

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
I-295/I-76/NJ 42 Interchange Reconstruction**

Community Advisory Committee Meeting
August 20, 2002 – 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Bellmawr Mutual Housing Complex

Meeting Summary

CAC Meeting Attendees

2 Bellmawr Residents
Mt. Ephraim Girls Softball Association
Borough of Bellmawr Highway Department
Borough of Bellmawr Sewer Department
Center for Independent Living
Chair, Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association
Camden Co. Council on Economic Opportunity
Mt. Ephraim Resident
Dir., Diocesan Administered Cemeteries
2 Gloucester City Residents
Chair, Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association
Diocese of Camden
Bellmawr Seniors
Bellmawr Baseball
Bellmawr Park Mutual Housing
Trustee, Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust
Chair, Transportation Committee, Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce
Director, AAA South Jersey Public Affairs

Project Team Attendees

Bill Beans (New Jersey DOT)
Nick Caiazza (New Jersey DOT)
Patricia Feliciano (New Jersey DOT)
Steven Maslow (New Jersey DOT)
Bruce Riegel (New Jersey DOT)
Michael Russo (New Jersey DOT)
Charlie Meidhof (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Lou Robbins (Dewberry-Goodkind, Inc.)
Arnold Bloch (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)
Stephanie Brooks (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)
Karen Rosenberger (Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc.)

Summary

Arnold Bloch opened the meeting, and asked each Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and project team member to introduce him or herself. Bill Beans followed with a project overview. Arnold Bloch discussed the roles and responsibilities of the CAC. Lou Robbins summarized the draft Purpose and Needs Statement. This was followed by a Question and Answer session.

Summary of Question and Answer Session

- One CAC member wanted to know whether or not various intersections and traffic circles, which he characterized as "dangerous", will be addressed in the highway reconstruction, and whether or not the public will be made aware of where and when construction will begin. Project Team members responded that a good share of the alternatives screening process consists of determining what work outside of the interchange will be included in the reconstruction effort. It was specifically noted that improvements to two locations – Brooklawn Circle and the intersection of Route 168 and Beinigno Blvd. – are under current study within NJDOT as separate projects. The public will be kept abreast of the alternatives screening via this CAC group and public meetings.
- Questions were raised as to how the Project Team plans on dealing with the effect that reconstruction will have on underground utilities. Bill Beans responded that a key tool in the reconstruction process is the use of existing utility maps, to inform team members where each utility area is located. By doing so, the team will have an idea of which utilities will be most affected by the final chosen alternative.
- One CAC member asked whether or not reconstruction includes fixing the bridge near Creek Road. Project Team members replied that the bridge is scheduled for repairs in early spring of next year, but that this is not connected to the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 interchange reconstruction.
- A number of CAC members were curious as to how the Missing Moves project will affect I-295/I-76/NJ 42 reconstruction, and whether Missing Moves will improve local road access and relieve congestion off I-295 and NJ 42. Charlie Meidhof replied that The Missing Moves Project is a distinctly separate project. He described Missing Moves efforts being made to provide two ramps which do not current exist, which, in tandem with the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 reconstruction, will reduce the traffic bottleneck in local roads. Other concerns were raised by CAC about the Missing Moves project, specifically, regarding potential weaving movements between traffic entering from I-295 and wishing to stay on 42 and traffic on 42 that wishes to exit on 55 or stay 42. Another concern was the current narrowing down of Route 42 from 4 to 3 lanes in the vicinity of Route 55. Both these concerns will be addressed by NJDOT, either as part of the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 reconstruction project or the Missing Moves project.
- Questions were raised as to whether or not the reconstruction itself has already been approved and will move forward. Bill Beans replied that there is no question of the need for this project in the minds of the local officials, residents and authorities and therefore at this time the project moving forward. The issue at hand is what is the best reconstruction alternative that minimizes impact yet still achieves project goals.
- CAC members wondered what exactly in this reconstruction process is different than the earlier construction done in the area during the 1950's and '60's. Lou Robbins replied that this project is complying with social and environmental regulations that were not even in existence forty years ago, and is progressing in a more fair and inclusive manner.
- A CAC member asked if there were any pre-existing prohibitive regulations against reconstructing within any area, such as the cemetery. Project Team members responded that at present they are not aware of any such restrictions.

- Brief questions were asked about double ramps and the influx of more traffic and noise in the area, and the lack of sound walls. Project Team members responded that CAC members will have opportunities to provide input on the development of noise walls. Part of the reason why noise walls do not exist in certain areas is due to technical difficulties that made such construction very difficult.
- In response to queries from the CAC, Project Team members stressed that the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 interchange reconstruction will be coordinated with the Missing Moves study, Brooklawn Circle project, and a study by the New Jersey Turnpike for an Rt 42 Interchange. These studies are geared towards reducing traffic congestion and improving safety in the region. CAC members will be informed of the status of all three projects throughout their developments.
- CAC members asked if they would be informed of construction alternatives prior to the October CAC meeting. Lou Robbins and Bill Beans both replied that a package would be sent to each CAC member before the meeting, so that members can have time to look over the various alternatives and develop their comments and suggestions.
- CAC members asked if there is room for discussion of multiple solutions/alternatives that would address small sections of the highways, instead of an overall reconstruction. Bill Beans replied that a study has already been done on multiple interchange reconstruction benefits of small project areas. It was determined that only a small percentage of traffic congestion would be relieved by such projects. In order to provide the most congestion relief, the entire highway interchange needs to be reconfigured.
- In a similar vein, CAC members asked if bus lanes and/or transit had been considered. Team members responded that bus lanes, like multiple construction in small areas, provided benefits that were minimal in comparison to the need for congestion relief and safety improvements in the entire area. Transit was also determined as not effective enough, since travel patterns in the area do not occur directly from point A to B, but instead include multiple trips that only freeway reconstruction can address. Still, transit options will be considered as part of this project.
- One CAC member asked whether funding was in place yet for condemnation of property. Bill Beans replied that the project is still in the early stages prior to any considerations of property takings. He stressed that later on the team will do a detailed look at exactly which properties will be affected by each alternative being considered. This effort will be done with CAC input.

CAC Commitment

- Bill Beans stressed that CAC commitment and consistency is imperative to a successful alternatives decision-making process, and asked that each CAC member think realistically about his or her time commitments to the project. He then suggested that if any CAC member found that consistent attendance was going to be difficult, to please let us know so that another representative could be found to attend in their place. This will help in that particular issues would be consistently addressed, and their communities kept abreast of project developments.

Action Items

- CAC members requested a glossary sheet, which Lou Robbins said is forthcoming and will be included in the next CAC meeting.
- CAC members will receive information about the first-cut alternatives prior to the next CAC meeting, tentatively schedule for October 2002.