

US 301 Final Solution Sought

Public Workshops Set for Middletown Area

To help develop, evaluate and select a final alternative for an improved U.S. 301 south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is holding the first of several sets of public workshops on June 20 and 21 in Middletown.

The 301 Corridor has been studied many times before, and DelDOT has determined that putting this project off further is no longer an option. Selection of a final alternative is expected within the next six months. With that goal in mind, the public's involvement is vital as we seek a solution to address current transportation problems – such as congestion, truck traffic and safety – and future transportation needs in the US 301 area from the Maryland line to SR 1, south of the C&D Canal.

The workshops – more will be scheduled later in the year – are your opportunity to weigh in on which solutions you'd like to see DelDOT pursue. At the June workshops, you'll review and be asked to comment on:

- **A Range of Alternatives (potential solutions), and**
- **An assessment of the effects of each alternative.**

Brief presentations are scheduled for 4:15 p.m. and repeated at 5:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. The same information will be presented at the Middletown Fire Hall and Brick Mill Elementary School locations. Members of DelDOT's Project Team will be on hand to listen to your ideas and answer your questions. You are invited to express your views in writing, giving reasons for support of, or opposition to the alternatives presented and the preliminary assessment of their effects. You are also invited to propose additional alternatives you believe warrant evaluation. **Comments need to be provided by July 21, 2005.** We hope to see you there!



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Public Workshops

Monday, June 20
 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 Middletown Fire Hall
 W. Green Street and S. Scott Street
 Middletown

Tuesday, June 21
 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 Brick Mill Elementary School
 378 Brick Mill Road
 Middletown



Delaware Department of Transportation



A Cooperative Effort of the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration

Current US 301 Project Builds Upon Prior Efforts

Although the US 301 Project Development Phase is just beginning, it builds upon a number of planning efforts for the US 301 Corridor over the past 40 years.

Since the 1960s, studies have been conducted regarding the need, possible solutions and effect of improving the regional connections, reducing congestion and improving safety in the US 301 area. The Bay Bridge Connector Study was the initial effort in the mid-60s. In the early 90s, US 301 connections to I-95 were evaluated, and a US 301 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared.

In the late 90s, the Greater Route 301 Major Investment Study (MIS) was undertaken. The study confirmed the need for multi-modal transportation improvements in the area, including a major roadway from the Maryland line to SR 1, south of the C&D Canal, to accommodate existing and projected congestion, to manage truck traffic and to address safety concerns. A number of the transit (bus and commuter rail), bicycle, park and ride, and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) recommendations have been or are being pursued and implemented.

Why This Project Is Needed

In the last few years southern New Castle County has seen a significant influx of new residents spurred by a strong state economy and alluring quality of life. This project is needed to meet the current demand for a better transportation system given that many of these new residents are commuting to their jobs in northern New Castle County, southeastern Pennsylvania and lower Delaware.

In addition to carrying local traffic, US 301 has also become a major truck route. As an example, over 30% of the vehicles that travel US 301 daily from Maryland are trucks. Three key issues have been identified as driving the need for improvements in the US 301 area.

1 The need to reduce congestion



In the past 9 years (since 1996), traffic on the US 301 / SR 896 corridor has grown by as much as 50% south of the C&D Canal. Increases in local and regional traffic volumes combined with high truck volumes will negatively impact traffic operations, air quality, and safety on the corridor in the future.

2 The need to manage truck traffic



US 301 has become a major route for long distance trucks avoiding the congestion and tolls on I-95. Through truck traffic should be separated from local traffic.

3 The need to improve safety



From October 1999 to September 2004, there were over 1200 reported accidents in the US 301 project development area. Over the same period, there have been 17 fatalities in the US 301 / SR896 Corridor.

Project Goals

The Project Team has been busy conducting a "Listening Tour" of over 100 state, county and municipal officials, police and emergency services, civic organizations, business, environmental, and historic interest groups. From these interviews, a set of project goals has been developed to ensure the US 301 Project Development effort addresses project purpose and need. These project goals will be used to evaluate alternative solutions by how well they:

- Provide a new limited access roadway that separates through and seasonal traffic, particularly trucks, from local traffic, thus preserving and enhancing the capacity on the local roadways for local traffic and improving safety.
- Provide efficient local access to the new limited access roadway for local traffic traveling north and south of the study area.
- Provide a roadway network that supports responsible and sustainable land development and economic growth while accommodating the anticipated growth in local, seasonal and through-traffic.
- Provide roadway solutions that first avoid, and if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse effects to communities and the natural environmental and cultural resources.

A Range of Alternatives, along with a preliminary assessment of their effects will be presented at the workshop.



PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following project schedule is extremely aggressive. The Project Team is committed to meeting this schedule. Timely completion of the effort is critical. Alternative corridors that are available today to address project needs will become more costly, with significantly greater impacts, if the decision on this project is delayed. The transportation problems that exist today along US 301 will continue to get worse with the mixture of truck traffic and continued planned growth.

Feb – Jun '05	Develop Project Purpose and Need/Goals and Objectives, and Potential Range of Alternatives
Jun '05	Public Workshop #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Project Purpose and Need/Goals and Objectives • Present Potential Range of Alternatives/ Preliminary Assessment of Their Effects
Jul – Aug '05	Evaluate Range of Alternatives and Develop Recommendations for Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study
Sep '05	Public Workshop #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Range of Alternatives and Assessment of Effects • Suggest Alternatives Recommended for Detailed Evaluation and Alternatives Not Recommended for Further Consideration
Sep – Nov '05	Complete Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives and Develop Recommendations of Preferred Alternative
Nov '05	Public Workshop #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Results of Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Retained and Assessment of Their Effects • Propose Preferred Alternative
Nov – Dec '05	Develop Recommendation for Selected Alternative
Jan '06	Public Workshop #4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Selected Alternative
Jan – Mar '06	Complete environmental documentation and submit to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Apr '06	FHWA Approval of Selected Alternative

Consultation and coordination meetings with the environmental resources agencies will be continuous throughout the project development effort.

Contact Information

The US 301 Project Team invites public and media inquiries about this project.

DeIDOT Public Relations

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Stay Informed & Up-To-Date...

We encourage all residents, property owners, business owners and those who travel the US 301 Corridor to stay informed, make their views known and contribute to determining a solution to the problems on US 301. There are several ways to do this:

- Attend public workshops
- Sign up for project newsletters (fill out form on the right)
- Log on to the project website for all the latest information: www.us301.org
- Visit the project office in the Middletown area (check the project website for times and location)
- Contact DeIDOT with questions or comments

All materials presented at the public workshops will be available online after the workshops. **Please provide us with your comments by July 21, 2005.**

Sign up here for future newsletters

If you would like to continue to receive future newsletters, please fill out the following form and mail it to DeIDOT Public Relations, PO Box 778, Dover, DE 19903 or e-mail: dot-public-relations@state.de.us.

Name

Company or Organization (if applicable)

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone (optional)



DeIDOT Public Relations

PO Box 778
Dover, DE 19903

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**Public Workshops
June 20 & 21**



Delaware Department
of Transportation

Nathan Hayward III, Secretary