

## **Memorandum of Meeting**

**Date:** March 29, 2007

**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** CHEER Center, Georgetown, Delaware

**Topic:** **Georgetown Working Group Meeting #15**

**Attendees:** See Page 7

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### ***Call to Order***

Bob Kramer called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. He welcomed everyone and, directing his comments to those members of the public that were in attendance, thanked them for their input over the last month. He introduced himself and reviewed the evening's agenda. For the edification of the large number of public in attendance, Mr. Kramer explained that the Working Group was part of the process not a substitute for the public in general.

### ***Summary of Public Workshop Comments***

Mr. Kramer began a review of the summary of comments from the March 12, 2007 and March 15, 2007 Public Workshops to introduce the East-to-East Connector alternatives.

Donna Atkinson stated that she felt the numbers, in reference to the comment forms, were low. She indicated that the Department ran out of comment forms at the Georgetown Workshop and asked if the petition signatures (1,100+) were included in the numbers.

It was indicated that the Department did not run out of comment forms but ran out, briefly, of the alternatives plan sheet and impact matrix. Additional black and white copies of the alternatives plan and matrix were made and those people not receiving copies were asked to indicate on the sign-in sheet whether they wanted a copy mailed to their home. (Copies were sent to everyone who made a request.) It was also indicated that the petition was separate from the numbers being presented.

Harold Johnson stated that he got to the workshop at 5:15 and got a copy of the comment form.

Mr. Kramer continued through the summary of public comments.

Harold Johnson asked, when Mr. Kramer stated that it was likely that the East-to-East alternatives will not be carried forward, if that included the portion of the alignment to US 113.

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Mr. Kramer reviewed the East-to-East alternatives map and described the portion of the East to East alternatives from Route 9, east of Georgetown, to Route 24, east of Millsboro, that would be dropped. He also emphasized that the East-to-East alternatives have not been dropped yet, since the comment period doesn't end until April 13, 2007 but based on the responses to date and unless something unforeseen occurs, the alternatives will be dropped.

Harold Johnson stated that he thought the Working Group had dropped the Eastern Bypass alternatives.

Mr. Kramer stated that the Working Group had dropped a closer in Eastern Bypass alternative (originally Alternative C) but the Orange alternative (originally Alternative B) was retained for detailed evaluation.

Lit Dryden stated that Monroe had stated at the County Council meeting that the East-to-East alternatives were off the table.

Mr. Hite stated that the alternatives would be off the table following the end of the comment period as long as nothing unforeseen occurs to counter the current sentiment regarding the two East-to-East alternatives.

Carlton Moore asked when the Project Team expected the Working Group to make a recommendation.

It was indicated that based on comments made by Secretary Wicks, which will be discussed shortly, the Project Team hoped the Working Group would develop their recommendation during the next two Working Group meetings, April 19<sup>th</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Donna Atkinson indicated that the public wants all the bypass alternatives dropped.

Mr. Kramer stated that the public response from the last two Workshops would support that position.

Donna Atkinson asked if another public meeting would be needed following the Working Group's recommendation.

Mr. Hite stated that a public meeting would not be necessary. He also indicated that because of the nature of the conversation and questions, it would be better to adjust the order of this evening's presentation and move ahead to the report on the Bond Bill Committee Meeting on DelDOT's budget and Secretary Wicks' direction from that meeting.

### ***Bond Bill Committee Meeting/Secretary Wicks Commitments***

Mr. Hite went over the results of the recent Bond Bill Committee Hearing on the Department of Transportation's budget and Secretary Wicks' commitments to renew the effort on the On-alignment option in the Georgetown Area and to review that effort with the Working Group in April. Hopefully, the Working Group would reach a recommendation in April, with the Department recommending a preferred alternative in the Georgetown Area in May.

Lit Dryden asked Mr. Hite to invite Secretary Wicks to the next Working Group meeting and he would make a personal request. Mr. Hite responded that he would do that.

Harold Johnson, in response to Mr. Hite's comment that only a dramatic response from the public would change the current thinking to drop the East-to-East connector alternatives, asked what Mr. Hite considered a dramatic response to be.

Mr. Hite stated that he did not expect that to occur but it would have to be an overwhelming response in favor of retaining the East-to-East alternatives.

Mr. Kramer continued his review of the public comments from the Workshops. In response to a question regarding the nature of a modified On-alignment option, he stated that no traffic lights, no left turns and no cross-overs would be included and that the existing right-of-way would be used to the greatest extent possible to reduce individual property impacts.

### ***Discussion of Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study***

As Mr. Kramer was about to move the discussion to the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study, Carlton Moore indicated that Donna Atkinson had a statement to make and he asked that she be given the time to make it. He also stated that the impacts of an On-alignment option need to be reevaluated and limited, something the Project Team has not made a valid attempt to do.

Donna Atkinson read from a prepared statement. She indicated that the Project Teams treatment of the On-alignment alternative has not been fair. There are several east and west bypass alternatives, but only one On-alignment option. She indicated that the rumor is that DelDOT wants to use US 113 as a diversion route for SR 1. Recent traffic information indicates that 38,000+ vehicles could be diverted from SR 1. She indicated that the value of the Working Group had been severely compromised and diminished for many reasons but most importantly for the lack of concern for the private rights and privileges of the residents and property owners of Sussex County. She asked that all options be dropped, that the Department concentrate on the real needs in Sussex County, East/West traffic, and that in-house studies be conducted on a strict on line prerogative for US 113. She stated that DelDOT is finally listening to the public but is asking the

Working Group to hurry up and pick a solution. She concluded her statement by stating that DelDOT should improve the three main arterial roads running N-S instead of taking farm lands.

David Pedersen asked that the Project Team clarify the history of the project. Do legislators want one continuous road from Wilmington to the Maryland State Line?

Mr. Kramer stated yes that a legislative resolution specifically stating a limited access highway is the basis for this study.

Carlton Moore asked who rejected the third lane option.

Mr. Kramer stated that the Working Group rejected the third lane option because of the safety implications associated with unlimited access, traffic signals and turn lanes. He also stated that at the upcoming Working Group meeting, the Project Team would provide copies of the minutes from the meeting where the decision on the third lane was made.

Carlton Moore stated that the Department needs to focus on the east/west problems which are far more of a concern than north/south traffic, particularly the SR 9/SR 18 corridor.

Mr. Kramer initiated a lengthy discussion which included Mr. Hite and Mr. Simmons on the numerous efforts, past, present and future, by the Department to address East/West traffic. Those efforts began back in the 70's, with studies in the SR 26 corridor to studies in the 80's and 90's to address the 404/18/9 corridor, all of which were rejected by the public. US 9, SR 24, SR 26 and SR 54 are currently under study/design and or construction. All of these improvements are limited solutions to a much larger problem.

Carlton Moore stated that the Working Group wants to share their specific ideas about the concepts and a process which is taking way too long.

Donna Atkinson questioned if the state cannot fund minor East/West relief projects, how can they fund the huge US 113 project? She also stated that the probable reason for the failure of the major East/West studies was because DelDOT was looking at a completely new alignment rather than focusing on the existing corridor.

David Pedersen, referring to slide 9 of the presentation, asked if the intent of the alternatives was to have limited access, no lights the entire length of the study area. He also thanked the Department for the short-term improvements at US 113 and SR 18 and for the traffic light on US 9 at the Sussex Tech Vocational School.

Mr. Hite reminded the Working Group that short-term improvements, such as those mentioned by David, as well as others recommended by other Working Groups are either completed or in the pipeline. Intermediate improvements, as well as long term improvements are also within the scope of the Working Group.

Donna Atkinson asked when the Working Group could see some modifications to the On-alignment option.

Mr. Kramer indicated that the request for the extra Working Group meeting on April 19th was for the express purpose of presenting details of modifications to the On-alignment alternatives.

Lit Dryden stated that the Project Team had developed 19 or 20 alternatives but he had not seen the alternate he suggested long ago that had no impact. That alternative was to add an additional lane and sign the outside lane and shoulder for business use and the inside lanes for through traffic. He added further that it was his opinion that the Working Group was here to tell the Project Team what is needed not whether we need bridges and limited access.

Harold Johnson asked why more lanes couldn't be added like US 13 in Dover.

Mr. Simmons stated that traffic along US 13 in Dover has significantly reduced since the opening of SR 1 (Dover Bypass). US 13 in Dover still has numerous safety and traffic problems.

Donna Atkinson asked why beach traffic is not diverted down US 301 to US 50 in Maryland.

Mr. Kramer stated that future traffic numbers show that approximately 50% of US 113 traffic will be local, as a result of increased development in the corridor. 25% of the traffic is destined for the Delaware beaches. Diverting traffic to US 301 and US 50 only takes traffic away from where they want to go.

Donna Atkinson asked how a limited access roadway served local traffic.

The same way SR 1 helps local Dover traffic was the response.

Donna Atkinson asked why the traffic numbers include a Milford Bypass if the Milford Bypass section has not yet been determined.

Mr. Kramer stated that the traffic projections include a build scenario as well as a no-build scenario in Milford.

Merrill Moore asked what road will be used for traffic between Dover and Milford.

Mr. Hite stated that DelDOT has already developed a corridor preservation plan for SR 1 from Dover to Five Points in Lewes in the 1990's. Options for removing access points along the corridor from Dover to Milford and even further south are currently being planned and designed. Construction will begin in stages as funding becomes available. Merrill Moore stated that if we choose a route, people's property will be tied up.

Mr. Hite stated that it is has been the goal of the Working Group from the beginning to recommend a preferred alternative. DelDOT will pick the ultimate corridor and be responsible for addressing the needs of those individuals impacted by that selection.

Carlton Moore asked if it was true that 9,000 to 11,000 properties, from Milford to Selbyville, will be impacted by the US 113 project.

Mr. Hite stated that the numbers are incorrect and are considerably less.

Donna Atkinson asked if the advance acquisition committee had ever turned down a request. After it was indicated that they have rejected requests in the past, she asked what happens to the property owner in that case.

Donna Atkinson asked how much money had been requested for the US 113 project.

Mr. Hite stated that \$135 million was currently in DelDOT's 6-year Capital Transportation Plan for design and right-of-way acquisition. He reminded the Working Group that the CTP is draft pending legislative approval before July 1.

Donna Atkinson stated that, as she sees it, the Working Group needs to make a decision on an alternative that may not be completely funded.

Mr. Hite stated that is the mission of the Working Group and that the entire cost of a long term project is never earmarked upfront and all at once.

Harold Johnson stated that the Project Team will now comeback with the No-build and modifications to the On-alignment alternatives.

Mr. Kramer stated that the Project Team will come back with modifications to the On-alignment alternatives but by definition the No-build alternative means doing nothing other than programmed maintenance and possibly other minor projects that are already in the Department's 6-year Capital Transportation Plan. So the Project Team will not be bringing anything back on the No-build alternative.

Howard Abbott stated that we have never seen any data supporting safety problems along US 113.

Mr. Hellmann stated that accident rates would be provided at the next Working Group meeting.

Lieutenant Benson, Working Group member representing the Delaware State Police, indicated that she would provide accident data at the next Working Group meeting.

Mr. Hellmann stated that updated traffic data focused on On-alignment and including No-build data will also be provided at the next Working Group meeting.

Keith Moore asked if the Working Group should consider dropping down to one Western Bypass alternative.

Harold Johnson stated that the Working Group should consider dropping all the other options but On-alignment at this time. The suggestion was made that the Working Group take a straw poll to determine whether they wanted to reduce the number of alternatives at this time. Mr. Johnson stated that he saw no benefit in taking a straw poll.

Lit Dryden indicated that it would be one way to move to a decision. He thought that a straw poll might be of benefit. He further stated that it doesn't make sense to continue with alternatives that aren't going anywhere.

Harold Johnson stated that the Working Group should take a straw poll to see if a straw poll was in order.

A straw poll was taken to determine whether the Working Group should take a straw poll to determine whether additional alternatives should be dropped by the Working Group. The straw poll was defeated by a vote of 10 to 8.

Guy Phillips thanked the Project Team for the opportunity to have an open discussion like this evenings.

Mr. Kramer summarized the evening's discussion and adjourned the meeting at 8:30.

Minutes prepared by Joe Wutka

Attendees:

Howard Abbott, Jr.	David Pedersen
Donna Atkinson	Guy Phillips
Lt. Benson	Mike Simmons
Eric Buehl	
Allison Burris-Castellanos	
Carol R. Campbell-Hansen	
Mark Davis	
Lit Dryden	
Martin Donovan	
Harry Dukes	
Matthew Gibbs	
Bryan Hall	
Harold Johnson	
Terry Johnson	
Tom Klein	
Carlton Moore, Sr.	
Keith Moore	
Merrill Moore	

