



MONMOUTH COUNTY
Local Concept Development Study for Monmouth County Route 537
Borough of Freehold and Township of Freehold

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1
MEETING REPORT

DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2012
 TIME: 10:00 a.m.
 LOCATION: Township of Freehold Municipal Building,
 1 Municipal Plaza, Freehold, NJ

ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
		Community Stakeholders
Brian	Boyle	Freehold Township Schools
Joan	Burroughs	Freehold Township Schools
Bill	Conry	Property Owner, Historic
Don	Cruz	PNC Bank, Freehold Branch
A. Richard	Gatto	Downtown Freehold
Scott	Kennel	McDonough-Rae Associates
Frank	Lucia	Freehold Raceway Mall
Dan	Megill	Freehold Engineering / OEM
Larry	Metz	Colonial Plaza Shopping Center
Dan	Sandiford	NJ TRANSIT
Dean	Smith	Freehold Police Department
Anne Marie	Sparaco	Brookdale Community College,
Peter R.	Valesi	Township of Freehold
Timothy	White	Freehold Engineering Dept.
		Project Team
Martine	Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson, LLC
Dennis	DeGregory	NJDOT, Bur. of Environmental
Larry	Diffley	Cherry, Weber & Associates
Inkyung	Englehart	Monmouth County Engineering
Daria	Jakimowska	Monmouth County Engineering
Sarbjit	Kahlon	NJTPA, Environ. Planning
Susan	Quackenbush	Amy S. Greene Environmental
Bruce	Riegel	Hardesty & Hanover
Glen	Schetelich	Hardesty & Hanover
Khalid	Shaikh	NJDOT, Bike / Ped
Wendy S.	Smith	NJDOT, Local Aid, District 3
Brian	Stankus	Orth-Rodgers & Associates

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Route 537 corridor within the study limits to develop the project purpose and need. (See attached Agenda)

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and Introductions

Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator opened the meeting on behalf of Monmouth County, and the cooperating agencies of North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).

- (a) After introductions by the project team members and attendees, Martine reviewed the handouts that were provided in a green Route 537 Project Portfolio for those stakeholders who represent organizations, which will be meeting three times within the year.
- (b) Martine thanked attendees who had completed the Stakeholder Survey. The Stakeholder Survey Summary on green colored paper lists any comments received under each question as separate bullets.
- (c) The Stakeholder List on blue colored paper is a draft of the Community and Agency Stakeholders who have interest in this Local Concept Development Study (LCD).
- (d) The Project Team list on ivory paper provides contact information for the Project Team members. The key contact is the Monmouth County Project Manager, Daria Jakimowska.

2. Project Overview & Background

Daria Jakimowska, Monmouth County Chief Engineer, Traffic Design, thanked Local Officials for hosting this meeting. She provided information on prior studies conducted in the corridor. The Power Point presentation will be posted on the Monmouth County web site.

- (a) This project is from Gravel Hill Road in the Township of Freehold to the Route 33 Business intersection in Freehold Borough. It is a new project with a focused area of the corridor, a new project team and process.
- (b) This new Local Concept Development process under the NJTPA is a new program and opportunity to identify the transportation needs and alternative solutions, which depending on the preferred alternative selected, could then transition more effectively to design and construction.

3. Concept Development Process

Sarbjit Kahlon, Principal Environmental Planner from NJTPA is the Program Manager for this study. She provided information about this new Local Capital Project Delivery (LCDP) Program as indicated in the Power Point presentation diagrams.

- (a) This project is one of four pilot projects having the opportunity to be advanced.
- (b) Currently, the project is in the Local Concept Development phase, which is described in blue on the chart.
- (c) Once this phase is completed, and if the No Build Alternative is not the preferred alternative, then the project will move forward to the next phases of work; preliminary engineering, final design (including right-of-way acquisition if applicable) and then construction.
- (d) 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).

4. RT537 Corridor - Data Collection, Roadway and Traffic Analysis

Bruce Riegel presented information on the existing conditions. Surveys are done, and environmental screening has been completed. Photos in the Power Point presentation illustrated the deficiencies and substandard design conditions identified in the corridor by the engineering team. The team is obtaining information on utilities to be included in the base mapping of the study area.

- (a) The team will be collecting traffic counts and obtaining current crash data. New counts will be taken in the coming months.
- (b) Bruce presented the schedule, the major project milestones and the community involvement steps to be completed within an 18 month period, as listed in the Power Point presentation and on the Project Information Handout distributed in the Project Portfolio (see attached Project Information Handout).
- (c) Presently, the team is looking for stakeholders' input in order to develop the Project Purpose and Need Statement.
- (d) Once the Concept Development phase is completed, and public meetings are held, resolutions of support for the Preferred Alternative will be requested from the Borough of Freehold and the Township of Freehold.
- (e) The NJDOT E-Team includes Dennis DeGregory, who will be responsible for coordination with the permitting agencies such as New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop a cohesive plan for improvements.

5. Environmental Process

Dennis DeGregory, NJDOT Environmental Team Specialist, provided information on the Environmental process.

- (a) NJTPA is administering the project, however the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides the funding. Any transportation projects receiving Federal funding must also follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
- (b) The Local Concept Development Study must identify any environmental concerns and develop an environmental profile. When analyzing alternatives, one looks to avoid environmental resources and if not, then to minimize and if that's not possible, then to provide mitigation. The environmental resources include air, noise, hazardous or contaminated sites, parks, open space and cultural resources such as historic structures and facilities.
- (c) Sue Quakenbush of Amy Green Consultants, is part of the project team and has been collecting and compiling this information. The environmental screening is completed and a display board shows a map of the environmental resources within the study area.
- (d) The agencies look carefully at comments from the public and thus community involvement is also an important part of environmental process while moving the project forward with environmental compliance.

6. Community Stakeholders Group

Martine reviewed the Potential List of Stakeholders as a draft list and the team is looking for input on any entities and organizations that would be helpful as members of the Community Stakeholders Group.

- (a) The Stakeholders Group is meeting today to discuss community issues and provide input in developing the project purpose and needs. The Group will be meeting at least two more times to provide input on the development of alternatives which satisfy the project purpose and need, and to provide concurrence in the selection of the preferred preliminary alternative (PPA).
- (b) The Community Stakeholder Survey Summary, which was provided in the Project Portfolio was reviewed. Those who were not able to complete the survey prior to today's meeting are encouraged to complete it and a Summary Update will be present at the upcoming public meetings and next Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2. This information is taken into consideration to develop the project purpose and need.

7. Community Input – Purpose and Need

The meeting was open for any questions or comments. Martine asked attendees to share any issues they see with the operation of the Route 537 corridor and intersections today or improvements they would like to see in the future. The following discussion items were noted:

- Casanova Way - the timing is short.
- When there is a change in school schedule, where students can leave school during day time; there is concern for students crossing Route 537 to access shops and restaurants.
- Wemrock Road - need for enhancements for pedestrians.
- If looking to improve capacity along the roadway or at intersections, the impact to property needs to be considered.
- Route 9 is a two lane roadway (each direction), improve left (turns) on Route 9 & short merge areas
- At Brookdale Community College, the roundabout is working, and functions very well, despite concerns before, everyone is pleased with it.
- *Question:* When will you do the traffic counts.
Response: Traffic will be conducted in April (2012).
Additional Comment: Mall traffic during holidays causes severe congestion.
- Left turn at Stillwell on to Route 537 is a problem, especially during school hours
- Regarding traffic counts: March 30th through April 9th is school spring break, and is not a good week to obtain counts and observe regular traffic patterns.
- Great Adventure traffic on weekends results in a lot of traffic at Route 33 and Route 9.
- NJ Transit will review the Route 537 bus routes. There are no designated stop areas, most trips are to CentraState hospital.
- There is at least one bus which services Freehold to City of Asbury Park and the pick-up/drop off is along Route 537, near the mall in grass turnaround area near Bob's.
- There is a Raintree Plaza bus stop, perhaps not designated, but a courtesy stop for

Walmart (303 yards) or for Great Adventure trips.

- School bus stops are at Gravel Hill Road and at Potter Road.
- The Stillwell intersection at Route 537 is a problem also for right turns and lefts; there is No Right on Red to allow for movement to the local road.
- Look at signal phasing to allow for better flow and possible operational improvements.
- Right on red, perhaps consider a dedicated turn light.
- Wemrock Road turn from RT537 to Mall, consider extension lanes, and right turn only at Stillwells.
- Right turn from Mall to Route 537 toward Radisson; there is separate lane but people stop than proceed - confusion, consider better signage; and access from Route 33 to Route 537.
- At Walmart, there is confusion, a sight distance issue and signage; Township named access road to help drivers to indicate entrance.
- Interest in widening of Route 537 and Route 33 bypass, here there are three lanes that are restricted to one lane, so multiple issues contribute to traffic in this area.
- Consider widening Route 9 bridge to match the center lanes on Route 537.
- There is a need to examine bicycles and pedestrian access and connections from Stillwell intersection in Freehold Township to Freehold Borough.
- Carefully examine open green areas remaining along Route 537 in the study area; Township has approved site plans with land owners and developers; project team needs to look at proposed improvements.

8. Next Steps and Closing Comments

In summary, Martine provided information on the upcoming public meetings. She encouraged everyone to attend either Public Information Center (PIC) meetings to be held on Tuesday, April 24th. One will be held in the afternoon in Freehold Borough in the Council Room and the other in the evening at the Senior Center in Freehold Township (details listed in section below). The PIC meetings will be advertised in local papers and posted to the municipal web sites. Property owners within 200 feet of the roadway in both municipalities will receive a Public Meeting Notice letter in the mail from Monmouth County.

- (a) Both PIC meetings will be an open house format with display boards providing project information on the existing conditions, traffic analysis to date and environmental screening. There will be a brief presentation at each and comment forms available for the general public to provide input on the purpose and need similar to this stakeholders meeting.
- (b) The Public Meeting Notice and the Comment Form will be sent via email to attendees and those on the Community and Agency Stakeholders List.
- (c) The next Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 will be held to obtain input for various alternatives developed to meet the Purpose and Need Statement.

- (d) In closing, Martine asked attendees and the project team for closing comments. Meeting minutes will be provided and distributed to attendees. Daria Jakimowska, thanked attendees for their input. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. Martine will provide Public Information Center meeting notice and Comment Form to the attendees and to Freehold Township and Freehold Borough for posting to their website.
2. H&H will continue data collection and traffic analysis in coordination with the County and in preparation for presentation at the Public Information Center (PIC) meetings.
3. Attendees to review Project Information, Stakeholders Survey Summary, and Draft Stakeholders List. Please provide any suggestions and contact information prior to the PIC meetings and the next Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2.
4. Martine will provide via email: meeting minutes, update the Stakeholders List, summary of the PIC meetings, and the meeting notice for the next Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 to be held in August/September.

NEXT MEETING - Route 537 Public Information Center (PIC) Meetings

Date: Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (3:00 pm brief presentation)

Location: Freehold Borough Council Room, 51 West Main Street, Freehold, NJ

Date: Tuesday, April 24, 2012 (same day)

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (7:00 pm brief presentation)

Location: Freehold Township Senior Center, 116 Jackson Mills Road, Freehold, NJ

NEXT MEETING - Route 537 Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2

Date: Tuesday, September 25, 2012

Time: 10:00 a.m. – Noon (*to be determined*)

Location: Borough of Freehold or Freehold Township (*to be determined*)

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
RT537 Community Involvement Facilitator



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Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Freehold Township Municipal Bldg., 1 Municipal Plaza, Freehold, NJ, 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule, and to obtain input on the community interests associated with the Route 537 corridor within the study limits to develop the project purpose and need.

- I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*
 - Project Overview & Background
 - Concept Development Process

- II. *ROUTE 537 CORRIDOR*
 - Project Status and Schedule
 - Data Collection, Roadway and Traffic Analysis
 - Environmental Process - Screening
 - Community Stakeholders Group – Survey Summary

- III. *DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS*
 - Community Input – Purpose and Need
 - Action Items – Public Information Center Meetings
 - Closing Comments