

V. AGENCY AND PUBLIC COORDINATION

*SR 1, Little Heaven Grade Separated Intersection Project
Environmental Assessment / Section 4(f) Evaluation*



*U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration*



Delaware Department of Transportation

V. AGENCY AND PUBLIC COORDINATION

A. Agency Coordination

Agency coordination for the SR1, Little Heaven Grade Separated Intersection Project was initiated in February 1997 as part of the SR1 CCPP. It was recommended during the initial project scoping that this specific project be evaluated under an Environmental Assessment.

Meetings were held with the environmental resource and regulatory agencies to keep them up to date on the project progress and community involvement efforts throughout the project development process. Attendees included representatives from the following agencies:

1. US Army Corps of Engineers
2. Environmental Protection Agency
3. US Fish and Wildlife Service
4. Federal Highway Administration
5. Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
6. Delaware State Historic Preservation Office
7. Delaware Department of Agriculture
8. Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination

Meetings were generally conducted at three month intervals, piggybacking on DelDOT's Joint Permit Review meetings, and were supplemented with field reviews as needed. As alternatives were developed, they were presented along with their impacts, to the agencies for consideration and comment. The agencies focused their attention on the Preferred Alternative and related options and efforts to minimize overall impacts.

On April 1, 2010 copies of the Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation were forwarded to the Delaware Division of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Section and Coastal Zone Management Office, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a 30 day review period. No comments were received.

On April 19, 2010 copies of the Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation were forwarded to the U. S. Department of Interior (DOI), Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance for a 45 day review period. DOI responded suggesting we include a signed copy of the Memorandum of Agreement developed with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the final Environmental Assessment. This has been done.

B. Public and Community Involvement

The SR1, Little Heaven Grade Separated Intersection Project was initially identified as part of DelDOT's SR 1 CCPP. The SR1 CCPP program began as DelDOT policy in 1992 and was made into law in 1996 with the intent to preserve the capacity of existing transportation facilities rather than build new facilities on new alignments. In 1998, ten (10) locations were formally identified along the SR1/SR113 corridor that would require improvements to the existing roadway in order to preserve the capacity of the overall facility. The SR1, Little Heaven area was one of the project locations identified and presented in Public Workshops in 1998. More information about the CCPP can be obtained by visiting:

http://www.deldot.gov/information/pubs_forms/brochures/pdf/ccpp_fyi.pdf.

1. Public Workshops

Four (4) Public Workshops were held in the Little Heaven area to provide the greater community with the opportunity to view displays, hear presentations and offer comments regarding the various alternatives. Public Workshops were held on the following dates:

1. February 23, 2004
2. July 20, 2004
3. October 26, 2004
4. July 16, 2008

At the February 23, 2004 Public Workshop DelDOT presented Alternatives A (**Figure II-2**) and B (**Figure II-3**). At the meeting, concerns were identified among residents about the separation of the community and lack of interconnectivity between the eastern and western sides of the community of Little Heaven. The Bower's Beach, Frederica and Magnolia Fire Companies also had concerns about emergency access to the Little Heaven area. In addition, the location of the bridge crossing in the vicinity of Mulberrie Point Road would result in significant wetland impacts. The various input received from this meeting was utilized to develop several new alternatives.

At the July 20, 2004 Public Workshop DelDOT presented Alternatives C (**Figure II-4**), D (**Figure II-5**), E (**Figure II-6**) and F (**Figure II-7**) to address both the public and agency input received from the February 23, 2004 Public Workshop. These alternatives reduced wetland impacts and responded to concerns raised by the residents and local fire companies.

Alternatives C, D, and E involved moving the proposed bridge structure to the existing Bower's Beach Road intersection. The existing intersection at Bower's Beach Road would remain and SR1 will pass over the intersection on an elevated bridge structure. There are variations on local access, notably in the vicinity of the Tara subdivision, which is located off of northbound SR1 at the intersection of Mulberrie Point Road. Alternative F (**Figure II-7**) located the bridge structure and the Bower's Beach Road intersection further south than the other alternatives to reduce the visual impact of the bridge on the historic Jehu Reed House.

Alternatives C, D, E and F all include the extension of the project southward to Barratt's Chapel Road. A new tie-in between Barratt's Chapel Road and the western service road is provided, resulting in the closure of the median crossover located at Barratt's Chapel Road. This avoids an unsafe situation of several conflicting movements in the same location. Based on public input Alternative C was the public's preferred Alternative.

At the October 26, 2004 Public Workshop DelDOT presented several refinements to Alternatives C, D, E and F based on the July 20, 2004 Public Workshop. As result of comments received at the October workshop and compiling all of the previous comments from residents, local fire companies, and state and federal natural and cultural resource agencies, Alternative C, with a slight variation, was selected as the Preferred Alternative and presented at the Final Public Workshop on July 16, 2008.

Throughout the long history of this project, DelDOT has coordinated closely with federal and state environmental and regulatory agencies and the Federal Highway Administration. The various public workshops also provided a forum for interaction with the local residents and business owners, along with emergency service providers and all input was crucial to selection of the Preferred Alternative C with refinements.

2. Project Website

Since the inception of the SR1, Little Heaven Grade Separated Intersection Project, DelDOT has maintained a project website (http://www.deldot.gov/information/projects/little_heaven/index.shtml). The website includes overall project information, project history, environmental documents, public involvement efforts and DelDOT contact information. The available information includes: display boards, workshop handouts, alternatives mapping, comment forms and summary of comments received. Under the link “Project Workshops” there are links to each of the Public Workshops including a meeting synopsis, Powerpoint presentation slides for all of the Workshops are there for viewing along with a copy of the comment sheet that was provided to meeting participants.

3. Other Public Involvement Efforts

A mailing list was developed from sign-in sheets at every meeting and continuously updated. The mailing list was used to distribute meeting announcements and project updates. Announcements were also posted in newspapers.

Public notice of the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was posted in the News Journal and the Delaware State News (April 20, 2010) providing a 30 day comment period. The 30 day period was up May 21, 2010. No comments were received on the public notice.

4. References

References for this EA may be found in the project files maintained by DelDOT.