Public Information Center #2 Summary

Date/Time: September 11, 2018, 5:30 PM
Location: Hyatt House Morristown
194 Park Avenue, Morristown, NJ

Attendees:		
	Richard Brundage	NJTPA – Project Manager
	Meghan Paccione	Morris County
	Amy Sokalski	McCormick Taylor
	Walter Marks	McCormick Taylor
	Katie Carver	McCormick Taylor
	Peter Berg	TranSystems
	Jeff Stiles	TranSystems
	Paul McEachen	RGA, Inc.
	Marie Salvato	Citizen
	Christine Lee	Florham Park Eagle
	George Griumlsky	Citizen
	Douglas Nase	Citizen
	Cathy Wilson	Morris Township Committee

Public Information Center #2 was held for the Columbia Turnpike Bridge over Black Brook Local Concept Development (LCD) Study. Amy Sokalski began the meeting with a brief introduction of the project team. The project team includes the following: Morris County (the project sponsor), North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). The consultant team is being led by McCormick Taylor with the following subconsultants: Amercom Corp., RGA, Inc.; TranSystems; and Stokes Creative Group. She explained that the purpose of the meeting is to provide a summary of the Local Capital Project Delivery Process, a brief summary of the data collection effort and the Purpose & Need/Goals & Objectives; present the improvement concepts; and obtain stakeholder input on the concepts.

Ms. Sokalski presented the Project Overview and Background for the Columbia Turnpike Bridge over Black Brook, which is located in Florham Park Borough, Morris County. The bridge was built in 1929 and is in need of rehabilitation or replacement. Morris County was selected by NJTPA as the recipient of funding for an LCD Study of the bridge. McCormick Taylor was selected as the consultant and the LCD Study was initiated in November 2017.

The Local Capital Project Delivery Program provides an opportunity to advance the project with public input and agency collaboration throughout the process. The LCD phase is the time to solicit input from the local officials to ensure that the project team understands all of the issues. Ms. Sokalski gave a brief overview of the Local Capital Project Delivery Process, which includes the following 4 phases: Local Concept Development, Local Preliminary Engineering, Final Design/ROW Acquisition, and Construction. This process must be followed to obtain federal

funding for the project. Ms. Sokalski explained that the project is currently in the Local Concept Development phase of the process.

Ms. Sokalski then provided information about the Columbia Turnpike Bridge, which was built in 1929 and widened in 1960. The bridge is 35' long with a roadway width of 45'-7" and 4'-11" sidewalks in each direction. The roadway is two (2) lanes in each direction with no outside shoulders, and the average annual daily traffic (AADT) is 33,840 vehicles per day. The bridge is in overall fair condition due to the condition of the superstructure, which has a rating of 5 out of 10. The bridge is functionally obsolete due to the substandard roadway width (no outside shoulders). The Sufficiency Rating of the bridge is 57.5 out of 100 based on the 17th Cycle Bridge Re-evaluation Report.

An Environmental Constraints Map was shown for the project, which depicts the extensive wetlands in close proximity to the bridge. These wetlands are of exceptional value and may contain Threatened & Endangered species such as bog turtles. The Samuel Ford Jr. Hammock Farm is located just east of the bridge and is listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places as well as the National Register of Historic Places. Although the building has since been removed, the site is still considered to be historic. There is a sewer pump station located west of the bridge, and Ely's Aquatic Farm is also located to the west. That property has a low elevation, and there are also flooding concerns. During the Alternatives Analysis, impacts to this property will be identified such as vibration and noise during construction. There is an office complex east of the bridge, and the Morristown Airport is located west of the bridge, near the Route 24 interchange.

Ms. Sokalski then detailed the current status of the LCD Study. The data collection phase was completed in Spring 2018, and Local Officials Briefing #1 and Public Information Center #1 were held in the spring. The purpose and need statement was finalized in June 2018, and the development of conceptual alternatives was conducted in Summer 2018. A Local Officials Briefing #2 was held on August 30, 2018.

Ms. Sokalski then presented the purpose and need of the project. The purpose of the project is to address the deficiencies and improve safety and traffic operations through the rehabilitation or replacement of the Columbia Turnpike Bridge over Black Brook and to provide an upgraded structure that meets current standards and maintains a safe means of transportation across the Black Brook for all users. The Bridge supports a vital regional transportation network link for the driving public and connects to major highways, towns and the Morristown Municipal Airport. The bridge is Functionally Obsolete due to the substandard roadway/shoulder widths and is in overall fair condition due to the condition rating of the superstructure. The superstructure condition is fair with a rating of 5 out of 10, and the substructure is in satisfactory condition. The bridge currently has a Sufficiency Rating of 57.5.

The goals and objectives of the project are to address structural deficiencies and upgrade the bridge and approach roadways to meet current standards; minimize impacts to environmental features and utilities; minimize traffic disruptions during construction; maintain access to

businesses during construction; minimize the use of detours; and provide bicycle and pedestrian compatibility to the approach roadways.

The presentation was then turned over to Peter Berg to present the improvement concepts. He described the critical design parameters for the structural alternatives including: providing a durable, cost-effective bridge with minimal maintenance; no flood water increases greater than 0.04' upstream or downstream; maintaining four lanes of traffic open during construction; addressing substandard geometry and widening bridge to include outsider shoulder; and eliminating environmental barriers at the bridge for wildlife (terrestrial species).

Mr. Berg presented the existing cross section and plan view of the bridge, indicating lane widths of 11'-3" (outside lanes) and 11'-6" (inside lanes) with no outside shoulders. He then discussed the various superstructure alternatives that include adjacent box beam, spread box beam, NEXT beam (accelerated bridge construction), and Inverset (accelerated bridge construction). Mr. Berg also presented the results of the Hydrology & Hydraulics (H&H) analysis for two different span lengths. The 32' span would accommodate the H&H but would not accommodate a wildlife passage. The 52' span would not meet H&H requirements but would allow for a wildlife passage.

Staging concepts, roadway plans and profiles were also presented. Staging Concept 1 is 6 stages and the proposed bridge remains within the existing right-of-way (ROW). The project limits are shortened compared to the other concepts. Staging Concept 2 includes 4 stages, and the bridge is shifted slightly to the south and would require ROW acquisition. Staging Concept 3 also has 4 stages and the bridge is shifted slightly to the north and would also require ROW acquisition. Staging Concepts 2 and 3 would also result in slightly longer project limits than Concept 1. All three concepts will slightly raise the profile of the bridge compared to existing conditions. The final bridge configuration for Concepts 1, 2 and 3 will include two 12-foot lanes and an 8-foot outside shoulder in each direction. A 6-foot sidewalk will be provided in the WB direction.

Walter Marks then discussed the challenges and conflicts related to wildlife passages. The 52' span would accommodate the wildlife passage but increase flooding downstream due to the nature of the topography. A permit would not be issued for this condition, and the County, Borough and regulatory agencies could be liable for potential damages. The 32' span would require separate wildlife passages (3'x3'), which would not increase downstream flood levels.

Ms. Sokalski then presented the Draft Alternatives Matrix and stated that once this matrix is completed, it will assist the project team in choosing the Preliminary Preferred Alternative for the project. The matrix includes such criteria such as meeting the purpose & need, improving roadway features, providing bicycle/pedestrian compatibility, duration of construction, ROW and access impacts, improving structural features, environmental impacts, utility impacts and cost.

Ms. Sokalski then presented the project schedule.

- Purpose and Need Statement – June 2018
- Development of Conceptual Alternatives – Aug/Sept 2018

- Selection of PPA – Dec 2018/Jan 2019
- Submission of Draft Local Concept Development Study Report – March 2019
- Completion of LCD phase – June 2019

She then briefly described the Community Outreach schedule. The first set of public meetings were held in April/May 2018. The second set of meetings were held in August/September 2018, and the final set of meetings will be held in Fall/Winter 2018.

The project website and social media information is as follows:
Website: www.columbiaturnpikebridge.com
Twitter: @Columbia_Bridge

Ms. Sokalski stated that the PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the project website subsequent to the meeting.

Comments received from the meeting attendees are summarized below.

- One attendee asked if the Columbia Turnpike Bridge could be designed to include future provisions for a median barrier. He stated that traffic volumes are high and travel at high speeds and that a median barrier may be needed in the future. Mr. Berg responded that this will be taken into consideration as the alternatives are revised and finalized.
- Cathy Wilson inquired about the funding sources for the study. The project team responded that the project is federally funded.
- Ms. Wilson also asked about the timing of the improvements. The project team responded that each phase takes about 18 months to complete, so construction may begin in approximately 4-5 years.
- Ms. Wilson also inquired about the regulated turtle species and wildlife crossing requirements. Mr. Marks responded that NJDOT is in the process of determining if wildlife passages may be needed for the bridge.
- Ms. Wilson and the group also briefly discussed the historic property along Columbia Turnpike. No particular questions were asked about the property; Paul McEachen discussed the history of the farm at the request of Ms. Wilson.