



COUNTY OF HUDSON / COUNTY OF ESSEX

Local Concept Development Study for the Clay Street Bridge over the Passaic River in the Borough of East Newark, Hudson County, NJ and the City of Newark, Essex County, NJ

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER MEETING

SUMMARY REPORT

DATE: Wednesday, June 24, 2015
TIME: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
LOCATION: East Newark Senior Citizens Center
37 President Street, East Newark, NJ

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this public meeting is to inform the public of the conceptual alternatives and to solicit public input and comment on the proposed Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) for the Hudson County/Essex County Clay Street Bridge. (PIC Project Information Update Handout attached).

MEETING SUMMARY

1. A total of twenty-three (23) individuals attended the Public Information Center (PIC) meeting in the Borough of East Newark from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sixteen (16) project team and agency members were in attendance. Seven (7) individuals are listed on the Sign-In Sheet for the PIC Meeting, representing businesses, local residents, Town of Harrison, and Freeholder of Hudson County. A member of the media was in attendance for a local newspaper.
2. The meeting was conducted as an open house with display boards providing project information for viewing by the general public and to provide reference in addressing any questions from the public. Project Team members were in attendance to present information and assist with questions from the community stakeholders and general public.
3. Two handouts were available at the sign-in table: (1) PIC Project Information Update Handout and (2) a blank PIC Comment Form distributed to the general public upon sign-in to the meeting. The Comment Form could be completed to hand in at the meeting or could be faxed, emailed or mailed to either Hudson County Project Manager, Joseph Glembocki, P.E. or to Essex County Project Manager, Luis Rodriguez (Handouts attached). The PIC Notice was also available in Spanish. Both the English and Spanish versions are posted on the project web site. (www.claystbridge.com, under Community Outreach).

4. The project display boards used to share information during the open house included:

- Aerial map of the Clay Street Bridge and project study area
- Environmental screening map indicating constraints
- Renderings of each of the proposed Conceptual Alternatives
- Alternatives Analysis Matrix indicating the Preliminary Preferred Alternative
- Local Project Delivery Program Process Chart

5. One Comment Form was received at the afternoon PIC meeting (see attached).

6. Round tables with chairs were available for seating for viewing the PowerPoint presentation, which was presented at 2:30pm. After introductions from the Project Team, Joseph Glembocki, Hudson County Project Manager provided an overview of the project noting the following:

The Clay Street Bridge is shared structure between Hudson County and Essex County and is over 100 years old. The need to study the bridge is due to structural deficiencies that will require either a major rehabilitation or replacement. The purpose of this study is to identify how to improve the existing bridge. The costs are too great for Hudson County and Essex County, so it requires Federal funding. This Local Concept Development Study is the first step to the bridge improvements. Hudson County filed an application with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) who is overseeing this phase of the project. The bridge is under both Hudson County and Essex County jurisdiction. It's important getting input from the community stakeholders to decide what improvements are needed for the bridge. This is a second public meeting to view the alternatives for bridge improvements and once a preliminary preferred alternative is decided, then NJDOT Local Aid would administer the project for the design and construction phases with the Counties using Federal funding.

7. Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, presented the project status and schedule with PowerPoint presentation slides. The project information included the bridge condition with data and photos.

- (a) Bruce referred to the Project Information Update. On the backside is the project schedule with milestones and the community involvement steps that have occurred and those to be met.
- (b) The Concept Development Phase is anticipated to be completed by October 2015.
- (c) Bruce shared information on the data collection, the Purpose and Need Statement, community outreach meetings held to date and the environmental process. If no significant impacts are determined, then a Categorical Exclusion (CE) document would be implemented according to NEPA requirements. The Power Point presentation will be posted to the project web site after the PIC meetings are held.

8. Robert Piel (Environmental Specialist, Amy S. Greene Consultants, Inc.) provided information on the environmental resource screening using the environmental constraints map.

- (a) There are no wetlands, however the entire area is within a 100 year floodplain.
- (b) There is also a regulated riparian zone adjacent to the Passaic River.
- (c) In addition, the project area is mapped as a possible urban nesting habitat for the state endangered species, Peregrine Falcon. Further investigation will be needed prior to construction to determine if the species is nesting in the area. The project area is also foraging habitat for the Peregrine Falcon. Unless the Peregrine Falcon is nesting on the bridge (which is not likely) the only constraints anticipated are timing restrictions during construction.

- (d) There are several known contaminated sites (hazardous waste sites) within the project area originating from the long term use of the area for industrial manufacturing. There are also several records of spills in the project area and of existing and abandoned underground storage tanks. Based on the Environmental Data Resources report the contaminated areas have been cleaned up, removed or capped.
- (e) The Passaic River itself is mapped as a contaminant site, possibly with dioxin, and if disturbance of the bottom sediments is proposed, further testing and evaluation of the sediments will be necessary.
- (f) As a bridge project, there will be permits required by the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for any improvements to the Clay Street Bridge. Rob will assist the project team with environmental permits related to each alternative developed.

9. Amy Sokalski, McCormick Taylor Traffic Engineer, presented information via display boards of each of the Conceptual Alternatives developed and listed on the Alternatives Analysis Matrix (display board and matrix handout distributed at meeting). The concepts and written descriptions of each will be posted to the project web site once the PIC meetings are held.

- (a) The options examined range from replacing the bridge to the north, to the south and rehabilitating existing bridge and keeping it in service as a vehicular or pedestrian bridge; or replacing the bridge on the existing alignment with a low or high level fixed bridge; or replacing it with a movable bridge structure.
- (b) Conceptual Alternatives were dismissed mainly due to significant right-of-way property and/or environmental impacts.
- (c) Selection of a movable bridge verses a fixed bridge is due to the recommendations submitted by the Harbor Operations Committee (HOC) to not restrict future commercial marine access of the Passaic River.
- (d) The Concept identified as the proposed Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) is Concept 3C, a complete replacement bridge on existing alignment with a movable bridge over a 100' wide waterway channel on the Passaic River.

10. Bob Supino, Hardesty & Hanover Bridge Engineer, provided information on the different types of movable bridge structures for consideration with images mounted on a display board.

- (a) The options are a vertical lift structure similar to the Stickel Bridge, or a single or double leaf bascule bridge. During the preliminary design phase further engineering analysis would be done to assist in determining the type of movable structure.
- (b) The counter weights for a bascule bridge that allow the openings of the bridge are either located below the structure or above the structure. There a number factors for consideration in this determination, which would be analyzed during the preliminary design phase of the project.

11. Bruce Riegel provided additional information via the Power Point presentation slides, to discuss the conceptual alternatives, comparison matrix, and the proposed Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).

- (a) If nothing was done which is the No Build Alternative, the existing bridge would continue to deteriorate and require load posting (limiting use by trucks and buses) and would eventually result in closure of the bridge. There are maintenance contracts being advanced now by Essex County to address current critical needs and prevent load posting of the bridge.

- (b) Two additional variations of the Conceptual Alternatives were developed since the Community Stakeholders Meetings were held in October, 2014, due to input from an Inter-Agency Meeting (included US Coast Guard, US Army Corps of Engineers and the US EPA) and a presentation to the Harbor Operations Committee (HOC), which resulted in recommendations to consider conceptual variations of a higher level (135 feet over Mean High Water) fixed bridge and a movable bridge with a wider (100 feet vs. 75 feet) channel.
- (c) Based upon the community stakeholders meetings, the agency meetings held, and comments received at the outreach and coordination meetings, the PPA recommended is Concept 3C, a complete replacement bridge on existing alignment with a movable bridge over a 100' wide waterway channel on the Passaic River.
- (d) The cost of the proposed bridge replacement is an estimated \$70 million.
- (e) The next steps are the PIC Meetings, and after the 30-day comment period resolutions of support will be needed by the Borough of East Newark, City of Newark, Hudson County Freeholders and Essex County Freeholders. The Project Team will also ask the Towns of Harrison and Kearny for resolutions if they would like to support the project with resolutions as well.

12. Below are the questions and comments shared by attendees (representatives of civic, social service, business owners, residents and general public) during and after the presentation as follows:

a. *Question:* How long will this study take?

Response: The Local Concept Development phase will be completed in October 2015. Resolutions of support will be asked of the municipalities and the Counties. The Federal and State agencies will then review the findings. The project will then apply for Federal funding for the next step called Preliminary Engineering.

b. *Question:* When do you expect the bridge to be constructed?

Response: Once funded, the local preliminary engineering and final design phases would be an estimated 3-4 years and construction would be another 2.5 to 3 years. Earliest completion of design plans would be in 2019-2020 and construction in 2023-2024.

c. *Question:* Can the bridge be in operation during construction?

Response: The bridge will be shut down during the estimated 2.5 to 3 years to construct the replacement bridge. Given the type of bridge structure and movable swing bridge, it's not possible to stage the construction to provide vehicular or pedestrian movements.

d. *Question:* Will you need property? Any right-of-way impacts?

Response: The proposed preliminary preferred alternative is to build within the existing alignment to minimize the amount of property right-of-way impacts. However, the new bridge will be a wider structure to provide shoulders. The amount of right-of-way needed is anticipated to be minimal; which will be determined during the preliminary design phase.

e. *Comment/Question:* Town of Harrison is concerned about traffic during construction with the bridge closed. Have traffic studies been done?

Response: Yes, traffic studies were done and shared with the municipalities. A copy of the report is available and can be provided to Town of Harrison.

f. *Question:* What is the cost?

Response: The cost of the preliminary preferred alternative is estimated at 70 million. *The cost is listed as a slide in the Power Point presentation.*

g. *Question:* With the option of keeping the old bridge and building a new bridge to the south of the existing structure, would they both have to operate?

Response: Yes, both structures would have to operate so the vertical clearance over the Passaic River would be same to accommodate the navigable waterway and the height of the boats when bridges are closed and when they are open.

13. At end of presentation, attendees were encouraged to take copies of the handouts to share information with others. An email notice will be sent once the web site is available at: www.claystbridge.com. The 30-day comment period ends as of Friday, July 24, 2015 for comments on the conceptual alternatives and the PPA. The next step will be to ask for resolutions of support from the municipalities and the Counties, which will be part of the LCD final documentation in addition to any public comments received.

14. One PIC Comment Forms were received in the afternoon meeting session at the East Newark Senior Citizen Center in the Borough of East Newark. One PIC Comment Form was received at the evening session in the City of Newark (6-8pm) and no additional PIC Comment Forms have been received after the PIC meetings within the 30-day comment period to date. The PIC Tracking List and Comments received to date are attached. Any responses to PIC comments received would be written and distributed by Hudson County and Essex County.

15. The attendees extended thanks for the opportunity to review and comment on the project to individual Project Team members. The PIC open house afternoon session was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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.

NJTPA Hudson County/Essex County Clay Street Bridge Project Team