

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

**Fourth Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
November 25, 2003, 6pm -9pm
Bellmawr Senior Citizens Center**

MEETING MINUTES

CAC Meeting Attendees

Frank Meloni (Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association)
Stephanie Mensch (AAA of South Jersey)
Richard Middleton (Bellmawr Baseball, Inc.)
Wayne Koehl (Mt. Ephraim Resident)
Michael Gaglianone (Mt. Ephraim Borough Council)
Raymond Stanaitis (Gloucester City Resident)
Joseph Ciano (Bellmawr Public Works)
George Coleman (Bellmawr Sewer Department)
Robert Stokes (Mt. Ephraim Resident)
Harry Moore (Bellmawr Park Mutual Housing Corp.)
Ken McIlvaine (Diocese of Camden – Dept. of Real Estate)
Daniel Eggers (Mt. Ephraim resident substitute for Lillian Eggers)
Stephen Sauter (Bellmawr Resident/Borough Council)
Hayley Knopple (Korman Interstate Business Park)
Charles Dougherty(Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission)
Bruce Huntsinger (Gloucester City Resident)
Leonard Bandoch (Bellmawr Resident)
Florence Korostynski (Bellmawr Senior Citizen Association)
Dale Keith (Senior Citizens United Community Services of Camden, Inc.)
Joseph Bloomer (Bellmawr Resident)

Project Team Attendees

Mike Russo, (New Jersey DOT)
Nick Caiazza, (New Jersey DOT)
Bruce Riegel (New Jersey DOT)
Patricia Feliciano (New Jersey DOT)
Lou Robbins (Dewberry)
Ileana Ivanciu (Dewberry)
Jeff Hewitson (Dewberry)
Linda McDonald (Transportation Marketing Strategies)
Patricia Saulino (Dewberry)

Summary of Presentations

Mike Russo welcomed the attendees, introduced the team and asked for self-introductions of all present. He presented an overview of the project status to date, including the several meetings held since the July PIC: NJDOT/Team short listing meeting (9/30/03); Local Official Briefing (10/7/03); Agency Coordination Meeting (10/15/03) for their respective recommendations on a short list of alternatives. He explained the purpose and importance of the CAC's participation to provide their input and recommendations. Following the CAC, a Partnering meeting will evaluate the recommendations and reach a consensus on the recommended short list for presentation at the next Public Information Center on January 28, 2004.

Ileana Ivanciu presented a review of the alternatives selection/screening process and specifically those that best meet the purpose, need and least amount of impact on the community. Maintaining the cohesion of the community and neighborhoods is a critical factor in the alternative screening process (the presentation is attached). Those alternatives that best meet the overall criteria for advancement appear to be D, G-2 and K.

Lou Robbins explained the risk assessment process to be conducted for alternative K (tunnel), hazardous cargo routes and Federal Highway Administration compliance regulations.

The presentation continued with an in-depth explanation of the criteria utilized in the screening process, e.g., natural resources, wetlands, visual impacts, elimination of the Al Jo's curve, St. Mary's Cemetery, impacts to quality of life and individual homes. Ms. Ivanciu explained that the entire process must balance the purpose and need of the project with minimal impacts to the community and environment, which is quite difficult within a very constrained existing right-of-way. Comparison of the alternatives "families" were explained including the "1" designation for the retention of Al Jo's curve, and the "2" designation for enhancements at weaving movements at the Route 168 Interchange.

During the presentation, the group discussed the "D" family and the value of retaining Al Jo's curve and wetlands impacted by G-2 and H-1.

A discussion of the cemetery and potential property acquisition clarified that no existing plots would be impacted.

Ms. Ivanciu and Mr. Russo asked the group for their feedback at the conclusion of the presentation and posed the following questions: Is the rationale appropriate? Are there other things to consider?

Ken McIlvaine of the Camden Diocese posed a 'what if' scenario about discovering endangered species during the analysis.

Ms. Ivanciu explained that a database of such information is available through the natural resource agencies and has been utilized to determine if any such species do exist. At present none are known to exist. The next phase will involve detailed wetlands delineation based upon field observation of wildlife and plant species.

Lou Robbins asked that the group provide feedback on alternatives they wished to DISMISS and those recommended for further study. He responded to Mr. Stokes question about the importance of this input, stating that these meetings are purposed for them to make an informed, qualitative decision. Their recommendations will be presented at the Partnering Meeting on January 7, 2004.

Mr. Russo and Ms. Ivanciu provided guidelines for this process, that if there is anything unacceptable in a specific alternative it should be dismissed.

B, C family, E family, G family, H family, J and L were discussed at length. Negative visual impacts, community impacts, noise and traffic disruptions were cited.

G-2 was discussed at length, its characteristics, height, number of lanes, and noise walls etc.

Ray Stanaitis stated concerns about the noise walls being inadequate to address the noise generated from the existing roadway and the G-2's elevated design would create further mitigation problems.

Mr. Robbins explained that a noise expert on the team would perform modeling to predict noise levels with and without noise walls. Background noise readings were taken in the summer / fall of 2001 at five key locations.

Harry Moore stated that K offered the least noise impact of the alternatives. This generated further discussion about the tunnel alternative. Characteristics of the tunnel were presented by Mr. Robbins and some of the unique issues to address: hazardous material, pumps to mitigate flooding due to the high water table; ventilation and impact to the mausoleums in St. Mary's cemetery.

Mr. Russo explained that the cemetery property over the tunnel had continued potential use excluding residential.

The group agreed that overall, Alternative K offered the lowest noise and visual impacts.

Robert Stokes had concerns about the ramp configurations at the Al Jo's curve stating he thought they were too tight for the speeds and the improved ramp would impact the wetlands

Mr. Robbins again reviewed the alternatives requesting the group to narrow them down to a recommendation. Some were dismissed without discussion.

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The D family generated discussion. The group believed that D was worthy of further consideration since it minimized impact to the cemetery mausoleums, homes, Annunciation Church and school/adjacent land and ball fields. At this point a potential Church expansion plan was introduced for a parish hall/gymnasium. Plans are to be provided to the team.

D-1 was adamantly dismissed citing requirement of new alignment to “flatten” the roadway, curvature/speed, and impacts to the proposed church improvements. The point was made by Harry Moore that elimination of the Al Jo’s curve was the intended purpose of the project. This recommendation concurs with the DOT’s.

The group agreed that Alternatives D & K should be recommended and presented at the Partnering Meeting and advanced for further study.

Mr. Robbins requested that the committee nominate 4-5 representatives to participate in the Partnering Session on January 7, 2004. The group nominated: Robert Stokes – Mt. Ephraim, Harry Moore – Bellmawr Park Mutual Housing Corp, Dale Keith – Sr. Citizens United Community Services of Camden County, Rich Middleton – Bellmawr Baseball, and Joseph Bloomer – Bellmawr resident.

Mr. Robbins advised the group of upcoming meetings:

- Bellmawr Park Housing, December 2, 2003 to discuss the unique relationship/situation surrounding the project
- Discussions with the Camden Diocese
- Discussions with the affected property owners on Essex Ave.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.