

## **Memorandum of Meeting (Draft)**

**Date:** 10/25/04

**Date of Meeting:** 9/29/04

**Time:** 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

**Location:** Millsboro Fire Company Banquet Hall

**Type:** Millsboro-South Area Working group Meeting #4

**Attendance:** See Attached

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The following is a summary of the discussion at the Working Group Meeting:

- Bob Kramer called the meeting to order at 5:40. He initially focused his attention on the general public turnout. Mr. Kramer indicated that an error had been made and that this evening's meeting was not a Public Workshop but a Working Group meeting. He indicated that Public Workshops would be held in Millsboro on November 15<sup>th</sup> and in Selbyville on November 16<sup>th</sup>. He further indicated that the public was welcome to stay, that no decisions would be made tonight and that this meeting was intended to give the Working Group their first view of potential preliminary alternatives. He asked that everyone please sign the sign-in sheet so that their names could be added to the mailing list if they were not already on the list. He then welcomed the Working Group back from their summer hiatus.
- Mr. Kramer asked the members to introduce themselves since there were some new members to the group and asked that they indicate any affiliations that they might have. Daryl Houghton indicated that he was representing George White. Following introductions, Mr. Kramer indicated that there would be a lot of details for the members to review this evening and then turned the floor over to Monroe Hite III, DelDOT's Project Manager.
- Mr. Hite addressed the Working Group members and expressed the hope that they had a good summer. He then turned his attention to the general public apologizing for the mix-up and welcoming the public to stay if they so chose. He reiterated the Workshop dates and reinforced Mr. Kramer's request that those in attendance sign the sign-in sheets. Mr. Hite turned his attention back to the Working Group and indicated that the Project Team had been busy over the summer and that there was a considerable amount of information to go over. He reviewed the material in their handout and indicated that, following a short presentation, the Working Group would break up into smaller teams to review and comment on the various

potential preliminary alternatives. He then turned the meeting back to Mr. Kramer.

- Mr. Kramer reviewed a list of recent meetings and briefings that had been held since the last meeting with the Working Group in May. He indicated that he expects the number of meetings to increase with the amount of detail that the group will see shortly. He indicated that, if there are community or business groups who would like a presentation, the Project Team is available to meet and discuss the project with them. He indicated that we are early in the process and now is the time to get meaningful input into the process.
- Mr. Kramer then addressed a number of potential misunderstandings that the Project Team has heard through the meetings and briefings that were reviewed previously. The first misconception is that “DelDOT has already made up its mind to go with On-alignment”. Mr. Kramer indicated that the initial emphasis on On-alignment is based on extensive experience in working with the regulatory agencies, which are one of three groups (general public, Working Group, agencies) providing input to DelDOT through this process. They will be involved in reviewing the environmental documentation for the project and the eventual permitting and that full and total consideration must be given to the On-alignment options before they will consider Off-alignment options. Both On-alignment and Off-alignment options will be fully considered. However, absolutely no decisions have been made by DelDOT.
- The second misunderstanding is that “DelDOT is trying to do this on the cheap.” Mr. Kramer indicated that this may be the result of some comments made earlier by the Team that On-alignment is cheaper than Off-alignment. While this may be true in some cases, it is not necessarily true in all cases. Cost is a factor but not the only factor and that all factors (traffic relief, improved safety, farmland and businesses impacts, etc.) will be weighed in making a decision. Mr. Kramer also indicated that the Project Team is just beginning to put together costs and is nowhere near knowing the costs of any of the options at this time.
- The third misunderstanding is that “DelDOT is intending to turn US 113 into a fully controlled access highway just like SR 1 from I-95 to Dover.” Mr. Kramer indicated that the effort, On-alignment, is to create a limited access roadway. Limited access does not mean no access as is the case with a controlled access highway like SR 1. 113 will have a different approach to access.
- The final misunderstanding deals with “the outcome (of this project) is already a done deal.” Mr. Kramer indicated that if there was an option that is without issues, then there would be a preferred choice. Since no “silver bullet” option exists, tough issues associated with all options are going to be addressed and trade-offs made. We are analyzing options on a daily basis. We are still in the early stages of a lengthy process. Therefore, a decision on a preferred option is a long way off.

- Mr. Kramer then introduced Bill Hellmann to introduce the details for this evenings meeting. Mr. Hellmann indicated that the Public Workshops in June had provided excellent comments to go along with the effort by the Working Groups. A lot of hard work over the summer had gone into developing and refining each of the options to be presented and to make them as workable as possible. Mr. Hellmann indicated that the Working Group is moving from the concept level of 1000 foot wide yellow bands to preliminary alternatives with considerably more detail. The first step in evaluating these alternatives is to get your feedback, what you like and don't like. Your input is key as we continue to refine the alternatives.
- Mr. Hellmann then introduced Jeff Riegner who reviewed the western Off-alignment options for the Millsboro-South Area.
- Mr. Riegner then introduced Joe Wutka who reviewed the eastern Off-alignment options.
- Mr. Wutka then reviewed the On-alignment options for the Millsboro-South area.
- Mr. Wutka then turned the meeting back to Mr. Hite, who broke the Working Group into smaller groups to review the various preliminary alternatives with assistance from members of the Project Team.
- As a result of the effort by the Working Group members in their breakout session, the following comments were reported back to the entire Working Group:

### **General**

- Regardless of what alternative is selected, it should be consistent with and help achieve Livable Delaware initiatives and approved Town and County comprehensive plans.
- Consider tolls if either Off-alignment alternative is selected.

### **East Off-Alignment**

- This option will cause a conflict between use of developed/developable land and consumption of environmental resources such as agricultural and farm land.
- Option will push development farther east and is in conflict with local plans.
- Prefer this alternative with the easternmost option including interchanges, even though it may have more environmental impact and may cost more. Takes traffic going to beach areas out of town. Doesn't divide the development area.
- Local people like east bypass.
- Need to preserve right-of-way now.
- Picks up 20, 24 and 26 keeping east/west traffic out of towns.
- Connect to each town.
- How much longer than existing?

- Connect to Frankford.
- Alternate 1 doesn't make sense.
- Section to 24 is critical! (won't have much business impact)
- Environmental/Ecological/Social Disaster.
- Check County spray irrigation at Piney Neck Sewage Treatment Plant
- Beach traffic will build up away from towns.
- Locals can get to bypass.

## **West Off-Alignment**

### **General Comments**

- Shorter, less environmental impact.
- Good for through traffic but not local traffic.
- NO, hurts towns.

#### In Millsboro area:

- Be consistent with town's annexation plans.
- Does not help get traffic to the Delaware beach areas.
- Will help get traffic to Ocean City.
- Will foster development and create a western development boundary.
- Will impact cultural resources.
- Alternate 5 is better, less residential impact.
- Satisfies future growth, keeps town together.

#### In Frankford area:

- Too close to town; will not solve traffic problems.
- No need to bypass Frankford.
- 113 bypass eliminates business opportunities.

#### In Dagsboro area:

- Dagsboro bypass to west may help accommodate growth, shift alignment further west.
- 113 bypass eliminates business opportunities.

#### In Selbyville area:

- Prefer option 6, farthest to the west. It will take traffic headed to Maryland beach areas out of town. This will provide relief for town residents. This option may need to branch off US 113 farther to the north.

## **On-Alignment**

- Provides no help; will not solve traffic problems in the Millsboro area and will destroy many businesses.
- Helps North/South traffic but not local traffic.
- BAD (2 is less bad), ruins businesses and divides town.
- Hard to find your way around.
- Elevate 113.
- Need continuous frontage roads.

- At Sheep Pen Road-move west frontage road away from wet area.
  - Access at Oak Avenue needs to be shown on plans.
  - Access to southbound lanes too far apart.
  - Option 1 easier to get from east to west rather than waiting at lights.
  - Overpass at 24 will have severe impacts on businesses.
  - Poor access at 24.
  - Consider overpass at 24 with 113 over 24.
  - Keep 113 as local road.
  - Consider backage road between Wharton and Delaware and additional access.
  - More crossing points.
  - Look at other interchanges.
  - Short term bad for businesses.
  - Long term may be good but only if businesses are willing to invest, group unsure whether that investment would happen.
  - Option 2, some ideas have merit but as a whole not in favor.
  - Both options really negative, businesses hurt.
  - On-alignment is appropriate in the Frankford and Selbyville areas with addition of some rights in and out.
  - Frankford needs direct interchange, but watch viable businesses.
  - Poor access to Dagsboro and Frankford.
  - Dagsboro option has some merit, group had general support for this option.
  - Dagsboro Church of God property and Gray Farm property need to be considered .in light of On-alignment option through Dagsboro.
  - Additional crossover in Dagsboro at existing SR 26, better access on west side.
  - On-alignment, even back access roads, will destroy businesses in the Dagsboro area.
  - Selbyville needs a mix of west Off-alignment and On-alignment options. On-alignment will serve the annexation areas north of Selbyville toward Frankford.
  - Selbyville option has some merit.
  - Selbyville needs another crossover, better access to Mountaire.
- Following the reports from the breakout groups, Mr. Kramer asked if there were reactions from the Working Group on what they had just heard.
  - Ronald Atherton indicated that it appeared to him that the ultimate choice may be a series of Off-alignment options around the perimeter of the towns with On-alignment between the perimeters.
  - Mr. Kramer indicated the fact that portions of 113 are not developed fully at this time and that Mr. Atherton's approach has merit in tying those areas of lesser development together with bypasses around those areas which are developed. He further indicated that more development will result in fewer options over time and indicated the need to make decisions now while options are greater.
  - Ann Marie Townshend asked if a bypass option is chosen, would DelDOT still

pursue the Corridor Capacity Preservation program along the existing alignment?

- Mr. Hite indicated that the process we are currently in will determine DelDOT's plan for the 113 corridor.
- Jim Bennett indicated that he felt most of 113 was still a viable roadway and that the group shouldn't consider taking a healthy road and throwing it away. He indicated that Off-alignment options affect groups, family units, etc. He agreed with Mr. Atherton that those viable portions of 113 should be protected and enhanced to maintain their viability and only those portions no longer viable should be bypassed.
- Mr. Hite indicated that a combination of options, Off, as well as On-alignment, certainly is something that the Working Group should ultimately be considering.
- Mr. Kramer indicated that FHWA would have a difficult time in approving bypasses of viable sections of 113.
- Preston Dyer asked why there had been a consideration of a long Eastern Off-alignment option but not a long Western Off-alignment option.
- Several individuals went through a discussion of the perceived environmental constraints associated with a long western bypass, in particular, large areas of contiguous wetland and cultural resources.
- Mr. Dyer indicated that reading between the lines, if a bypass alignment to the east is difficult to support by the agencies because of the impacts in the Millsboro Pond area, Indian River, Pepper Creek, etc. then a long western bypass might be a trade-off.
- Mr. Hellmann responded that the wetlands permit, not the type of funds, would drive the issue. It was agreed that a long western Off-alignment option would be explored in more detail.
- Mr. Kramer indicated that the following items were general themes that he had heard while floating among the breakout groups: a connection to Route 24, such as the portion of the Eastern Off-alignment option from 113 to SR 24, was desirable; concerns about either of the On-alignment options through Millsboro; a western Off-alignment option doesn't address east/west concerns through Millsboro; if you are going to go through the pain, you need to get some gain out of it; no support for the short western bypasses around Dagsboro and Frankford; the longer Eastern Off-alignment option which returns to the 113 corridor just south of Frankford could work; in Selbyville, a short Western Off-alignment option might work.

- Mr. Kramer indicated that, in terms of the process, by law, the No-build alternative must be studied and evaluated and carried through the entire process. If enough support can not be obtained for a specific solution, then the fall back would be the option of doing nothing. An On-alignment option will also be carried through the process for reasons discussed earlier. The impacts associated with this option would be used to compare against one or more Off-alignment options based on comments tonight.
- Mr. Kramer indicated that the Project Team would make changes based on this evenings comments and come back to the group next month with those changes. In addition, how the information will be presented at the November Public Workshops will be a topic at the next Working Group meeting. We'll spend some time on what the Working Group wants to say to the public and how this is presented. The Project Team will make a presentation with options as to how to present the information to the public at the next Working Group meeting
- Gary Taylor indicated that the addition of a third lane in each direction on 113 should be developed and offered as a solution to be carried forward. It was agreed that this alternative would be developed. He also indicated that the next Working Group meeting conflicted with a SCAT meeting that same evening and that several members of the Working Group would be attending that meeting. It was agreed that DelDOT would consider changing the date of the next Working Group meeting [It was subsequently changed to October 26<sup>th</sup>].
- Mr. Hellmann indicated that there appears to be a lot of support for some form of eastern bypass. He further indicated that the resources agencies, the Corps of Engineers in particular, is charged with assuring that only the least environmentally impactive alternative is approved. That said, he felt that the Working Group members should be thinking, in terms of specifics, of why the On-alignment options are a problem for the community and that some time should be spent in the next meeting going over the goals and objectives to shore up the issues of Project Purpose and Need and identifying, in more detail, the issues with On-alignment.
- Bob Stuart asked why are we here? He indicated that we were doing everything to address through traffic (N/S) and nothing to address town traffic and the ability for people, including emergency equipment, to get around. We should be addressing the towns' needs not a perceived N/S problem.
- Mr. Kramer disagreed and indicated the East/West White paper as an example that the Project Team is addressing the towns' needs.
- Mike Simmons indicated that SR 1 went through the same process and you all know what the outcome was of that project. While some options, such as On-alignment don't make sense to you, they need to be carried through the process to satisfy agency concerns.

- Richard Kautz asked who makes the final decision? Mr. Hellmann indicated that the Secretary of Transportation will decide on the projects and the General Assembly will decide on funding. He reminded the group that FHWA will be involved in funding and the resource agencies in issuing permits. Therefore, the Secretary has the final say but he needs an alternative that is workable and has a broad range of community support. Mr. Simmons indicated that the Working Group members have to become salesmen and help to build support both among the community and with the regulatory agencies by enunciating the specific concerns that they have for those alternatives that don't seem viable to them.
- Mr. Kramer indicated that the next Working Group meeting will be November 3rd at the Fire Hall, pending a change [changed to October 26] because of the SCAT meeting, and that the Project Team will be making changes to the options based on the comments from the breakout sessions, as well as a presentation on how the information will be presented to the public in November. He also indicated that there will be two Public Workshops in the Millsboro-South Area. They will be November 15<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 7 pm at the Fire Hall in Millsboro and November 16<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 7pm in the fire hall in Selbyville. Mr. Kramer asked that the Working Group members to attend at least one hour at one of the Public Workshops, listen to the public and offer your insight. Mr. Kramer also indicated that meetings with the Millsboro/Dagsboro Chamber of Commerce were scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The Project Team is eager to work with the towns and this is one way to do that.

The Working Group meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.