

MINUTES OF MEETING OF Public Information Center – July 22, 2020

NJTPA FY 2019 Hudson County Local Concept Development Study
Meadowlands Parkway Bridge
Town of Secaucus, Hudson County
NJX-2019678.01

DATE PREPARED: August 3, 2020

LOCATION: Online; open format from 5:00 to 7:00 PM; formal presentation at 5:10 PM

ATTENDEES:

NJTPA, Hudson County, NJDOT, GPI and Stokes representatives:

Thomas Malavasi	Hudson County Engineer	201 369-4340
Jose Sieira	Hudson County Engineering Department	201 369-4340
Sean Keating	Hudson County Engineering Department	201 369-4340
Sascha Frimpong	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)	973 639-8400
Sarbjit Kahlon	NJTPA	973 639-8419
Patricia Newton	NJTPA	973 877-8128
Pamela Garrett	NJDOT– Bureau of Environmental Resource Programs	609-693-2063
Bernie Boerchers	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI)	908 236-9001
Julia Steponanko	GPI	908 236-9001
William Farrow	GPI	908 236-9001
Nicole Pace-Addeo	Stokes Creative Group, Inc. (Stokes)	732 232-3835

PURPOSE: Solicit comments and/or concerns from the stakeholders on the existing conditions in support of the Purpose and Need.

DISCUSSION: After a brief summary of the meeting format by Ms. Pace-Addeo, Mr. Boerchers then presented via PowerPoint the Project Team, project delivery process, existing conditions, crash and traffic data and analyses, stakeholder survey results, work completed to date and next steps. The following summarizes the key points of discussion (grouped by topic):

Bridge

1. It was inquired what would happen if the bridge experiences additional deterioration or a severe failure before construction. The Project Team stated that the structure is inspected every two (2) years, so any additional deterioration will be noted and corrected as needed until construction. The Project Team added that priority repairs, including column supports under numerous stringers and replacement of several end diaphragms, were completed in 2018.
2. It was inquired whether the off-road pedestrian walkway on the river side of the bridge, that originally provided access to the NJ Transit platform, could be reconstructed (it was removed after the station stop was eliminated). It was added that pedestrians using the off-road walkway could then cross Meadowlands Parkway at Seaview Drive. The Project Team noted that this option could be considered as part of the alternatives analysis.
3. It was noted that the NJ Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA, formerly the Meadowlands Commission) is generally involved with construction in municipalities in its jurisdiction. The Project Team noted that NJSEA will be a stakeholder, but it was not known whether they need to review contract documents for construction. *Subsequent to the meeting, a review of NJSEA courtesy copy of the Hackensack Meadowlands District Regulations, Section 19:4-*

3.2, Exemptions, item (a)1. indicates that “maintenance, repair or replacement work within municipal, county and State ROWs or on railroad tracks, signals, bridges, and similar facilities and equipment located in a railroad ROW” are exempt from these regulations.

4. It was inquired if there was any opposition to replacing the bridge. The Project Team stated that no opposition was received to date.

Roadway

5. It was inquired if any consideration will be given for making it possible to enter and exit Harmon Cove Towers (HCT) from both directions along Meadowlands Parkway, including entry and exit points directly onto the bridge from the HCT upper platform. Currently, traveling to and from HCT and Secaucus Junction is circuitous for residents. The Project Team replied that HCT access changes will be considered as part of the alternatives analysis.
6. It was stated that numerous motorists heading northbound on Meadowlands Parkway currently make an illegal left turn at American Way onto Meadowlands Parkway southbound to access HCT which is a safety concern.
7. It was inquired if this project addresses signage issues on the Meadowlands Parkway to Secaucus Road loop under the bridge. The Project Team stated that changes to traffic patterns, if any, will include modifications to signage on all approach roadways. However, it was noted that any existing signage concerns may best be addressed by the Town of Secaucus.
8. It was stated that there are “breaks in the drain line” in the project area which create ponding and icing over the winter. The latter results in difficulty traversing the bridge. It was noted that flooding occurs in the area. The constituent inquired if this issue will be addressed by this project. The Project Team indicated that while drainage may be upgraded in the proposed conditions that the existing concern seems to be a maintenance issue that is best addressed by the Town of Secaucus.

Pedestrian/Bicyclist

9. Mr. Boerchers asked the attendees if there was a side of the bridge that pedestrians and bicyclists use more often. One attendee stated the side closer to the river is used more, while another attendee stated whichever side faces traffic depending on which direction they are walking. The Project Team noted that all options for sidewalks and bike lanes, one or both sides of the bridge, would be considered as part of the alternatives analysis.
10. It was inquired if there will be significant noise from construction specifically in the early morning, late night, or weekends. The Project Team noted that noise minimization would be included in the contract documents with consideration given to local noise ordinances, and that there will be future outreach at which this issue could be further addressed.
11. It was stated that sidewalk is present along Meadowlands Parkway southbound, north of HCT and south of Seaview Drive. No sidewalk exists along Meadowlands Parkway northbound between Seaview Drive and American Way.
12. An attendee stated that it is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists to use the bridge.

Public Transportation / NJ Transit

13. It was stated that HCT and the Townhomes previously had direct access to the trains via the removed pedestrian bridge and platform. However, now there is only a bus connection to Frank R. Lautenberg Secaucus Junction Station. Buses cannot get to HCT from Meadowlands Parkway northbound. The nearest bus stop along Meadowlands Parkway northbound is at American Way. *Note, there is no crosswalk across the northbound*

approach of Meadowlands Parkway at American Way to access the bus stop and the signal at Meadowlands Parkway and American Way does not have full pedestrian accommodations. There is also a signed bus stop southbound.

General/Other

14. It was inquired as to when construction is expected to commence, how long it will take, and the anticipated measures to ensure that traffic can continue during construction. The Project Team replied that construction would start in approximately five (5) years and would last about two (2) construction seasons. It was stated that the Local Capital Project Delivery Program Process, as outlined during this meeting, is in the first of four phases, hence the timeline. The Project Team also noted that a reduction in the number of lanes, one way and full closures with detours along with maintaining all lanes with lane width reductions will be considered as part of the alternatives analysis. It is anticipated that access to HCT will be maintained at all times during construction.
15. It was inquired as to where most of the submitted surveys came from. The Project Team noted that most of the 37 responses were submitted by HCT residents. An attendee noted that HCT and the Harmon Cove Townhouses have approximately 1,200 and 1,400 residents, respectively and recommended an interview to publish in the Secaucus Spectator, which reaches approximately 75% of the HCT and Townhome residents, to get additional comments.
16. It was recommended that the NJSEA and Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc. be included as stakeholders.
17. It was inquired whether link files (documents/audio) of the meeting downloadable for sharing will be made available to the public. The Project Team noted that while this meeting is recorded and will be available via the website that only the presentation slides will be downloadable.

This memorandum of record is believed to be an accurate record of the discussions at this meeting. If any of the attendees disagree with the documented discussion, please contact Bernie Boerchers at (908) 236-9001 within 10 days of receipt of minutes. If no comments are received, then this memorandum will be considered a true and accurate record of this meeting.