



Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge Improvement Project Focus Group Meeting #3



**Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School, Newburg, Md.
Thursday, January 24, 2008
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

Meeting Summary and Action Items

Meeting Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Lt. Wayne Boarman	Maryland Transportation Authority Police
Megan Blum	Maryland Transportation Authority
Shawn Burnett	Wilson T. Ballard, Co.
Tony Chinyere	Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland
Kyle Conboy	King George County Office of Community Development
Kerri Corderman	McCormick Taylor, Inc.
Linda Crandell	Colonial Beach Town Council
Hula Edmonds	Mirant MidAtlantic LLC
Patti Faulkner	Cliffton on the Potomac Community
Jay Friess	Maryland Independent Newspaper
Alma Gaddis	Roseland Road Community
Jean Graham	Roseland Road Community
Jason Groth	Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management
Jim & Jane Hudnall	Oxon Hill Bike Club
Gary Jackson	Maryland Transportation Authority
Edward Marshall	Cobb Neck Citizens Alliance
Kelly McCleary	Maryland Transportation Authority
Regina Mundi	One Stop Travel Plaza
Nick Nies	Virginia Department of Transportation
Dave Ogle	Virginia Department of Transportation
Earl Robb	Virginia Department of Transportation
Kelly Robertson-Slagle	Robertson's and Captain Billy's Crab Houses
Joe Schumacher	Representative Robert Wittman's Office
Dale Sisson	King George County Board of Supervisors
Glen Smith	Maryland Transportation Authority
Captain Judy Smith	NSA South Potomac
Jerry Volman	Bryans Road Corp
Gary Wagner	NSA South Potomac
CDR Michael Weaver	NSF Dahlgren

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Glen Smith, Project Manager of the Nice Bridge Improvement Project with the Maryland Transportation Authority (Authority), welcomed the group to the project's third Focus Group meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a summary of the public comments received at the spring 2007 Alternates Public Workshops and review the proposed Alternates Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS), the environmental documentation process, and the project schedule. Glen thanked the Focus Group members for their continued participation in the meetings and for the local perspective that they provide on the project.

Glen asked that the attendees each introduce themselves and identify the community, business, organization or agency that they are representing. He noted that each participant should have three

hand-outs; the meeting agenda and information for the presentation, information on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process, the Summary of Public Comments from the spring 2007 Alternates Public Workshops.

Brief Review of the spring 2007 Alternates Public Workshops

Ms. Kerri Corderman presented information on the comments received from the public at the spring 2007 Alternates Public Workshops. She noted that over 130 people attended the May 31st and June 7th workshops. She explained that the team sorted all the comments received into seven categories: Alternates, Community Access, Natural Environmental Resources, Community/Business Resources, Design/Aesthetics, Existing Bridge Issues, and Project Schedule/Funding. Ms. Corderman provided examples on the types of comments received for the seven different categories. She referred to the hand-out provided to the Focus Group participants that included the detailed summary of public comments submitted at and following the Alternates Public Workshops.

No questions were asked regarding the summary of public comments.

Alternates Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS)

Mr. Shawn Burnett presented information to the participants on the ARDS process and described each of the ARDS and the alternates that were dropped from consideration. Mr. Burnett explained how the comments received from the public are taken into consideration when the team is identifying the alternates that will be carried forward into the detailed environmental studies. He also described how alternates are developed to be consistent with local land use plans and other factors taken into consideration including cultural resources, such as historic properties and the location of Native American tribes.

Mr. Burnett presented the seven proposed ARDS and referred to page five in the presentation hand-out that was provided to the group. Page five of the hand-out featured graphics of each of the seven ARDS. He then provided information on the seven alternates dropped from consideration that include: Off Existing Alignment, Roadway Shift, Tunnel, Stacked Deck, Three-lane Bridge with Moveable Barrier, Transportation Systems Management/Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM), and Transit.

Questions/comments received on the ARDS

- Does the team envision keeping a span open during construction? *Mr. Burnett responded that one lane would continue to remain open during construction.*

Environmental Documentation Process

Ms. Megan Blum, Environmental Manager with the Authority, presented information to the group on the environmental documentation process. She described information on the agency coordination process and how that relates to the environmental studies being conducted. She explained how the project team works closely with regulatory and resource agencies in both states (Maryland and Virginia) throughout the project planning study. She also noted the team coordinates closely with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) throughout the study.

Ms. Blum provided information to the group on how the project team conducts the analyses of environmental resources and how these analyses are summarized in the project's environmental

document, per NEPA. She noted these resources included the natural environmental resources such as wildlife, cultural resources including historic properties and archeological sites, and socioeconomic resources including communities and businesses. She described how the technical teams gather data on the resources and then analyze how each of the resources will be impacted by the alternates being studied. She referred to the NEPA Process hand-out that was provided to the Focus Group participants that includes the various steps taken during the project planning study.

Questions/comments received on the environmental documentation process

- Can you provide more information on the socioeconomic resources and what that means? *Ms. Blum responded that the team looks at the social and economic impacts to the community. She described how the team identifies the communities in the study area and determines how those communities will be impacted.*
- The participant asked how the team identifies the impact on economics. *Ms. Blum noted that forecasts are conducted to determine how the project will affect business in the study area. Ms. Corderman described the socioeconomic analysis that identifies the businesses in the study area and will determine impacts such as physical and access impacts to the business from the alternates or from temporary construction activities as well as potential benefits for the businesses.*
- Will the businesses that will be impacted be contacted by the project team? Our main concern is impacts during construction to Captain Billy's and Robertson's Crab Houses. *Mr. Smith explained that the Authority will contact any property owners whose property would be impacted by the project (either permanently or temporarily during construction). Mr. Burnett noted that maintenance of traffic plans are developed with the goal of maintaining traffic flow at all times. Mr. Smith explained public involvement activities continue throughout the project into the design and construction phases. During the construction phase, maintenance of traffic information will be available to the public.*
- What is the projected traffic increase going from a two-lane bridge to a four-lane? *Mr. Burnett described how the team looks at the impact from the No-Build alternate as well as the build alternates. He noted that traffic scenarios are run for each alternate.*
- Are you also looking at impacts to cultural, noise, air? *Ms. Blum noted that the team was conducting studies on the impacts to cultural resources and the impacts to noise and air quality.*

Project Schedule

Mr. Smith reviewed information on the project schedule with the participants and referred to pages eight, nine and ten in the presentation hand-out. He went through the list of public outreach activities since Focus Group Meeting #2, held on May 10, 2007, the project milestones completed to date, and the next steps to be taken in the project schedule.

Questions/comments received on the Project Schedule

- Is the project only funded for planning? *Mr. Smith noted that currently the project is only funded for the planning phase and not design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction.*
- Support from elected officials will be important in getting further funding for the design and construction of the project. *Mr. Smith described the Authority's funding structure and noted the Authority is in the process of identifying alternate funding sources for its projects such as federal funds and public private partnership (P3) funds.*

- How is the Nice Bridge viewed at the Maryland state level? What priority is it given? *It is a top planning priority at the Authority.*

Future Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Smith noted that the fourth Focus Group Meeting would be held in Virginia and would take place prior to the fall 2008 Public Hearings. He noted that the project team would be in contact with the Focus Group members closer to the meeting timeframe with further details on the date, time and location.

Questions & Discussion

Mr. Smith noted the importance of feedback from the Focus Group members, and asked that each Focus Group participant provide their input regarding the project. This will provide an opportunity for all Focus Group members to hear each others concerns. Questions and comments were received on the following topics:

- Construction impacts;
- Current traffic congestion;
- Involvement from elected officials;
- Parkland impacts;
- Project Schedule;
- Community access;
- Funding;
- Bicycle/pedestrian facilities;

Mr. Smith thanked everyone again for the very helpful questions and comments. He thanked everyone for their participation in the third Focus Group meeting and noted a meeting summary would be sent to each participant following the meeting.