



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

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1 MEETING REPORT

DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2012
 TIME: 10:00 a.m.
 LOCATION: Borough of Rumson Municipal Building
 80 E. River Road, Rumson, NJ

ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
		Attendees
Charlie	Baker	Resident, Sea Bright
Betsy	Barrett	HP Service / MC Transportation
John	Burton	Two River Times Newspaper
Daniel J.	Chernavsky	Sea Bright Police Dept. / OEM
Stephen	Cutler	Chapel Beach Club
Kristen	Dalton	The Hub Newspaper
Ben	Day	Borough of Rumson Council
Tom	Dooley	St. George's-by-the-River-Church
John E.	Ekdahl	Borough of Rumson
Frank	Gripp, III	Rumson-Fair Haven Reg. H.S. District
J. Clayton	Kingsbery	Sea Bright Beach Club
Richard	Lilleston	Sea Bright Beach Club
Diane	Millhiser	Resident, Rumson
Ross	Millhiser	Resident, Rumson
Jan	Moren	Resident
Read	Murphy	Sea Bright Council
Scott	Paterson	Rumson Police Dept.
Thomas	Rogers	Borough of Rumson
Lynda	Rose	E. Monmouth Chamber of Commerce
Doug	Rossbach	Sea Bright Tennis / Cricket Club
Dan	Sandiford	NJ TRANSIT
Dominic	Sequeira	DDJ Management, Inc.
Daniel	Shaffery	Little Silver Police Dept & OEM
John	Sorrentino	Sea Bright Police Dept.
Mary Lou	Strong	Landmarks Commission, Middletown
Todd	Thompson	Friends of the Oceanic Bridge Assoc
Rick	Tobias	Borough of Rumson Police Dept.

Roger N.	Trendowski	Holy Cross Parish
Clay	Wilbanks	Sea Bright Beach Club
		Project Team
Martine	Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson, LLC
Dennis	DeGregory	NJDOT, Environmental Project Support
Larry	Diffley	Cherry, Weber & Associates, P.C.
Inkyung	Englehart	Monmouth County Engineering Dept.
Pamela	Garrett	NJDOT, Environmental Project Support
Daria	Jakimowska	Monmouth County Engineering Dept.
Sarbjit	Kahlon	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
Jon	Moren	Monmouth County Engineering Dept.
Susan	Quackenbush	Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants, Inc.
Bruce	Riegel	Hardesty & Hanover, LLP
William	Riviere	NJDOT, Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs
Glen	Schetelich	Hardesty & Hanover, LLP
Wendy S.	Smith	NJDOT, Local Aid, District 3

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 County Bridge S-32 on Rumson Road over the Shrewsbury River 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 and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

- (a) After introductions by the project team members and attendees, Martine reviewed the handouts that were provided in a blue Bridge S-32 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.
- (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, Jon Moren.

2. Project Overview & Background

Jon Moren, Monmouth County Principal Engineer, Bridges, thanked Tom Rogers and the Borough officials for hosting this meeting. He 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. So it's time to examine whether the bridge is in need of major rehabilitation or replacement.

(a) There was a scoping initiated 5-8 years ago, however the complexity of the project, it was not feasible to complete the scoping phase, final design and into construction phase within the allotted federal time clock. This new pilot program, specifically the Local Concept Development phase does not have federal time clock. This is now a new study with a new process. A purpose and need statement needs to be developed to determine what improvements will be moved forward to design.

(b) This new Local Concept Development Study process is a new program under the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). It provides for a better funding mechanism and coordination with the transportation improvement agencies.

3. Concept Development Process

Sarbjit Kahlon, Principal Environmental Planner from NJTPA, as the Program Manager for this Study explained the following:

(a) This project is one of four pilot projects having the opportunity to be funded for study.

(b) Currently, the project is 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.

(c) 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.

4. Environmental Process

Pam Garrett, NJDOT Environmental Team Leader, provided information on the Environmental process:

(a) Any transportation projects receiving Federal funding must follow the NEPA process. NJTPA is administering the project, however FHWA provides the funding.

(b) When analyzing alternatives, the project team will look to avoid environmental resources and if not, then to minimize and if that's not possible, then to provide 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.

(c) The Local Concept Development Study must identify any environmental concerns and develop an environmental profile. It is very important to define the purpose and need from which the environmental process will be determined. The goal is to develop a cohesive plan.

(d) The agencies look carefully at comments from the public, so community input is a part of the NEPA process. The environmental screening, which is in the project schedule, will be presented at the public meetings.

5. Bridge S-32 - Data Collection, Bridge and Traffic Analysis

Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Deputy Project Manager presented information on the project status:

- (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.
- (b) The team is also reviewing existing bridge inspection reports, identifying any existing substandard design elements, and gathering accident and historic traffic count data. New traffic counts will be collected during the summer season to reflect seasonal traffic. Input is needed from the stakeholders and the public in developing the Project Purpose and Need; which is the first major milestone.
- (c) Bruce referred to the Project Information Handout. On the backside is the project schedule with milestones and the community involvement steps to be met (see attached Project Information Handout).
- (d) The Concept Development Phase is scheduled to be completed in 18 months (April 2013).

6. Community Stakeholders Group

Martine reviewed the Potential List of Stakeholders as a draft list and the team is looking for input to confirm what entities and organizations would be appropriate and helpful as members of the stakeholders outreach group.

- (a) The Stakeholders Group will be meeting three times to discuss community issues; provide input in developing the project purpose and needs, provide input to the development of alternatives which satisfy the project purpose and need, and provide concurrence in the selection of the preferred preliminary alternative (PPA).
- (b) The Stakeholder Survey indicates questions to respond to if interested in becoming a member of the Stakeholders Group and to provide input helpful for this first Stakeholder meeting 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 bridge today or improvements they would like to see in the future. The following discussion items were noted:

- *Item #1 - Question:* Why are we here, why a new project or bridge now?

Response: The reason for the project is due to the level of deterioration of the bridge. Based on the 2009 Bridge Inspection Report, the overall condition of the bridge is serious and was given a Sufficiency Rating of 25 out of 100. A bridge with a Sufficiency Rating of 50 or less is eligible for repair or replacement. The bridge's superstructure is in poor condition with a rating of 4 out of 10. Due to the continuing deterioration of the superstructure, the bridge may need to be load posted to limit the amount of weight it is able to support in the future. If the bridge were "load" posted it would limit its usage, especially by buses and trucks, requiring a detour route to be implemented. The Bridge Inspection Report concludes that the bridge is need of \$10 M of immediate repairs.

Additional Comment: The project team will provide data on the reason for this study and the bridge condition data at the public meetings.

- *Item #2 - Comment:* Restrictions on the right hand turn off the bridge into Sea Bright (south on Route 36) causes backups on the bridge and back on Rumson Road (CR520) in Rumson during busy traffic.

Response: The signal timing may be due to restricted sight distance. Potential improvements will be reviewed as part of this Study.

Additional Comment: This has been the situation for more than 25 years and it used to be a free moving right turn. Please consider a seasonal or optional phasing to the traffic signal. It is a problem now.

Additional Response: This traffic signal is part of the Study since it impacts movements over the bridge. The traffic engineers will include it as part of the traffic analysis.

• *Item#3 - Comment:* Traffic moving from Sea Bright to Rumson is also impacted at this traffic signal.

Response: All vehicular movements over the bridge are included in the Study, so it will be part of the traffic analysis.

• *Item #4 - Comment:* The bridge is striped for two lanes of traffic; one lane in each direction. The communities would like to have a dedicated right turn off the bridge and has informed both the County and State about this situation.

Response: It is a two lane bridge, which may limit the turns, when entering on to Route 36.

Additional Response: Both communities use the bridge as a four-lane bridge, not as a two-lane bridge. The center lane has a double stripe but no other lines are indicated. The bridge may have been designated as a two lane bridge, but it would be severely backed up without the use of four lanes on the bridge, especially in the summer recreational season.

• *Item #5 - Comment:* Please consider making improvements at this intersection in the short term if possible before the completion of the study.

Response: NJDOT is part of the project team and the traffic analysis will be shared as part of this Study.

• *Item #6 Question:* Will the Oceanic Bridge be replaced before this bridge?

Response: It is the County's intension to complete the work on the Oceanic Bridge prior to this bridge improvement project.

Additional Comment: The review agencies will treat each project independently based upon its condition and circumstances. Until it is clear what is the purpose and need for this bridge project, the answer cannot be determined. Due to traffic impacts, both bridges could not be under construction or out of service concurrently.

• *Item #7 - Question:* Isn't the work being done on the Oceanic Bridge all that is to be done for ten years?

Response: The Oceanic Bridge is in a scoping process. The repairs are being done so that it will continue to operate during the time needed to complete the design process for eventual replacement of the structure.

• *Item #8 - Comments regarding pedestrian movements:*

- On the other side of Route 36 along Sea Bright Beach Club, there is no sidewalk.

- Pedestrians cross the roadway to and from the beach to frequent businesses in Sea Bright (Dunkin Donuts and other shops along Ocean Avenue)
- People park in Rumson and walk over the bridge, including mothers with strollers and little children, who need more time to cross Route 36 safely and motorists are not patient.
- Some beach clubs now limit members to one car in their parking lots, so another car is parked in Rumson increasing the number of people who are walking over the bridge, or there are more vehicles crossing the bridge to pick up and drop off members.
- The sidewalk on the south side doesn't connect to anything – ends abruptly, missing connection.
- The Rumson-Sea Bright bridge is used by pedestrians to walk to Holy Cross Elementary School and Church; there are crossing guards on the Rumson side of the bridge.
- The bridge is also used by pedestrians to walk to church services at St. George's-by-the-river Episcopal Church.
- People do walk through the Sea Bright Beach club parking lot since there is no sidewalk along Route 36. The Beach Club representatives noted that they don't object to it.
- There are no pedestrian crosswalk areas north of the bridge. The crosswalks and warning signs put in along Ocean Avenue down by the Route 36 Highlands bridge end a few blocks before this intersection with the bridge. Pedestrians are crossing to get to either the public beach or to other beach clubs north of the bridge.
- Police from both Sea Bright and Rumson are active on-site in the summer months to direct traffic and pedestrians due to the increased congestion at the bridge with motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the bridge and Ocean Avenue (Route 36).

• *Item #9 - Comment:* Sea Bright Police had submitted a report in 2010 to NJDOT with suggested improvements needed in this area. They never received a response from the Department. The report was not sent to the County.

Response: Please provide a copy of the report to the project team and the County. This is the type of data this Study is collecting and will analyze in developing the project purpose and need.

• *Item #10 - Comments regarding bicycle movements:*

- There are no accommodations for bikes, so the conditions are uncertain where to be.
- Many bikers are teenagers carrying boogie boards and beach bags while trying to bike and steer between motorists; due to the lack of designated shoulders.

• *Item #11 - Other Comments:*

- Please consider lowering the posted speed limit to 35 mph during the summer season; it is now posted at 40 mph.
- There is concern during the summer season with the congestion in this area and how well the EMS providers are able to respond to emergencies safely and timely.
- There are no pre-emptive traffic signals in Sea Bright or Rumson.
- Look at ITS possible improvements to assist in traffic flow and safety near the bridge.

• Item #12 - Comments on bridge closures or openings disrupting traffic movement:

- When asked when was the last time the Rumson Sea Bright bridge was closed, the response was 1993 for three days.
 - There is concern during the summer season with vehicle backups in both Sea Bright and Rumson due to the bridge openings.
 - The frequency of bridge openings is every half hour during the summer season and on demand during the off-season.
 - Consider examining the number of openings and see if there are options for changing schedule, such as limit openings during certain peak vehicular travel times over the bridge.
 - Improve communications to inform the public when closing the bridge for maintenance or any other reason.
 - When the bridge opens, there is a back up of over a mile in Rumson, causing issues with access at Holy Cross School and Church.
 - It is extremely important to businesses that the bridge remains open during rehabilitation or replacement.
- Any load restriction on the bridge: would be a concern for school buses and trucks.
- The bridge is part of a designated Coastal Evacuation Route.
 - Ocean Avenue must be kept open to provide for NJ Transit bus routes.
 - Multiple school bus companies use the Rumson Sea Bright Bridge to transport public and private school students.
 - The bridge must be maintained to keep businesses alive; essential for economic viability.

• *Item #13 - Question:* Given that it is important for the bridge to always remain open, is it possible to dismiss the alternative once suggested which was to remove and not replace the structure?

Response: All alternatives must be identified for consideration once the Purpose and Need Statement has been accepted. At this point in the process, the Purpose and Need must be determined. It is most important to communicate the reasons it is necessary for the bridge to remain open to traffic. Any alternatives developed that do not meet the project needs would then be dismissed.

Additional Question: Can comments be submitted by the beach clubs and other businesses indicating the importance of this bridge crossing and the need to keep it open?

Additional Response: Yes, the project team and agencies encourage public comment. People are welcomed to draft letters or use the Comment Form, which has been created for use at the public meetings. It will be forwarded to attendees with the Public Meeting Notice.

• *Item #14 - Question:* How long would it take for the bridge replacement work to start?

Response: The shortest time frame is approximately three years, depending on funding availability and other competing priorities.

Additional Question: What is the shortest time to replace the bridge?

Additional Response: The shortest time frame to replace the S-32 bridge with a similar type bridge with the same points of access, would be approximately 18 months; with no staged construction.

• *Item #15 - Comment/Question:* If it takes so long and may not be in construction for a number of years, what is the point of discussing it now?

Response: Even if it may take years to design and construct a bridge replacement, there is reason to begin the process now due to the 2009 report indicating deteriorating conditions. The current analysis will be part of this Study to determine what needs to be done and develop alternatives to meet today's needs. The existing bridge was built in the 1950s which replaced an old swing crossing the Shrewsbury River on an alignment to the south of the current alignment. Due to the bridge's existing deteriorated condition, the time has come to discuss major repairs or replacement of the bridge. This new process is an opportunity to do so with time to discuss and determine an appropriate solution that will work well for both communities and the region, before the bridge has serious limitations.

8. Next Steps - 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 Monday, February 27th. One will be held in the afternoon in Sea Bright and the other in the evening in Rumson (details listed in section below). The PIC meetings have been advertised in local papers and posted to the Borough web sites. Property owners within 200 feet of the bridge in both Boroughs have been sent a Public Meeting Notice letter in the mail.

- (a) Both PIC meetings will be an open house format with display boards providing project information on the bridge condition, 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. Jon Moren, thanked Rumson Borough and the attendees. The project team will provide additional information on the bridge condition at the Public Meetings. 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 Rumson and Sea Bright Boroughs for posting to their website.
2. H&H will continue data collection, bridge and traffic analysis in coordination with County and in preparation for presentation at the Public Information Center 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.

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 May/June.

NEXT MEETING - Bridge S-32 Public Information Center (PIC) Meetings

Date: Monday, February 27, 2012

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (2:00 pm brief presentation)

Location: Borough of Sea Bright Municipal Building, Council Room

Date: Monday, February 27, 2012 (same day)

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (7:00 pm brief presentation)

Location: Borough of Rumson Municipal Building, Council Room

NEXT MEETING - Bridge S-32 Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2

Date: May/June, 2012

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (*to be determined*)

Location: Borough of Rumson or Sea Bright Municipal Building (*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
Bridge S32 Community Involvement Facilitator

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, Monmouth County, NJ

Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Borough of Rumson Municipal Bldg., 80 E. River Road, Rumson, 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 County Bridge S-32 on Rumson Road over the Shrewsbury River to develop the project purpose and need.

I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*

- Project Overview & Background
- Concept Development Process

II. *MONMOUTH COUNTY BRIDGE S-32 ON RUMSON ROAD OVER SHREWSBURY RIVER*

- Project Status and Schedule
- Data Collection, Bridge 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