COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1
MEETING REPORT

DATE: Wednesday, July 23, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Online – Microsoft Teams
ATTENDEES:

STAKEHOLDERS		
Madelyn	Artiles	Newark Department of Engineering, Division of Traffic & Signals
Shawn	Savage	Newark Department of Engineering, Division of Traffic & Signals
Chief Joseph P	Mastandrea	Town of Kearny Fire Department
Rocco	Russamanno	Town of Harrison Construction & Engineering Department
Candy	Blanks	Resident
Cynthia	Velasquez	Resident
Dr. Rosuara	Bagolie	East Newark School
Chad	Spies	New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Elizabeth	Da Silva, MPA	NJ TRANSIT Government & Community Relations
Anthony J	Bocchino	NJ TRANSIT Bus Service Planning
Christopher	Sandiford	NJ TRANSIT Bus Service Planning
Zita	Leung, AICP	Rutgers - IPO
Joe	Vocaturo	Rutgers - IPO
Jean-Philippe	Magron	HDR Inc.
Unknown	Attendee	

PROJECT TEAM		
Mark	Kataryniak, P.E.	Hudson County Engineer
Joseph	Glembocki, P.E.	Hudson County Assistant County Engineer
Sean	Keating	Hudson County
Art	Manabat	Hudson County
Anthony	Pisani	Hudson County
Andres	Gomez-Ortiz, P.E.	Essex County Supervising Engineer
Bruce	Riegel, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager
Phil	Thompson, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover Deputy Project Manager
Matthew	Mancini	Hardesty & Hanover
Brian	Medino, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover Highway Engineer
Brian	Mileo, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover Bridge Engineer
Bob	Supino	Hardesty & Hanover
Jason	Vopelius	Hardesty & Hanover
Matthew	Witkowski, P.E.	Hardesty & Hanover Traffic Engineer
Susan	Quackenbush, PWS	Davey Resource Group Environmental Specialist
Chelsea	Mansky	Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. Principal Senior Architectural Historian

PROJECT TEAM		
Martine	Culbertson	Community Involvement. Facilitator, M.A. Culbertson, LLC
Val	Aylesworth	Project Assistant, M.A. Culbertson, LLC
Harrison	MacDowall	Environmental Specialist, NJDOT BEPR
Sarbjit	Kahlon	Project Manager, NJTPA

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule for the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase, present bridge replacement preliminary plans and to obtain community input on the proposed improvements for the Clay Street Bridge replacement. (See attached agenda.)

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and Introductions

a. Meeting attendees were welcomed and informed of the following guidelines for the meeting:
   - The meeting would be recorded for internal use in writing the meeting summary report.
   - Microphones should be kept muted unless the attendee was speaking.
   - Cameras could be on during introductions and Q&A but should be turned off during the presentation to focus on the slide presentation.
   - Questions and comments could be submitted through the meeting Chat or held until the discussion period after the presentation.
   - During Q&A, Chat questions/comments would be read aloud in the order they were received, and a Project Team member would respond.
   - After the Chat questions/comments were addressed, participants could use the Raise Hand feature to ask questions or provide comments for the Project Team to address.

b. Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, presented the meeting agenda and introduced the project team members from Hudson County, Essex County, the Hardesty and Hanover (H&H) Team, and the cooperating agencies of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).

c. Joseph Glembocki, P.E., Hudson County Assistant County Engineer and Hudson County Project Manager, welcomed everyone, thanked them for their time and participation and provided the following opening remarks:
   - This is an essential bridge crossing and an important bridge replacement project.
   - The bridge is under the jurisdiction of both Hudson and Essex Counties.
   - Hudson County took the lead in applying to the NJTPA for a federally-funded Local Concept Development (LCD) Study and will continue to be the lead agency for the design and construction phases, working in coordination with Essex County.
   - After the LCD Study was completed, the project was advanced, with federal funding, to the current Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase.
   - The subsequent Final Design and Construction phase would also be federally funded.
   - The LPE phase involves performing engineering tasks and technical environmental studies to advance the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) for the bridge replacement that was developed during the LCD Study.
   - Community stakeholder input regarding the bridge replacement design and improvements provides valuable insight and is important to the process.

2. Project Overview

Bruce Riegel, P.E., the Project Manager from H&H, provided an overview of the project location, existing conditions and history of bridge, including the following points:

a. The bridge was built in 1908 and has been rehabilitated numerous times since 1942.

b. The bridge spans the Lower Passaic River and connects the City of Newark and the Borough of East Newark.

c. The bridge is co-owned and maintained by Hudson County and Essex County.

d. The LCD Study completed in June 2020 determined that the existing bridge should be replaced.

e. The roadway cross-section on the existing bridge consists of two 18-foot lanes, two 9-foot-wide sidewalks and no shoulders. Traffic averages are approximately 25,000 vehicles per day as of last year's counts.

f. The existing bridge consists of three spans, and the main, movable spring span splits the river into two 75-foot navigable channels.

g. The bridge sits within the limits of the EPA's Lower Passaic River Restoration Project, and replacement of the bridge will be coordinated with the restoration project efforts.

h. The bridge project limits extend from the Clay Street/Passaic Street intersection in the City of Newark to the Clay Street/Passaic Avenue intersection in the Borough of East Newark.

i. The Passaic River is under the jurisdiction of the US Coast Guard (USCG) and a USCG permit will be required for the bridge replacement.

j. The predominant use of the river at this location is recreational, however, it also must accommodate Newark City fireboats and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission skimmer vessel. As part of the LCD Study, the USCG issued a preliminary navigational clearance determination for at least 18 feet over mean high water.

k. The nearby Bridge Street Bridge is also currently under design for replacement. That is a separate project.

3. Local Project Delivery Process

For federally funded capital projects, four (4) phases of work are required. Community involvement continues through each phase with outreach meetings and the project website.

a. The first phase was Local Concept Development (LCD) and was completed in June 2020. The purpose and need for the project were established and a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) to replace the bridge was developed.

b. The project is now in the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase. The predominant goal is to complete engineering to establish the footprint of the project and to complete the environmental documentation. The LPE phase began in late fall 2023 and is expected to be completed in Spring 2026.

c. At the completion of the LPE phase, Hudson County can obtain federal funding for the Final Design (FD) phase. During FD, construction contract documents are completed, permits are secured, and right-of-way is acquired. The expected duration for FD is two years.

d. The final project phase, Construction, is expected to begin in Fall 2028 but depends on whether the Bridge Street Bridge goes to construction first or after the Clay Street Bridge, since both bridges can't be under construction at the same time.

4. Project Purpose and Need

a. The Purpose and Need Statement was developed during the LCD phase:

Purpose

- *Address deficiencies to provide safer and more efficient crossing*

Need:

- *Critical transportation connection for residents and commuters to Newark's Downtown Business District*
- *Bridge Condition*
  - *Overall serious condition*
  - *Sufficiency rating of 33.0*
  - *Structurally deficient (superstructure - serious condition)*
  - *Scour critical*
  - *Seismic design below standards*
  - *Bottom chords of steel truss are fracture critical members*

b. The Goals and Objectives for meeting the Purpose and Need include, but are not limited to, improving safety, providing bicycle and pedestrian compatibility with ADA improvements, minimizing environmental and right-of-way impacts, and providing accommodations for current and future users of the Passaic River.

5. Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA)

Brian Medino, H&H's Deputy Project Manager, provided a review of the PPA and a look at the design updates made in this phase.

a. The original PPA includes the bridge replacement and improvements to the intersections and approach roadways on both sides of the bridge.
   - Proposed new bridge:
     - Width = 68 feet
     - Two 12-foot-wide eastbound travel lanes to East Newark; one 12-foot-wide westbound travel lane to Newark
     - Shoulders on both sides, each 6 feet wide (wide enough for bicycles)
     - Sidewalks on both sides, each 8 feet wide
   - Passaic Avenue southbound approach roadway to Clay Street (East Newark) has a right-turn-only lane recently added by Hudson County that will be retained.
   - Passaic Avenue & Clay Street intersection (East Newark) will have the following proposed improvements:
     - ADA-compatible curb ramps
     - Pedestrian countdown heads and pushbuttons, crosswalks, etc. to address the high rate of pedestrian crashes

b. The PPA meets the Project Purpose and Need and all Goals and Objectives.

c. Resolutions of support for the PPA were received from the municipalities of East Newark, Newark, Harrison and Kearny and from the Hudson County and the Essex County Board of County Commissioners.

d. Design updates to the PPA were refined from the intersection and roadway improvements originally proposed, given the right turn only lane already constructed by Hudson County.

6. LPE Phase Work Effort

a. The bridge replacement and intersection improvements preliminary engineering design involves the following items:
   - Design includes a single leaf bascule to meet the PPA
   - Focus on cost effective, efficient and resilient solution

- Looking at design innovations to make the structural, mechanical and electrical systems meet federal and state guidelines regarding potential flood events
- Also looking at innovations and efficiencies to minimize the construction impacts and reduce construction duration including reducing the detour timeframe

b. Detour Route
- Bridge has to be closed during construction. Proposed detour route is to the south, taking vehicles to the Bridge Street Bridge using Route 21 on the western side and Passaic Avenue on the eastern side.
- Another possibility is to utilize Route 280.
- A detour route for pedestrians and bicyclists is still being evaluated. One option is to use the Bridge St Bridge, however given the distance, the detour may involve bus service for assist pedestrians and bicyclists.

c. Value Engineering Analysis
- The most current estimated cost for the project, including roadway, bridge, utilities, right-of-way and other factors, is approximately $119.1 million. This is a very preliminary estimate.
- All federally funded bridge replacement projects exceeding $40 million undergo a Value Engineering (VE) Analysis. During the LCD Study, the VE Analysis was inconclusive in determining whether the bridge replacement should be fixed or movable. With additional information gained during this LPE phase, a follow-up VE Analysis was conducted. This second VE Analysis, combined with a Cost-Benefit Analysis, confirmed the PPA for a movable bridge replacement as the most prudent alternative based on factors such as cost, compatibility for pedestrians, right of way impacts, environmental impacts, visual impacts and future sea level rise.
- The option of a fixed span bridge would require the roadway to be raised approximately 10 feet to meet the USCG's clearance requirement which would have additional adverse right of way and environmental impacts.

d. Environmental
- As a federally funded project, this bridge replacement project must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). During LPE, technical environmental studies are conducted and results compiled to document compliance with NEPA.
- Environmental constraints for this project include habitats for some threatened and endangered species, FEMA mapped floodplains, tidelands claims, and riparian zone limits. Studies conducted include wetland delineations, threatened and endangered species studies, and fish habitat analysis, as well as hazardous waste investigations and cultural resources investigations.
- With the documentation of all the environmental studies results, environmental permits and approvals needed for advancement of the project will be identified.
- There is ongoing coordination with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJHPO) for cultural resources (*sometimes referred to as NJ State Historic Preservation Office, SHPO*).
- A cultural resource investigation was completed last year to determine the presence of and identify any archaeological resources.
- The Clay Street Bridge is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a significant and increasingly rare example of a swing bridge.
- In consultation with NJHPO, it was determined that the proposed bridge replacement will result in an adverse effect to this eligible historic property and several mitigation measures were recommended, including development of interpretive signage, documentation of the structure prior to any construction activities and archaeological monitoring during construction.
- All mitigation measures will be developed and finalized as part of ongoing coordination with NJHPO and will be documented in a memorandum of agreement.

7. Community Involvement & Public Outreach

Community involvement and public outreach are required aspects when using federal funds for transportation improvement projects and are instrumental in delivering a successful bridge replacement project.

a. During the LCD Study, two rounds of outreach meetings were held with local officials, community stakeholders, and the general public. The Purpose and Need Statement was drafted in the first round of meetings. The conceptual alternatives were developed and presented in the second round of meetings.

b. Input received from local officials, community stakeholders and the public during the LCD Study meetings was carried forward and kept in mind as the project progresses.

c. LPE phase outreach to date includes letters mailed to introduce the LPE phase, a Local Officials Meeting in January 2024, and today's Community Stakeholders Meeting.

d. Before the end of this phase, there will be a follow-up Local Officials Meeting No. 2, followed by a Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting.

e. The project website (www.claystbridge.com) has been updated for the LPE phase and is available to share information and accept questions or comments at any time. The website will continue through the Final Design (FD) and Construction phases of the project.

f. The project-specific email address (claystbridge@gmail.com) is also available and will continue through the duration of the project. Local officials, community stakeholders and the public can submit comments and questions that go directly to the project team.

8. Community Input - Discussion and Q&A

The meeting was opened for participants questions and comments. Initially there were no comments or questions in the chat box, however some were entered during the discussion part of the meeting as follows:

Question #1: Did I miss when the project will begin?

Response: The bridge replacement construction phase is anticipated to begin in Fall 2028, once the Final Design phase has been completed. However, it needs to be determined whether the Bridge Street Bridge replacement will occur before or after the Clay Street Bridge replacement. The condition of each bridge must be assessed to decide which bridge will advance to construction first. Both bridges cannot be under construction at the same time because each is the anticipated detour route for the other.

Question #2: So the bridge will be closed during construction?

Response: Yes, due to the type of truss structure, the bridge can't be staging and must close to be replaced in the same location. The traffic will be detoured to the Bridge Street Bridge. During the LCD Study input received from emergency access providers that for safety and emergencies one or the other bridge must remain open at all times. Residents and businesses on both sides of the river depend on access across the river for services.

9. Community Input - Discussion and Q&A

a. Activities expected during the remainder of the LPE phase include:
   - Local Officials Meeting No. 2 – Fall 2025/Winter 2026
   - Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1 - Fall 2025/Winter 2026
   - Completion of Environmental Categorical Exclusion Document (CED)
   - Preparation of Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Report

b. PIC Meeting No. 1 will be held online and is anticipated to be held in the evening 6-8pm.

- Once the date is determined, a PIC meeting notice will be provided at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled date.
- The PIC Meeting Notice will be sent by mail and email as well as posted to two local newspapers and on the project website.
- The Notice will also be provided to the municipalities and the County to post on their websites.
- A 30-day comment period will follow the PIC meeting to allow the public to submit comments and questions that will become part of the LPE report public outreach documentation.

c. The LPE Report will be submitted to an Intra-Agency Review Committee (IRC), made up of representatives from the cooperating agencies, for approval to concur on moving the bridge replacement project forward to the next Final Design (FD) phase.

d. The Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1 presentation slides and meeting report will be available to view on the project website, once reviewed and approved by the Project Team and County. A courtesy email will be sent to those on the project contact list when the report and slides have been posted and available to view.

10. Closing Remarks

Madelyn Artiles, Principal Engineer from the City of Newark Department of Engineering, thanked the Project Team for the informative presentation. It's an important project for the City of Newark.

Rocco Russamanno, from the Town of Harrison Construction & Engineering Department, thanked the team on behalf of Mayor Fife, who was unable to attend. Their main concern is the impact of traffic during construction and ensuring that access is maintained for the town and for the Red Bull arena which holding many large events.

Andres Gomez-Ortiz, Supervising Engineer from Essex County, expressed thanks to the team for the overall presentation. He indicated that Essex County is happy to see the project progress as the bridge is vital to the residents and businesses in the community. He is available to assist and coordinate on behalf of Essex County with this essential bridge replacement project.

Joseph Glembocki, Assistant County Engineer for Hudson County and the County Project Manager, thanked everyone for their participation and comments. Community input is very important to the project and valuable contribution to the advancement of the design of the bridge replacement.

Mark Kataryniak, the Hudson County Engineer, expressed appreciation for an informative presentation and discussion. He looks forward to continuing working with the community on this important project.

Please visit the website for information and submit any additional comments or questions to the project email address. Key contacts for the project are listed below and can be reached by emailing claystbridge@gmail.com:

Joe Glembocki, P.E.	Andres Gomez-Ortiz, P.E.
Hudson County Assistant County Engineer	Essex County Supervising Engineer

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

NEXT OUTREACH MEETING

Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1

Date: Fall 2025/Winter 2026 *(Date to be determined)*

Time: Evening (*Anticipated to be 6-8 p.m.*)

Location: Online via MS Teams

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.

Clay Street Bridge LPE Project Team

Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Online via MS Teams

AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule for the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase, present bridge replacement preliminary plans and to obtain input on the proposed improvements for the Clay Street Bridge replacement.

I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*

- Project Overview & Update
- Local Project Delivery Process - *Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Phase*

II. *CLAY STREET BRIDGE REPLACEMENT OVER THE PASSAIC RIVER*

- Project Status and Schedule
- Preliminary Preferred Alternative – *Proposed Bridge Improvements*
- LPE Work Effort – *Surveying, Preliminary Design Plans and Proposed Detour Route*
- Environmental Process – *Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation*
- Community Involvement – *Project Website and Public Outreach Meetings*

III. *DISCUSSION*

- Q & A - Community Input - *Interests, Issues, Improvements*

IV. *NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS*

- Public Outreach:
  - Local Officials Meeting No. 2 - Fall 2025/Winter 2026
  - Public Information Center (PIC) online - Fall 2025/Winter 2026
- Completion of LPE Phase Documents & Report
- Feedback and Closing Remarks
  - Project Website: www.claystbridge.com
  - Project Email: claystbridge@gmail.com