the maintenance not kept up so that it needs so much repair?

Response: The bridge has had continual maintenance and inspections, but the increased weight and volume of cars is far greater than 60 years ago. The bridge is showing its age and with movable parts exposed to the ocean environment causes wear and deterioration over time. Bridges today are designed for 75 years, so this bridge at 60 years with movable parts is reaching the end of its service life.

- *Question:* What are the key factors to deciding between rehabilitation or replacement?

Response: There are a number of aspects, which must be considered. The repairs may provide 30 years of service life where replacing the bridge would provide 75 years. Current design studies cost, constructability and environmental considerations will also be analyzed to determine which option best meets the project purpose and need.

- *Question:* Is this the same process that was done for the Route 36 Highlands Bridge?

Response: This Local Concept Development Study is a new process where there is more coordination among the agencies and will result in an preliminary preferred alternative. However, it is the same program and will follow the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process, as must all Federal funded projects.

- *Question:* Is there a chance for a movable bridge if replaced?

Response: Yes, however prior to selection of an alternative all options must be examined to determine which best meets the project purpose and need. This meeting is to determine what are the project needs and what improvements the community would like to see.

- *Question:* What will be done by April 2013?

Response: At the end of LCD scheduled phase of the project, the preliminary preferred alternative will be determined.

- *Question:* How much additional property is needed if the bridge is replaced?

Response: This early in the process it is difficult to determine the right-of-way impacts with this project. At this stage, the purpose of this meeting to identify existing problems and needs. Based upon the purpose and need statement, alternatives such as a replacement and its alignment will need to be analyzed and evaluated.

- *Question:* In examining an alignment south of the existing bridge, how much impact could there be to the neighborhood?

Response: The impacts to the neighborhood on the south side of bridge can vary significantly from small to large depending on the alignment of the bridge selected. The LCD study will evaluate impacts on the park, historic and cultural resources in the area with intent to minimize negative impacts to public park areas and right-of-way access to properties.

- *Question:* Is this information posted online?

Response: The Power Point Presentation will be posted on the Monmouth County web site.

- *Question:* Who makes the final decision on the bridge?

Response: Monmouth County is the owner and operator of the bridge and as such makes the final decision on the bridge rehab or replacement that complies with process. NJTPA and NJDOT provided the funding and oversight to ensure that Federal Funding can be used to fund the design, ROW acquisition and construction costs. NJTPA and the County will look to reach a concurrence among the permitting agencies, along with public input, on the alternative which best meets the needs of the project that complies with the FHWA process, whether that is the no build, a major rehabilitation or the type of replacement.

- *Question:* Who will decide if there is a conflict and unable to reach consensus?

Response: It is a Monmouth County bridge, but in order to obtain Federal funding, it will require the cooperating agencies to work together to find a preliminary preferred alternative, which the communities will support.

- *Question:* Will repairs continue to be done?

Response: Yes, there are regular bridge inspections to ensure the bridge is operating safely. Routine maintenance will continue as required.

- *Question:* Is there a date for construction?

Response: No, it still needs to be determined what the project needs are and determine what alternative best meets the needs, final design of the selected alternative, the then construction.

- *Question:* How long will this project take and how long if the bridge were to be replaced?

Response: The Local Concept Development phase is scheduled to be completed within 18 months, by April 2013. The average range of time for a bridge replacement is 18 to 24 months, but there are 3 more phases before the project is completed. An estimated time frame would be 3 to 5 years, provided the funding is available for the design and construction.

- *Question:* With this far in advance, how can we ensure that the community will be involved in what bridge will be replaced?

Response: Public meetings will be held as the project advances through each phase of design and then construction. Providing input at these public meetings will ensure community involvement. For this meeting, there is a Public Comment Form to share your interests, thoughts on what the problems are and what you would like to see for improvements. In addition to the general public meetings, there are also Community Stakeholder Meetings with representation from businesses, civic

organizations, schools, hospitals and local officials from Rumson, Sea Bright and the adjacent communities. The project team would also like neighborhood and residential representation. If interested, please provide your name to Inkyung Englehart, Monmouth County Project Coordinator at the Sign-In Table.

- *Question:* How do we know the project will make it to construction, is there funding for it?

Response: There is funding in place for the Concept Development Phase only and future funding will be programmed once it is determined what the preliminary preferred alternative is.

7. In summary, Jon Moren thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing comments. He noted that project Team members would continue to be available near the display boards should anyone have additional questions in looking at the information presented in the photos and the newsprint on the wall.

8. In closing the presentation, Martine encouraged anyone to submit their comments or any additional questions after the PIC meeting on the blank Comment Form or if in letter to the attention of the County Engineer, Joseph Ettore.

If interested in becoming a member of the Community Stakeholders Group, please provide your contact information to Inkyung Englehart. The next Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 will be held to obtain input for various alternatives developed to meet the Purpose and Need Statement.

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.

Bridge S32 LCD Study Project Team