



**US 113
Project Team**

Delaware Department of Transportation
Sussex County
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Memorandum of Meeting

Date: August 25, 2005
Date of Meeting: May 18, 2005
Time of Meeting: 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Location: Cheer Center, Georgetown, Delaware
Topic: Working Group Meeting 8

Working Group Attendees:

Name	Representing
Abbot, Jr., Howard	Georgetown Resident
Baird, David	Town Manager
Buehl, Eric	Center for the Inland Bays
Campbell-Hansen, R. Carol	Sussex County Board of Realtors
Cooper, Mitch	Delaware State Police
Diehl, David	Bayhealth Medical Center
Dryden, Lit	Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce
Dukes, Harry	First State Poultry, Sussex County Airport Board
Bruce Wright for Edwards, Bernice	First State Community Action Agency
Gibbs, Matthew	Georgetown Resident
Johnson, Terry	Delaware Technical & Community College
Jones, Wesley	Georgetown Historical Society
Martin D. for Messick, Lynda	Delaware National Bank
Moore, Sr., Carlton	Historic Georgetown Assoc.
Moore, Merrill	Georgetown Area Resident
O'Neill, Karen	Southern Delaware Tourism
Pedersen, David	Georgetown Planning Commission
Phillips, Guy	Sussex County Farm Bureau
Simmons, Mike	DelDOT, Project Development

Bob Kramer welcomed everyone to the 8th Georgetown Working Group and introduced himself as the facilitator. He specified that there is a full agenda available for everyone's participation. The agenda included the following items:

- Presentation of environmental impact information

- Presentation of Traffic Information

- Break-out sessions to discuss the recommendations of the committee on which alternatives to retain for detailed study.

- Summarize break-out sessions and reach consensus on decision.

Mr. Kramer then stated that the Working Group decisions would be shared at the Public Workshop on June 13th and also with the Resource Agencies for their input. These would all be considered within DelDOT's final decision this summer.

He then introduced Monroe Hite, III to start the agenda. Mr. Hite explained that there was a full agenda to work with and reminded the Working Group of the Public Workshop on Monday, June 13th from 4-7pm at the Cheer Center. He continued by specifying that tonight's meeting would go through details of the On-Alignment, East, and West Options. He indicated that the Working Group Members would have the opportunity to get into break-out groups and review the alternatives and then come back as a group and make formal recommendations as to which ones should be dropped. Mr. Hite reiterated that the Project Team is not looking for the preferred alternative at this time. He indicated that they are trying to determine which of the alternatives merit further study and which ones should be dropped. Mr. Hite finally explained the procedures of the break-out sessions and indicated that at the end of the meeting, there will be group discussion.

A member of the Working Group, who was uncertain of the project schedule, asked if the goal at this point was to identify a preferred alternative by next spring or summer. Mr. Hite stated that identifying a preferred alternative by next spring or summer is indeed the goal at this point and he outlined the steps that will be occurring to achieve that goal.

David Pederson indicated that during the last Working Group Meeting, the Project Team discussed updating the Purpose and Need, and asked if this was complete. Mr. Hite explained that the Project Team is in the process of updating the Purpose and Need and the document should be available to the Working Group at the next meeting. Mr. Hite then asked if there were anymore questions or comments.

Mr. Hite then began the discussion regarding the reduction of alternative that should be retained for detailed study. He stated that environmental and traffic information is being provided to the Working Group as a "tool box" in order to assist them in making recommendations. Jeff Riegner explained some of the changes and updates to the alternatives since the last meeting. He stated that a no-build alternative and at least one on-alignment alternative would be retained no matter what the Working Group recommends. Mr. Riegner then explained that the environmental and engineering matrices are the tools used to compare one alternative versus another. He suggested that

the Working Group review some of the impacts associated with each option so that they can make recommendations.

Mr. Hite then indicated that traffic data would be reviewed briefly. He specified that the Project Team found that all the alternatives will be effective at reducing N/S through traffic. However, some are better than others at addressing E/W traffic through Georgetown. He then reviewed the comments from the previous Public Workshops and Working Group meetings.

The Working Group asked if there was a reason for why the Project Team was limiting the On-Alignment versus other alternatives. Mr. Riegner indicated no, but it should be noted that in Georgetown each on-alignment is independent of one another and in fact all of them could be retained for further study.

Mr. Riegner explained that there are three On-alignment alternatives in Georgetown, two of them provide limited access along existing US 113 and the Third Lane Option provides an additional lane in each direction. The On-Alignment Options (Options 1 and 2) are limited access and there will be grade separations at the intersections with no signals. The key element of Option 1 is to provide directional ramps from SR 404 in front of DelTech onto southbound US 113 and provide less access to local roads south of SR 9. Option 2 will provide access roads on the west side of US 113 from 18 to 404 down to Arrow Safety Road to accommodate local roads, down to which will require more access south of Route 9. He indicated that these are the alternatives that the Project Team will be looking at. He explained that Option 3 will be at the existing grade. He also mentioned that there are only two intersections which will be grade separated (SR 404 and SR 18). All the other signals in the corridor will remain as they currently exist in the corridor but there will be an additional lane in each direction that will accommodate the growth in traffic.

Mr. Riegner responded to a comment from the Working Group as to the result of meetings with legislators in the spring. Someone from the Working Group asked why an additional lane in each direction wouldn't suffice. Mr. Riegner replied that the Project Team looked at what would happen if all signals would remain, and they found that there were two intersections that would fail even with an additional lane in each direction. That's why the Project Team is proposing grade separations at two locations because there is no way to accommodate all the traffic at those intersections. A member from the Working Group then asked for clarification on the meaning of a grade separation. Mr. Riegner explained that it means, in Georgetown, to take four new lanes put them in the median and build over 18 and 404 back to grade over Route 9 back down and then merge back together. He further explained that all turning moves coming into Georgetown going anywhere local, you would exit where those new lanes start in the median and then turn left under the bridge to get on SR 18/SR 404 and SR 9. The Third Lane Alternative does not address E/W, so as traffic continues on US 113 people will still have to get to the east and that means more traffic through the local roads. Now that SR 1 from the north is limited access all the way to Dover, there are plans all the way to Milford that include eliminating the few remaining traffic signals. He explained that US 113 in

Maryland is already almost limited access, and that there are provisions to remove the few remaining signals in the future. So, essentially Sussex County will have a limited access highway in both directions. As someone previously mentioned, coming from Maine down to Virginia Beach, the first light that traveler will hit is in Kent and Sussex/Kent Counties on US 113. So, the need to contain signals and not meet the purpose of having a connected system... (must occur?). The Project Team is concerned with safety.

Mr. Riegner then indicated that to address east/west traffic that there is support from the public for an alternative that would use Arrow Safety Road as some configuration with Park Avenue to bypass Georgetown to the South. The On-Alignment option south of Route 9 received the same support. However, in terms of impacts to Natural and Cultural Resources, whenever you upgrade an existing road is lower than building a bypass. He explained that this was no exception. Typically, the key use wetlands are in order of 20 to 25 acres. Somewhere in the order of 30 to 60 potentially historic structures and forestland, which is inside an interchange, otherwise this would put you right on the existing alignment. He explained that there is an alternative with 40 acres and the other with 80. Furthermore, as the future progresses along, most of the numbers will increase substantially.

A Working Group Member asked if a list of historic structures in the project area was available. Mr. Riegner stated that the Project Team is in the process of creating such a list and more information would be available after the detailed analysis was completed for the alternatives to be retained for detailed study.

Another member of the Working Group asked a question about land acquisition. Mr. Riegner explained that representatives from DelDOT's real estate section will be present at the Public Workshop. He also stated that the cost of land is much higher now than they were a couple of years ago.

Mr. Riegner then continued his discussion about cost. He stated that the costs of the bypasses are proportional to their length. He stated that the costs of the bypasses are proportional to their length. He indicated that the Working Group should not reject any alternative based on cost.

Mr. Riegner told the Working Group that the Project Team is still evaluating if Option 3 (Third Lane) addresses purpose and need. He also stated that on-alignment Option 1 and 2 are similar except in terms of their function. They are similar in terms of impacts and how they deal with traffic.

Mr. Wutka stated that there has not been much support for an eastern bypass throughout the process. Mr. Wutka then discussed the impacts associated with the eastern bypass options and how the numbers in the environmental and engineering matrices compare. Finally, Mr. Wutka discussed how the eastern bypass would operate in terms of traffic.

A Member of the Working Group indicated that in the earlier meetings the Project Team talked about costs for the bypasses. This person asked if there were any alternatives that are ridiculous in terms of pricing. Mr. Riegner clarified the question and specified that the Project Team would not show any alternative that would require some ridiculously long bridge or something out of question in terms of funding this project.

Lit Dryden asked for clarification on Arrow Safety and why it works for Option 1 and 2 but won't work for Option 3. Mr. Riegner explained again in terms of property impacts, Option 3 does not have many property impacts. The impacts that occur are typically related to the two grade separations at SR 404/SR 9 and SR 18.

Joe Wutka then discussed the eastern bypass options. Mr. Wutka specified that Alternative B is the farther out bypass on the east side passing airport. Alternative C is closer to town. Each alternative has an interchange at SR 9 and provides an interchange with Savannah Road. Mr. Wutka stated that there has not been much support for an eastern bypass throughout the process. Mr. Wutka then discussed the impacts associated with the eastern bypass options and how the numbers in the environmental and engineering matrices compare. Finally, Mr. Wutka discussed how the eastern bypass would operate in terms of traffic.

Mr. Riegner explained that traffic on the existing alignment is expected to increase by 20,000 cars per day in the year 2030 with the No-build alternative. An On-alignment Alternative will generate 66,000 cars per day because more cars will be expected to use it as an alternate route for north/south trips. The east bypass (option B), will allow the existing US 113 to carry half the traffic it does on an average summer day by removing the through traffic and placing it onto the new bypass. As for option C, it will divert more traffic from US 113, so the traffic would drop to 10,000 cars on an average summer day.

On the eastern bypass, he explained that the objectives try to reduce the traffic on the major roads in Georgetown. As indicated from a historical standpoint, the number of potential cultural resources that could be affected is greater on the eastern bypass than the western bypass. Mr. Baird expressed his concern for the placement of the future alignment.

Mr. Kramer indicated that the Project Team was trying to push the alignment out as far as they could east without pushing it to the point that it would never get built. Mr. Baird expressed that the Project Team take other land that is not wetlands just on the outside edge of those areas and use that as the possible roadway corridor and to use the land inside for development. Mr. Riegner specified that with the exception of option C on the eastside and the exception of option 1 on the Westside, the alignments attempt to avoid most wetland impacts.

Allison Burris reminded the working group that Georgetown is a prime real estate area for businesses due to its proximity to the beach. She explained that there is a new

hotel, and many more businesses are looking to build within the area but are waiting to see what happens with the alignments discussed with the 113 study.

Mr. Dryden asked about the timeframe in selecting a preferred alternative retained for detailed study. Mr. Hite explained that around this time next summer the Project Team hopes to have a preferred alternative. At that point, whenever the preferred alternative is selected it becomes a project and is funded by the capitol transportation program by the Department. If there is funding available at that time, right-of-way acquisition can then occur.

Merrill Moore asked for clarification on which alternative will be built. Mr. Hite indicated that the Project Team cannot say what's going to be built, because a preferred alternative has not been selected. He also mentioned that money may not be available a year from now. Mr. Kramer indicated that the major differences are not between the alternatives, the major differences will impact funding overall financial conditions and the competitiveness of the US 113 project versus other projects in the state that need money. So for the purpose of this project in the decision making process there are no differences between all these alternatives.

Further comments from various Working Group Members included such issues as short-term improvements compared to long-term improvements with regards to current and future traffic problems, while tending to the problems that will exist in between.

Mr. Hite reverted back to the first initial meeting in which the Project Team indicated that there will be three improvements: Short-term, Mid-term, and long-term improvements. Obviously, he informed that the bypass is the long term improvement. However, if a short-term improvement is required during the study then DelDOT will respond.

Mr. Wutka specified that an eastern bypass over Rt.9 will certainly help in terms of improving traffic on the circle and that could be done on a quicker time frame than trying to go with a bypass. Mr. Dryden's indicated that the building of the bypass will negatively affect the businesses. Mr. Baird asked if anyone knew how much through traffic was stopping versus the amount of local traffic. Mr. Kramer specified that meeting must continue and that the Working Group Members and the Project Team could coordinate a separate meeting for any further answers.

Mr. Kramer then emphasized that the Working Group "walk" through each alternative in the breakout sessions to report back their likes and dislikes for the alternatives.

Mr. Dryden addressed a question with regards to the validation and accuracy (field verification) of wetlands and the location of cemeteries. Mr. Riegner explained that the maps will show the impacts and the detailed information concerning the matrix. Mr. Hite mentioned his conversation with Diane and the addition of E5 in comparison to

E2 (as far as looking at wetlands). Mr. Kramer explained that the field verification is currently in the process.

Mr. Hite then announced the groups.

Monroe: Group 1

Led by Tom H & Tom Shafer, Sonya LaGrange, Buhl, Bell, Carey, Johnson, O'Neil, Carlton, Moore

Group 2: A Bing, Brian, Townsend, Jeff R, Abbot, Howard, Cooper, Dryden, Bruce Wright, Baird, Simmons

Group 3: JW, Ed Thomas, Adam, Chris and everyone else (Matt, Harry, David, Wes).

Group 1 comment: summarized by Mr. Kramer

- For the On-alignment this group prefers 2
- Do not believe Option 3 will accomplish purpose of project
- There might be some elements of Option 1 that could be incorporated into 2
- Western – preferred it
- Particular E5 seems the most desired route the way it ties into arrow safety and leaves 113 as the local 113 business. You're one concern is traffic coming from North on 113 going east. What's really going to happen there?? On the east, we should drop C not study further . . . we are going to study E, but it's not your preferred bypass . . . Study b . . . particularly like the northern don't really see the value of the southern half.

Group 3 comments: summarized by Mr. Kramer

- On-alignment – you're saying 3rd option does meet the short term solution
- Mr. Thomas indicated that the group's thought that the solution of grade separating the two intersections with the most congestion would probably cause a problem. But, the realization now is based on what might be a short-term solution that may not meet purpose and need of having limited access.
- No preference expressed for Options 1 and 2.
- In the west there is no preference for D and F, and no to 4
- Preferred B and either 2 or 3
- In the east, preference for dropping B and continuing C for growth and economic development in the area.
- The Working Group doesn't want to exclude portion of development that's probably going to be there.
- The Working Group indicated that it would have kept 5 in allowing the short section in keeping 5. But because of some concern about separating the new development just west. . . is why 2 and 3 are the choice selections.

Group 2 comments:

- In the east do not retain alt C

- 6 to 1 preference among group members to retain alt. B
- Primary interests to retain NE section ___?_ 113
- And 9 . . . went through in this group west side
- Preference in retaining F3, F4
- Preference in dropping all others
- Alternative F supported by 6 of 7 members
- Alternative 3-4 supported by all 7 members of the group
- Primary standpoint on 2 and 5 that it came in too close to the town, as well as alternative D. Along with anticipation that other projects in consideration with an expansion that would kill future growth along US 113 and that utility expansion would be for nothing at that point.
- Reasons for 3 & 4 kept everything south of Shortly road comes back in at most northern point at FCI feeling that the town has growth commitments from 18/9 down to Shortly road. With all utility service areas as well. All others voted the drop.
- Preference for the On-alignment – 3rd lane option and Option 6/7 not to be retained. Both 1 & 2 deserve further consideration. It does have the ability to connect future street networks with some of the access roads that are being proposed as well as would still remain accessible for east mobility.

The Working Group expressed their concerns for the third lane option and indicated that they would not like to see it carried forward for further study.

The preference among bypasses for the Working Group is for the West.

Mr. Kramer indicated that the remaining alternatives for detailed study include . . . E2, E3, E5, F3, and F4

One group specifically Requested – F3 and F4

One group indicated that they had preference for E2 / E3 while using portion of D

One group recommended looking further at E5.

Mr. Kramer and the Working Group concur on Options E2, E3, E4, E5, F3, and F4

Mr. Kramer announced the Public Workshop for June 13 from 4-7. He explained that the public comments will go to the department, and the decision will be made after the agencies meet next fall. He then thanked everyone for coming out.

Project Team Attendees:

Name	Representing
Monroe Hite, III	DelDOT
Sonya LaGrand	DelDOT
Don Plows	DelDOT
Andrew Bing	KA
Bob Kramer	KA
Ed Thomas	KA
Linda Moreland	Remline
Bill Hellmann	RK&K
Joe Wutka	RK&K
Tom Hannan	WR&A
Jeff Riegner	WR&A
Tom Shafer	WR&A
Joe Wutka	RK&K
Adam Weiser	RK&K
Chris Kirby	RK&K

Citizens in Attendance:

Name	Representing	Address
Finley B. Jones	Sussex County	14028 Sussex Hwy. Greenwood, DE.
G. Truitt		Georgetown, DE.
Donna Atkinson	Parker Road Landowner	25507 Hollis Rd. 19951
Pat Varine	Sussex County	13 S. Front St. Georgetown, DE.