

MONMOUTH COUNTY
Local Preliminary Engineering Phase for Monmouth County Bridge S-32
on Rumson Road (CR520) over the Shrewsbury River
Borough of Rumson and Borough of Sea Bright, Monmouth County, NJ

MEETING WITH CLERGY
MEETING REPORT

DATE: Thursday, May 21, 2015
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: St. George’s Episcopal Church
7 Lincoln Avenue, Rumson, NJ
ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
Tom	Dooley	St. George’s-by-the-River Episcopal Church
Rev. Ophelia	Laughlin	St. George’s-by-the-River Episcopal Church
Rabbi Harry	Levin	Resident
Rev. Michael	Manning	Holy Cross Church
Scott	Maraldo	Office of Congressman Smith
Thomas	Rogers	Borough of Rumson
Rev. Jeffrey	Roy	St. George’s-by-the-River Episcopal Church
		Project Team
Martine	Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson, LLC
Inkyung	Englehart, P.E.	Monmouth County Engineering
Pamela	Garrett	NJDOT, Environmental Support
Daria	Jakimowska, P.E.	Monmouth County Engineering
Sarbjit	Kahlon	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
John	Kosciuch, P.E.	NJDOT, Local Aid, District 3
Bruce	Riegel, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover, LLC
Wendy	Smith	NJDOT, Local Aid, District 3

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss concerns of the clergy and their congregations with the County’s proposed project, present the project status and schedule as well as information regarding the proposed new bridge and discuss community interests such as improvements to Ward Avenue and Rumson Road intersection, indication marking in West Park, and uses of West Park (See attached Agenda).

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Pastor Ophelia Laughlin, Rector of St. George's Church, welcomed attendees and thanked the County for the opportunity to meet and discuss questions raised by the clergy and their members.
2. Three questions of interest by the clergy in attendance:
 - Q – What do the markings in the park indicate?
 - Q – Why bridge failure and need to replace?
 - Q – Why the proposed cul-de-sac?
3. Rabbi Levin shared information on the West Park neighborhood, a community of an estimated 100 houses and three parishes and an in-home synagogue. It is a neighborhood encompassing many wonderful families and members of the religious communities.
 - Superstorm Sandy had both a physical and emotional impact on residents of West Park; many continue to experience physical and emotional damage from the storm.
 - It is a community that cares for each other.
 - This meeting is an opportunity to understand the bridge project and the neighborhood concerns; by discussing mutuality and where we can learn from one another.
4. Inkyung Englehart, Monmouth County Project Manager, provided a brief project overview. She noted that the County cannot fund the bridge replacement without the assistance of Federal funding which requires compliance with the NEPA process. During the Local Concept Development (LCD) Phase, the condition of the bridge was determined to be in very poor condition and in need of major repair or replacement. A Purpose & Need Statement was approved and conceptual alternatives were developed and analyzed in the matrix to recommend a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA), which is to replace the bridge on a new alignment to the south of the existing bridge. The PPA and the matrix were presented at public information center meetings in Rumson and Sea Bright and local municipal resolutions of support were received prior to the County and the NJTPA moving the project forward with the PPA from the Local Concept Development (LCD) Phase to the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Phase and selected the firm of Hardesty & Hanover, LLC to assist the County in advancing the project.
5. Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, provided the project status and schedule as listed on the Project Information handout distributed to attendees. On the backside of the page are the schedules for the project's major milestones and anticipated community involvement.
 - (a) Bruce noted the steps to be completed under the Local Preliminary Engineering Phase as indicated on the Local Project Delivery Process handout.
 - (b) He reviewed the PPA as displayed on the conceptual plan and known as 3F One Stage Construction from the LCD Alternatives Analysis, noting that comments received at the public information meeting held on January 23, 2013 indicated a need to look at the proposed cul-de-sac at the Ward Avenue & Rumson Road intersection to address community concerns as well as traffic mobility and access in the surrounding neighborhood.

- (c) For the existing bridge to remain in service and not be compromised by building the replacement structure to the south, there is a certain distance for safety needed between the structures (estimated to be 25 feet from the bascule pier).
 - (d) There are pedestrian improvements to be implemented on both sides of the bridge along the park in Rumson and Ocean Avenue in Sea Bright.
 - (e) The environmental and cultural resources are an important part of this phase. The PPA involves encroachment on West Park and the Rumson Sea Bright Bridge is historic. Both these elements involve coordination with State and Federal regulatory agencies: NJDEP Green Acres and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
 - (f) The engineering completed during this phase is limited to that what is needed to support the environmental documentation process. Survey work is currently underway.
6. The meeting was opened to questions from the clergy and attendees. The following comments and questions were noted:
- (1) *Question:* What is the timeframe? When would construction take place? How soon for the bridge replacement to commence?
Response: The PE phase began in November 2014 and is estimated to be completed by Spring 2016. Once awarded, the Final Design phase may take 18 to 24 months to complete, depending on the right-of-way acquisitions and State and Federal regulatory approvals. The earliest construction anticipated to commence is 2019 with an estimated duration of 24 to 30 months provided funding is allocated.
 - (2) *Question:* When did the County identify the need to begin to study the bridge?
Response: Bridges are inspected every two years. Based on the most current Bridge Reevaluation Report, the Rumson-Sea Bright Bridge is structurally deficient based on the condition of the superstructure and is in need of major repairs or replacement. The existing bridge was constructed in 1950 and is now 65 years old. The County continues interim and emergency repairs to maintain safety and serviceability of the bridge until it can be replaced. The County does not have funding available for the construction of a new bridge, so an application was submitted to the NJTPA to utilize federal funding and subsequently follow the Local Project Delivery Process. The Local Concept Development Phase was initiated in the Fall of 2011 and completed in Summer 2013. It is anticipated that federal funding will also be utilized for the design and construction of the new bridge.
 - (3) *Question:* Why are tractor trailer trucks allowed to go over the bridge?
Response: Rumson Road, CR520, is a County roadway that is part of regional thoroughfare permitted for truck traffic. Unless there is a safety issue, it is not possible to restrict trucks from using CR520 roadway. Tractor trailer trucks can use the bridge unless there is a posted weight restriction. The bridge is inspected regularly and repairs performed.
 - (4) *Question:* Why allow trucks?
Response: Rumson Road, CR520, is a County roadway that is part of regional thoroughfare permitted for truck traffic. Unless there is a safety issue, it is not possible to restrict trucks from using CR520.

- (5) *Question:* Will the replacement bridge be a movable bridge?
Response: Yes, the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) from the completed Local Concept Development (LCD) Phase is a new movable bridge on a new alignment to the south of the existing bridge. The LCD Phase documentation includes all the options considered and why a movable bridge was chosen as the PPA.
- (6) *Question:* For the cul-de-sac, is the County going to block off Ward Avenue?
Response: No, South Ward Avenue will remain open. The stakeholders focus group meeting is to discuss how to make improvements to the intersection and address the concerns with the proposed cul-de-sac.
- (7) *Question:* Did the project team study traffic flow?
Response: Yes, traffic analysis was part of the LCD Phase. The difficulty of traffic flow is due to bridge openings occurring every 30 minutes in combination with the heavy seasonal traffic volume.
- (8) *Question:* Is the traffic congestion at the bridge only a summer issue?
Response: Traffic congestion is the highest during the summer season when boat traffic for fishing and recreation is competing with the high vehicular traffic volume to and from the beaches.
Additional Response: The traffic signal in Sea Bright also contributes to variations in the traffic flow and congestion. The NJDOT Traffic Engineering Unit is investigating optimizing the signal phasing to provide some relief. It is made more complicated by the bridge openings.
Additional Comment/Suggestion: During periods of high traffic volume and congestion at the bridge, there is concern for pollution from the cars; consider signage to ask motorists to shut off their engines while waiting for the bridge opening.
- (9) *Comment:* Consider improvements for crossing Rumson Road at Ward Avenue for pedestrians and bicycles. People do cross to catch the bus.
Additional Comment: A lot of traffic turns left to enter Holy Cross school and/or for church services. Noon time is busy.
- (10) *Question:* Why the cul-de-sac design?
Response: The intersection of Rumson Road, Ward Avenue and Old Rumson Road is an unconventional five point intersection, which is a safety concern to both the County and the Borough of Rumson. Improvements to this intersection are proposed with this project. The cul-de-sac was selected as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative for improvements to the intersection during the Concept Development Phase. The Project Team is reevaluating this solution due to concerns from the local communities. A Focus Group Meeting is being held this evening (May 21) to discuss improvements to the intersection.
- (11) *Question:* Can there be a way in or out from the cul-de-sac for emergencies or floods?
Response: The design can include an emergency gate and/or mountable curb for emergency access and evacuation.

(12) *Question:* What do the markings indicate and what is the southern-most edge of the bridge replacement in West Park?

Response: The white marking is washable paint to indicate where the new bridge will be. The white line is the outside edge of the new sidewalk to be constructed on the south side of roadway and bridge. There will be sidewalks on each side of the bridge in addition to 8' wide outside shoulders which can be used by bicyclists.

(13) *Question:* How will the bridge be constructed? Will there be staging phases?

Response: The new bridge will be built to the south of the existing bridge which will result in minimal impacts to traffic other than when connecting the approaches to the existing alignments of both Rumson Road and Route 36 (Ocean Avenue). The approach tie-ins will be constructed during non-summer months to minimize impacts to traffic.

(14) *Question:* Looking ahead, is the project team aware of a two year natural gas line pipe, over Navesink project upgrade?

Response: The County is aware of the proposed NJNG plans. The County and project team will coordinate with all utilities in the area during construction.

(15) *Question:* When and how are meetings scheduled? There is concern for the timing and appropriate notice of public meetings.

Response: The project team includes a community involvement facilitator to assist the County with the scheduling, logistics, and communication with local officials, community stakeholders and residents in the area of the bridge.

Additional Comment: Rabbi Levin requested to be invited to all project meetings.

Additional Response: For any meetings involving stakeholders and the public, Rabbi Levin is welcome to attend. His name and contact information will be added to the community stakeholders list. Reverend Ophelia Laughlin, St. George by the River Episcopal Church Pastor, and Father Michael Manning, Reverend of Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church are already on the community stakeholders list and representatives from their parishes have attended prior stakeholders meetings and public information center (PIC) meetings during the LCD Phase.

7. Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, thanked everyone for their valuable input and noted meeting summary would be provided.

- (a) As part of the feedback from the meeting, the clergy requested that the project continue to be inclusive.
- (b) The Clergy meeting and Focus Group meeting summaries will be posted to the Monmouth County web site for those unable to attend.
- (c) Once preliminary engineering and the environmental studies are completed a public information meeting will be held to share the results; afternoon and evening sessions will be held, one in Rumson and one in Sea Bright, in the latter part of this phase in coordination with the completion of the environmental and cultural resources work.

8. In summary, Inkyung Englehart acknowledged the difficulties that the West Park neighborhood has experienced from Super Storm Sandy as many communities in Monmouth

County continue to recover from the storm. The reason the bridge replacement project must continue to move forward is the need to provide emergency coastal evacuation and it too sustained damage such that emergency repairs had to be performed. The frequency and cost of maintenance and repairs are increasing. The bridge needs to be replaced for public safety improvements, as well as improved access for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

The County will continue to work with the Borough in providing the needed improvements with this project, which will benefit the community and the regional area. The County will continue to develop the project to minimize impacts. For any questions, please contact Inkyung Englehart, Monmouth County Project Manager, or Bruce Riegel, the H&H Project Manager. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. H&H project team will examine pedestrian safety enhancements at the crosswalks, access options in Sea Bright, maintaining natural walkway, and continue with preliminary engineering, environmental and cultural resources studies.
2. Rabbi Harry Levin to be added to the Stakeholders Contact List; attendees to inform team of West Park activities; provide any comments and changes in contact information; and attend future stakeholder and public meetings.
3. NJDOT Local Aid to review the proposed streetscape enhancements plan to be implemented along Ocean Avenue (separate grant project) and to determine options for access and traffic signal operation.
4. Martine Culbertson will provide meeting summary, maintain the Community Stakeholders List, notify local officials and community stakeholders in scheduling future outreach meetings.

NEXT MEETING

Community Stakeholders Focus Group Meeting

Rumson Road & Ward Avenue Intersection and Proposed Cul-de-sac

Date: May 21, 2015

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Bingham Hall, 40 Bingham Avenue, Rumson, NJ

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.

Inkyung Englehart, P.E., Monmouth County Project Manager
Sarbjit Kahlon, NJTPA Project Manager
Bruce Riegel, P.E., H&H Project Manager
Martine Culbertson, Bridge S32 Community Involvement Facilitator



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Meeting with Clergy Thursday, May 21, 2015

St. George's-by-the-River Episcopal Church, 7 Lincoln Avenue, Rumson, NJ, 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting is to identify interests of the clergy and their congregations, present the project status and schedule, provide alignment of the new bridge and discuss community interests such as improvements to Ward Avenue and Rumson Road intersection, indication marking in West Park, and uses of West Park (*may include a walk in the Park*).

- I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*
 - Project Overview
 - Project Status and Schedule

- II. *MONMOUTH COUNTY BRIDGE S-32 DISCUSSION TOPICS*
 - Proposed New Bridge Alignment Layout with Bike & Ped. Access Improvements
 - West Park Uses
 - Ward Avenue and Rumson Road Intersection Improvements
 - Other Community Interests

- III. *SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS*
 - Community Involvement Update, Q&A
 - Focus Group Meeting for Rumson Rd & Ward Ave Intersection Improvements
 - Action Items & Closing Comments