



**COUNTY OF HUDSON / COUNTY OF ESSEX**

**Local Concept Development Study for the Clay Street Bridge  
over the Passaic River in the Borough of East Newark, Hudson County, NJ  
and the City of Newark, Essex County, NJ**

**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1**

**MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Monday, March 24, 2014  
 TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
 LOCATION: East Newark Borough Hall, Council Chambers  
 34 Sherman Avenue, East Newark, NJ  
 ATTENDEES:

First Name	Last Name	Representing
<b>Attendees</b>		
Luis	Barragan	Michael Baker Corp.
Bill	Chappel	James Street Association
Charlotte	Chappel	House of Prayer / Plume House
Roberto	Frugone	La Casa de Don Pedro
Van	Golemis	Simelog Properties, L.L.C.
Brigite	Goncalves	Borough of East Newark Admin
Jack M.	Nata	City of Newark, Traffic & Signals
Jeffrey	Peck	MONOC Ambulance
Chris	Sandiford	NJ Transit, Bus Planning
Richard	Tully	Kearny Shop Rite, Inc.
Joe	Vocaturio	Rutgers University
<b>Project Team</b>		
Martine	Culbertson	M. A. Culbertson, LLC
Maryellen	Dierkes	Stokes Creative Group
Anthony	DiMaggio	McCormick Taylor, Inc.
Pamela	Garrett	NJDOT, Environmental
Joseph	Glembocki	County of Hudson Engineering
Brenda	Hunter	Stokes Creative Group
Sarbjit	Kahlon	NJTPA
Marie	Limage	NJDOT Environmental
Paul	Miranda	NJDOT, District 2 Local Aid
Glenn	Modica	Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.
Rob	Piel	Amy S. Greene Environmental
Bruce	Riegel	Hardesty & Hanover, LLC
Glen	Schetelich, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover, LLC
Khalid	Shaikh	NJDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian

## **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 Clay Street Bridge over the Passaic River so to develop the project purpose and need. (See attached Agenda)

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### 1. Project Overview & Background

After introductions from the Project Team and Attendees, Joseph Glembocki, Hudson County Project Manager, opened the meeting explaining the need to study the bridge is due to structural deficiencies that will require either a major rehabilitation or replacement. The purpose of this study is to identify how to rehabilitate or replace the existing bridge. The costs are too great for the County so it requires Federal funding. This Local Concept Development Study is the first step to the bridge improvements. Hudson County filed an application with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) who is overseeing this phase of the project. The bridge is under both Hudson County and Essex County jurisdiction. It's important getting input from the stakeholders to decide what improvements are needed for the bridge. Once an alternative is decided, then NJDOT Local Aid would administer the project for the design and construction phases with the Counties utilizing Federal funding.

### 2. Concept Development Process

Bruce Riegel, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, provided an overview of the display boards: one with an aerial of the project area indicating the design deficiencies; one indicating the environmental screening for the project; photos of the existing bridge condition; and a flow chart showing the steps to be followed for this project for the Concept Development Phase. Attendees were welcomed to view the boards after the Power Point presentation.

- (a) Currently, the project is in the Local Concept Development (LCD) phase, shown in blue on the LCD flowchart slide and a copy of the flowchart is in the Project Portfolio given to each attendee.
- (b) The Concept Development Flow Chart shows the steps to be completed so to gather data, establish a Purpose and Need Statement, develop conceptual alternatives and through a matrix analysis recommend a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) to move forward to the design phase.
- (c) Working as a team in collaboration with the Agencies, Hudson County, Essex County, the Borough of East Newark and the City of Newark, the bridge improvement option with the most benefits and least impacts would be the one to be determined as the preliminary preferred alternative (PPA).

### 3. Clay Street Bridge – Data Collection, Bridge and Traffic Analysis

Bruce Riegel presented information on the project status, preliminary bridge condition and information to be collected on slides in the Power Point presentation and referring to the Project Information Sheet handout and flowchart handouts in the Project Portfolio.

- (a) The project work commenced on January 6, 2014. Project Access Notification Letters were sent to property owners within the 200' set back. Field survey work and data collection is nearly done with base mapping and environmental screenings completed.

- (b) The team has begun identifying existing substandard design elements and gathering accident and historic traffic count data. New traffic counts will be collected prior to the Pulaski Skyway closures to reflect more typical traffic.
- (c) Bruce provided information and photos of the existing bridge condition, the deficiencies, substandard design elements including the bridge electrical and operating machinery.
- (d) He presented the project schedule with milestones and the community involvement steps to be met as indicated on the backside of the Project Information Sheet (included in the Project Portfolio).
- (e) The Concept Development Phase is anticipated to be completed in 18 to 21 months (October 2015).
- (f) Input is needed from community stakeholders and the public in developing the Project Purpose and Need; which is the first major milestone. Martine Culbertson, as the Community Involvement Facilitator will provide more information on the Stakeholder Survey Summary, during the group discussion. Community input is part of the Environmental Process.

#### 4. Environmental Process

Bruce explained that the environmental process must be followed for federal funding transportation improvements. NJTPA is administering the project, however FHWA provides the funding. Any transportation project receiving Federal funding must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

- (a) The Clay Street Bridge LCD Study must identify any environmental concerns and develop an environmental profile. When analyzing alternatives, one looks to avoid or minimize environmental impacts and if that's not possible then to provide mitigation. The environmental resources include air, noise, hazardous or contaminated sites, parks, wetlands, water resources, social and economic impacts, and cultural resources such as historic structures and facilities.
- (b) Robert Piel, of Amy Greene Environmental Consultants, conducted the environmental screening and presented the findings to date:
  - Rob noted that there are no wetlands, however the entire area is within a 100 year floodplain.
  - There is also a regulated riparian zone adjacent to the Passaic River.
  - In addition, the project area is mapped as a possible urban nesting habitat for the state endangered species, Peregrine Falcon. Further investigation will be needed prior to construction to determine if the species is nesting in the area. The project area is also foraging habitat for the Peregrine Falcon. Unless the Peregrine Falcon is nesting on the bridge (which is not likely) the only constraints anticipated are timing restrictions during construction.
  - There are several contaminated sites (hazardous waste sites) within the project area originating from the long term use of the area for industrial manufacturing. There are also several records of spills in the project area and of existing and abandoned underground storage tanks. Based on the Environmental Data Resources report the contaminated areas have been cleaned up, removed or capped.
  - The Passaic River itself is mapped as a contaminant site, possibly with dioxin, and if disturbance of the bottom sediments is proposed, further testing and evaluation of the sediments will be necessary.
  - As a bridge project, there will be permits required by the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for any improvements to the Clay Street Bridge. Rob will assist the project team with environmental permits related to each alternative developed.

- (c) Glenn Modica, of Richard Grubb Associates, conducted the cultural resources screening and presented the findings to date. There are a number of historic sites within the project area including the brick buildings in East Newark known as the Clark Thread Company Historic District and is listed as a National Historic Landmark. A draft cultural report indicating the findings is currently in review. The bridge itself is historic so there will be on-going coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- (d) Bruce Reigel provided the Project Status, noting the importance of today's stakeholders meeting for input on what works and doesn't with transportation related to the Clay Street Bridge.
- (e) Pamela Garrett, Environmental Project Manager, from the NJDOT Bureau of Environmental Program Resources (BEPR), noted that SHPO and the regulatory agencies look carefully at comments from the public as an important part of the environmental process given this is an historic bridge. The results of the environmental and cultural resource screening, as part of the project schedule, will be presented at the public meetings. A good Purpose & Need Statement and documentation is important for the review agencies to work well with the project team in moving the project forward from the LCD Study Phase to design and construction.

## 5. Community Involvement – Input and Discussion

Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, provided an overview of the information in the Project Portfolio, distributed to attendees. She reviewed the Draft List of Community and Agency Stakeholders as part of the community outreach process.

- (a) This is a draft list and the team is looking for input from the communities to identify any entities and organizations or individuals interested to participate at one more community stakeholder meeting and one or two public meetings for this phase of the project.
- (b) The Stakeholder Survey Summary in the Project Portfolio provides the input and comments received to date and is helpful information to develop the project purpose and need statement as well as the project goals and objectives.
- (c) The project will have a website for sharing of information on the Clay Street Bridge Study. The site will be maintained by the Project Team and at completion of the LCD phase, it will be turned over to Hudson County and Essex County to be maintained.
  - The website will include information similar to the project information sheet, meeting announcements and reports, photos, contact information, and opportunity to submit comments and questions.
  - Meeting announcements will be in English and Spanish.
- (d) The meeting was opened for questions and comments to identify the issues and concerns in the project study area. The comments will help the project team develop the project purpose and needs statement. The Local Officials comments slide of the Power Point presentation was displayed for attendees to review together with the Stakeholders Survey Summary comments. The following questions and discussion items were noted on newsprint at the meeting:

*Question #1:* Are you only doing traffic counts? Or does it include pedestrian counts?

*Response:* The Project Team looks at prior traffic count reports and will conduct current traffic counts as part of the LCD Study. They include pedestrian counts. The traffic counts will be done by early April prior to the Pulaski Skyway lane closure.

*Additional Comment:* For information on the NJDOT Pulaski Skyway Project go to the NJDOT website: [www.njcommuter.com](http://www.njcommuter.com) for updates and statewide roadway information.

*Question #2:* If the bridge is expanded, then what impact to the properties next to the bridge? When is right-of-way determined? What's the timing and procedure?

*Response #2:* In this LCD phase, there is an estimate of the amount of right-of-way impact associated with each alternative for comparison and analysis. The right-of-way process does not occur until in the Design phase and owners would be notified with an appraisal time of 18 to 24 months.

*Question #3:* Why was the bridge closed for 6 to 7 months?

*Response #3:* The Clay Street Bridge closure was due to water utility work by the City of Newark. It was anticipated to be a few months, but the duration was much longer. The Project Team will investigate the traffic information and impacts associated with the City.

### **Input / Comments**

- Is bridge wide enough as is - needs to be determined by study.
- Bridge closed 6 – 7 months was terrible for businesses and residents; do not do for this project.
- Traffic patterns were awful, red bull arena very difficult – traffic staging – don't close bridge.
- Possibility of keeping bridge open and building beside bridge; keep traffic flowing - cars and pedestrians, and bikes.
- Expand riverfront access – review City proposed plans.
- Enhance pedestrian and bike access to / from local neighborhoods – minimize point of conflicts.
- Rutgers and NJIT use Kearny / Harrison shuttle – students, bikes, and pedestrians use bridge a lot.
- Clay St Bridge is the ambulance route 24/7 – St. Michael's and University Hospitals (MONOC).
- Obtain information from the Betesh Group – riverfront development vision.
- Bridge serves as economic vital link between communities on both sides of river.
- Maps – river front access – community input.
- Safety is a concern – sidewalk area too little, too narrow, no lighting.
- Traffic signal coordination so to minimize back-ups.
- Need Left-hand turn for traffic flow and safety.
- Art and ease of access – aesthetics

- Examine all options/alternatives:
  - No build, do nothing
  - Rehabilitate existing
  - Replace existing on location or at a new location
  - Keep existing and create a new bridge elsewhere

## 6. Closing Comments - Feedback

In summarizing the Q & A input and discussion, Martine asked attendees to provide feedback and closing comments. The following items were noted on newsprint:

### **Feedback / Action Items**

- Add NJIT to community stakeholder list - student access important.
- Riverfront access and aesthetics are important to the communities - quality of life, economics and recreational.
- Improved circulation is needed with bridge improvements.
- Bike and pedestrian safety, access and connectivity improvements.
- Only bus stops in East Newark – has high use – ‘40’ transit – ‘70’ articulated – need to confirm lane width recommended for NJ Transit buses.
- Rutgers runs Shuttle Buses – they are shared with NJIT students.
- Roadways – truck delivery – Elizabeth Warehouse – Bridge and Clay Street are important connection routes.
- Consider no cars - bike and pedestrian only - priority mobility and use
- Look at the RT7 Bridge – nice design and works well; check on closure time for construction.
- Currently there are no lights on bridge – not safe, dangerous for pedestrians .
- Widening shoulders and create left-hand turn lane - important.
- U.S. Coast Guard – requires certain clearance and they have jurisdiction to make determination.
- Examine any current marine activity and look toward and future proposed boating, amount and types of vessels either commercial or recreational.

## 7. Closing Comments – Next Steps

Bruce Riegel thanked attendees for their comments. The next steps will be for the project team to continue to analyze data, and hold the public meeting for additional community input. The Project Team will then develop the draft purpose and need statement; after which the team will then develop conceptual alternatives to present at the next set of stakeholder and public meetings in the fall as listed on Project Information Sheet.

Any questions, please contact Joe Glembocki, Hudson County Project Manager or Luis Rodriguez, Essex County Project Manager or Bruce Riegel, the H&H Project Manager. Meeting minutes will be provided and distributed by Martine Culbertson upon Project Team and County approval. The power point presentation and meeting reports will be posted to the web site. The project team will notify stakeholders once the web site and social media (twitter) is available.

In closing, Joe Glembocki thanked the Borough of East Newark for hosting the meeting and the attendees for their comments. He noted the importance of community input as valuable in helping to find the right solution for the Clay Street Bridge. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

### **KEY ACTION ITEMS**

1. H&H will continue bridge, roadway and traffic analysis in coordination with Borough of East Newark, Hudson County and City of Newark, Essex County.
2. Local Officials to review Draft Community Stakeholders List, Stakeholders Survey Summary, and other Project Portfolio Handouts; also provide any comments or updated contact information; attend either or both Public Meeting sessions on April 7th if possible.
3. Martine Culbertson will provide meeting minutes, update Community Stakeholders List, notify Stakeholders of web site availability, and schedule the Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 and Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting in the Fall 2014.

### **NEXT MEETING**

#### Public Information Center (PIC) Meetings (2 Sessions- separate locations)

Date: Monday April 7, 2014

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (*brief presentation at 2:30pm*)

Location: Council Chambers, Borough Hall, 34 Sherman Avenue, East Newark, NJ

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (*brief presentation at 6:30pm*)

Location: Community Room, Studebaker Lofts, 368 Broad Street, Newark, NJ

**\*\* Entrance to Community Room is 23 Spring Street, Newark, 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.

Martine Culbertson

Community Involvement Facilitator

NJTPA Hudson County/Essex County Clay Street Bridge Project



**COUNTY OF HUDSON / COUNTY OF ESSEX**  
**Local Concept Development Study for the Clay Street Bridge**  
**over the Passaic River in the Borough of East Newark, Hudson County, NJ**  
**and the City of Newark, Essex County, NJ**

---

**Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1**

**Monday, March 24, 2014**

***East Newark Borough Hall, Council Chambers***  
***34 Sherman Avenue, East Newark, NJ, 2:00 p.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 County Bridge on Clay Street over the Passaic River to develop the project purpose and need.

I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*

- Project Overview & Background
- Local Concept Development (LCD) Process

II. *HUDSON COUNTY / ESSEX COUNTY CLAY STREET BRIDGE OVER THE PASSAIC RIVER*

- Project Status and Schedule
- Data Collection, Bridge and Traffic Analysis
- Environmental Process - Screening
- Community Stakeholders - Survey Summary

III. *DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS*

- Community Input - Purpose and Need
- Action Items – Public Information Center Meetings
- Closing Comments