



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: Monday, April 7, 2014
TIME: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Council Chambers, Borough Hall
34 Sherman Avenue, East Newark, NJ

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this public meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input from the general public on the community interests associated with the Clay Street Bridge in developing the project purpose and need.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. A total of 20 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 members were in attendance. Four (4) individuals are listed on the Sign-In Sheet for the PIC Meeting, representing businesses, Town of Harrison OEM, and City of Newark Homeland Security.
2. The meeting was designed as an open house format 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 Handout and (2) 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. The handouts were available also in Spanish. Both the English and Spanish versions of the Handouts are now 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: (1) aerial map of project study area indicating the deficiencies (2) environmental screening map indicating constraints (3) cultural resources map showing historic properties in the area (4) Local Project Delivery Program Process and (5) Local Concept Development Phase – Process Flowchart.

5. One completed Stakeholder Survey was received at the meeting (2-4pm). The organization has been added to the Community Stakeholders list and Project Portfolio was given to the representative.

6. A screen presentation area was available with 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. 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 the 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. Once an 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, then presented the project information, status and schedule with PowerPoint presentation slides. Robert Piel (Environmental Specialist, Amy S. Greene Consultants, Inc.) provided information on the environmental resource screening using the display map of environmental screening and Glenn Modica (Cultural Resources Specialist, Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.) presented information on the cultural resources screening using a display map showing an aerial of the project area with the historic sites indicated. The PIC PowerPoint presentation and the display maps are available on the project web site (www.claystbridge.com, under Community Outreach).

8. Below are the comments shared by attendees (representatives of civic, social service, business owners, residents and general public) during the Q&A at the end of the brief presentation and during the open house, noted by Project Team members as follows:

a. *Question:* If the bridge is to be replaced who determines the vertical clearance from the water?

Response: The U.S. Coast Guard has jurisdiction of the Passaic River and through their public outreach process, they will determine the vertical clearance required; the Project Team is looking for input from the marine community as well as motorists, pedestrians and cyclists to determine what marine vessels travel on the river in developing the alternatives such as a fixed bridge vs. a movable swing or bascule type draw bridge.

b. *Question:* How do you decide how many lanes and how wide the bridge should if it gets replaced?

Response: The Project Team will be conducting a traffic analysis to identify the volume of traffic using the bridge and examine traffic safety records such as amount of crashes; the analysis includes counts for people and bicycles as well as cars.

- c. *Comment:* Town of Harrison concern for traffic volumes impacting the bridge especially with the NJDOT Route 280, Route 21 Project to be in construction; potential impacts to Bridge St Bridge too.
Response: It is anticipated that the State will have completed the Route 280, Route 21 Interchange Improvement Project prior to the Clay Street Bridge progress through final design and construction phases.
- d. *Comment:* It's important to respect the request not to impact the Clay Street Bridge traffic and the Bridge Street Bridge traffic at the same time; both can not be closed at same time.
Response: The Project Team will take this into consideration as part of the traffic analysis and in developing the purpose and need for the project.
- e. *Comment:* The City of Newark is where the key hospitals are located, so access for East Newark, Kearny and Harrison, is over the Clay Street Bridge as critical and current bridge is a 'vintage connection' and needs to provide vital emergency service 24/7 for today.
Response: Comment noted and appreciated for developing the purpose and need for bridge improvements. The Alternatives Analysis will take this into consideration when looking at the pros and cons of each alternative to select a preferred alternative to best meet the needs while minimizing impacts.
9. At end of presentation, attendees were encouraged to take copies of the handouts to share information with others. An email notice would be sent once the web site is available at: www.claystbridge.com. The 30-day comment period ends as of Friday, May 9, 2014 for the purpose and need. The next public meeting would be in the fall 2014 to present the project Purpose and Need Statement and proposed conceptual alternatives for the bridge.
10. No PIC Comment Forms were received at the afternoon meeting session in the Borough of East Newark. Two PIC Comment Forms were received at the evening session in the City of Newark (6-8pm) and three additional PIC Comment Forms have been received after the PIC meetings within the 30-day comment period for the project purpose and need. 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.
11. The attendees shared their appreciation for the opportunity to review and comment on the project to individual Project Team members. The PIC open house was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.