

VI. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

To involve community members and stakeholders early on in the project development process and to understand community issues and concerns, interviews were conducted in the form of a “Listening Tour” with nearly 100 individuals participating. These interviews were conducted prior to the formation of a community Working Group. A report on the Listening Tour can be found in Appendix A-I.

A. LISTENING TOUR

Between December, 2003 and March, 2004, Kramer & Associates conducted an extensive Listening Tour. An initial list of community leaders and individuals was provided by DeIDOT and additional names were gathered as the Listening Tour progressed. The following is a brief summary of the tour; a detailed Listening Tour Report may be found in Appendix A-I. During the Listening Tour, nearly 100 interviews were conducted with:

- A broad cross-section of civic, business, historic, and environmental organizations;
- Many citizens from throughout the study area; and
- Elected and appointed officials of the State of Delaware, Kent County, the City of Dover, and the Towns of Camden and Wyoming.

The Listening Tour was in furtherance of DeIDOT’s strong commitment to public participation and was conducted during the earliest stage of the project in order to accomplish the following goals:

- Provide information about the project;
- Learn about key issues, concerns, fears, rumors and potential pitfalls;
- Discover points of agreement and disagreement;
- Obtain information about Environmental Justice groups and leaders; and
- Identify additional stakeholders and influential organizations and leaders.

A standard list of questions was used to guide the interviews and assure similar information was obtained from each interviewee. The questions were designed to learn about traffic patterns and problems, anticipated impact of future development on traffic and views on whether Saulsbury Road should be extended or not. The interviews were conducted by staff from Kramer & Associates without other representatives of the project team or DeIDOT present. Interviewees were assured that their input would be shared with others only when summarized with the views of other persons and without attribution.

B. WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Following the Listening Tour, a forty-member community Working Group was established to provide advice to DeIDOT regarding potential transportation improvements that would connect Saulsbury Road to New Burton Road and possibly to US Route 13. The Working Group’s role in the project development process was to assist DeIDOT by providing input, making suggestions, reviewing alternatives, narrowing the range of alternatives, and recommending alternatives that will receive detailed study. The Working Group was one element of an extensive public and inter-agency involvement process. Eight meetings of the Working Group were held. A summary of each meeting is provided below; detailed Working Group meeting summaries and the Working Group member list are provided in Appendix A-III.

Working Group Meeting Number and Date	Meeting Focus
Working Group Meeting No. 1 May 26, 2004	The Working Group meeting focused on the purpose and role of the Working Group; the project history and its relationship to the Eden Hill Farm; an introduction of Working Group guidelines; Listening Tour and public workshop comments; development plans and proposals for the study area; background information on the purpose and need; the process for developing and evaluating alternatives; and an introduction of draft Working Group goals and objectives.
Working Group Meeting No. 2 July 14, 2004	The Working Group meeting focused on the review and adoption of Working Group guidelines; input on revisions to draft Working Group goals and objectives; introduction to the environmental consultation process and environmental and engineering features in the study area. The Working Group meeting also included a breakout session where small groups brainstormed ideas for West Dover Connector alternatives.
Working Group Meeting No. 3 September 22, 2004	The Working Group meeting began with a field tour of the study area. The meeting portion provided an update on the resource agency meeting and field tour conducted on August 31, 2004, as well as an update on the City of Dover's Traditional Neighborhood Design zoning ordinance amendment and the revised Working Group goals and objectives. Ideas generated from the July 14 th meeting were developed into concepts and presented in maps to the Working Group, along with a general assessment of the pros and cons associated with each concept in terms of traffic and effects on the natural and built environment issues. The Working Group meeting also included a breakout session where small groups continued brainstorming ideas for West Dover Connector alternatives as well as commenting on their support or lack of support for each of the concepts. The Working Group was asked to do a homework assignment to comment on what they like and dislike about the concepts.
Working Group Meeting No. 4 October 20, 2004	The Working Group meeting focused on providing an update from the environmental resource agency meeting held on October 14, 2004, as well as the results of the feedback received from the homework assignment on each concept. The meeting also included a presentation on existing study area traffic flow patterns and the travel demand modeling process to be used to analyze traffic for each of the concepts. The meeting also presented the analysis that would occur under the detailed study phase.

<p>Working Group Meeting No. 5 March 23, 2005</p>	<p>The Working Group meeting focused on providing a presentation on the results of the Preliminary Alternatives screening. Additionally, Working Group members were updated on the results of the November 10, 2004, Public Workshop, as well as the Rodney Village Civic Association meetings attended, and the January 2005 resource agency meeting and the January 2005 meeting with the Federal Highway Administration. An update was also provided regarding the status of the Eden Hill Farm.</p>
<p>Working Group Meeting No. 6 April 6, 2005</p>	<p>The Working Group meeting focused on a presentation of the results of the Preliminary Alternatives screening for Concepts 12 and 13. A breakout session was held to discuss concepts and alternatives that may not merit further consideration in detailed study. The Working Group voted to drop from further study Concepts 6, 8, 9 and 10 and Preliminary Alternatives 2A to 2D.</p>
<p>Working Group Meeting No. 7 May 25, 2005</p>	<p>The Working Group meeting focused on a presentation of the results of the Preliminary Alternatives screening for Concepts 7D and 14. A breakout session was held to discuss concepts and alternatives that may not merit further consideration in detailed study. The Working Group voted to drop from further study Preliminary Alternatives 3, 7A to 7D, and 12A, and Concepts 13 and 14A.</p>
<p>Working Group Meeting No. 8 November 2, 2005</p>	<p>The Working Group meeting focused on a presentation of DeIDOT's decision as to the alternatives to be retained for detailed study (Alternatives 1, 4, 5C, 7C and 7D) and to explain the work and products of the detailed study phase.</p>

C. PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Four (4) public workshops have been held to date. Public workshop summaries can be found in Appendix A-II. The first public workshop was held in January 2004 and presented background information on traffic trends and land development activities in the study area as well as common concerns and issues raised during the Listening Tour. A total of 122 people attended the workshop and 64 written comments were received. Most attendees commented that the study area currently faces issues like traffic congestion, cut-through traffic, a significant proportion of truck traffic, a lack of comprehensive land use and transportation planning and safety issues for bicyclists and pedestrians, including school children. Of the 64 written responses received, 41 people supported the need for a West Dover Connector roadway, seven indicated that they didn't find the need for a connector; nine people indicated that they were not sure about the need, while seven people provided no answer.

A second public workshop was held in November 2004 that presented information on existing and future levels of service for study area intersections; projections of population, households and employment; environmental screening maps; and maps depicting the conceptual alternatives developed through the Working Group process. The workshop sought public comment on these conceptual alternatives as well as any new ideas. Over 200 people attended the workshop and Concept 5C received the most support from those people who filled out comment forms. Many people commented that it meets the objective of the project – a connection to Route 13 – while minimizing neighborhood disruption and impacts to the W. Reilly Brown Elementary School, where many children

walk. The greatest concerns were safety for the children and the possible taking of houses, especially on Webbs Lane, Charles Polk Road and New Burton Road. Most attendees recognized the need to do something to relieve traffic now and accommodate future demand. Workshop results indicated a general lack of support for Concepts 6, 8, 9 and 10.

The third public workshop was held on January 11, 2006 at which the alternatives retained for detailed study were presented. The workshop was very well attended with 174 members of the public and 18 members of the Working Group attending. Alternative 5C received the most support from those people who filled out comment forms. Opinions on Alternative 4 were nearly evenly divided. Alternatives 1, 7C and 7D received more negative than supporting responses. Generally, supporters of alternatives other than Alternative 1 cited the need to address traffic problems, recognized that some impacts would be unavoidable and expressed hope that DeIDOT would strive to find ways to avoid or minimize those impacts. Some proponents of Alternative 1 expressed their belief that no new connector is necessary. Some suggested that localized improvements to existing intersections and roadways would be sufficient to address traffic concerns.

The fourth public workshop was held on September 28, 2010 at which the DeIDOT preferred alternative 5C Modified was presented. A total of 190 people attended the workshop and 42 written comments were received. About half of the attendees expressed that they support or are neutral about the preferred alternative for the West Dover Connector. Supporters of 5C Modified liked the alternative because they believe it will increase local access and reduce traffic congestion. In addition, many supporters of the alternative were positive about the incorporation of sidewalks and bike lanes. They recognized that constructing the roadway will impact properties and some environmental resources but they believe that the impacts are minimized with alternative 5C Modified. Those who do not support 5C Modified were concerned that the new roadway will not reduce congestion but instead will exacerbate local traffic problems, compromise the safety of residents living along Charles Polk Road, and impact properties, wetlands and wildlife.

D. COMMUNITY MEETINGS

In addition to the Listening Tour, Working Group, and Public Workshops, DeIDOT has responded and will continue to respond to community interest in the West Dover Connector project. DeIDOT made presentations to the Towns of Camden and Wyoming on May 2, 2005 and the Camden-Wyoming Fire Department on June 27, 2005. As well, DeIDOT was invited to and attended two (2) meetings of the Rodney Village Civic Association on December 2, 2004 and January 27, 2005. Kramer & Associates attended a September 21, 2004 meeting of the Crossgates-Mayfair neighborhood to hear their comments and concerns. DeIDOT will continue to offer communities in the study area the opportunity for a presentation on the West Dover Connector project.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY COORDINATION

Environmental resource agencies were brought into the project at its onset to ensure a full range of public and agency involvement. The West Dover Connector project was initiated according to the Mid-Atlantic Transportation and Environmental (MATE) Streamlining process established in 2000. Accordingly, eight (8) meetings have been held to date with the resource agencies, either at their quarterly meetings with DeIDOT or in a special project meeting that included a field trip through the study area. A summary of each meeting is provided below; meeting memoranda and an agency distribution list are provided in Appendix B. The resource agencies represented at these meetings have included:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
 - Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Section
 - Delaware Coastal Program
- Delaware State Historic Preservation Office
- Delaware Department of Agriculture

An introduction to the project was made to the resource agencies at their April 8, 2004 quarterly meeting. Key agency input from that meeting included concerns about the effect of extending Saulsbury Road onto the National Register-listed Eden Hill Farm. In addition, the need to validate the boundaries of the study area was expressed. The agencies also requested a field meeting to discuss specific issues.

A second meeting with the resource agencies took place during their July 8, 2004 quarterly meeting. The boundaries of the study area were explained as reflecting the localized focus of the project. A progress report on the environmental screening phase of the project was presented. Key agency input from the meeting included a recommendation that the project purpose and need be carefully and clearly written. The agencies requested a list of Working Group members and an explanation of the selection process (subsequently provided). An update of actions being undertaken by the Eden Hill Farm was also requested.

A special project meeting and field tour with the resource agencies were held on August 31, 2004. An update on the Eden Hill Farm project was provided as requested. A presentation was made concerning the transportation problems and needs in the study area as background for a purpose and need statement for the project. A description and statement of progress on the public involvement program were presented, as were the Working Group goals and objectives. Key input from the agencies included a request for the purpose and need statement. The agencies also stated their desire to see alternatives developed that would avoid or minimize environmental impacts wherever possible. The agencies also expressed a desire for a refinement in the language of the goals and objectives (subsequently provided).

A fourth meeting with the resource agencies occurred at their October 14, 2004 quarterly meeting, at which the first ten concepts developed were presented. Key input from the agencies included a request that the Working Group be reminded that cultural resources, particularly the Eden Hill Farm, a historic property, be considered as one of many environmental factors. In addition, the agencies requested a determination as to the boundaries of the Eden Hill Farm historic property and that this information be reported to the Working Group. The agencies asked that they be notified when the full range of alternatives has been determined. The agencies reiterated their request for a purpose and need statement.

A fifth meeting with the resource agencies was held during their January 13, 2005 quarterly meeting, during which the agencies were presented with a brief status report on the project, and were advised that they would shortly be receiving the project Purpose and Need Statement for their review and comment.

A sixth meeting with the resource agencies was held during their April 14, 2005 quarterly meeting, during which the agencies were presented with additional background information on the project, the Purpose and Need Statement and an update on the project status, including a review of the Concepts and preliminary alternatives developed to date. Regarding the Purpose and Need Statement, a request was made for agency comments by May 15, 2005. Key input from the agencies included comments by the agencies that the 5C and 7C spurs are flawed because there are other alternatives that would not impact Isaac Branch or Brecknock Park. The agencies reiterated that the Working Group should be

reminded that a full range of environmental factors, including cultural resources, will have to be considered prior to selecting a preferred alternative.

A seventh meeting with the resource agencies was held during their July 14, 2005 quarterly meeting. A presentation was made to update the resource agencies on work completed since the April 14, 2005 quarterly meeting. Specifically, information was provided regarding the performance of Alternatives 7D, 14A and 14B in Steps One and Two. The Draft Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Report was distributed and a request for resource agency review and comment was made.

An eighth meeting of the resource agencies was held during their October 13, 2005 quarterly meeting. The purpose of making a presentation was to let the agencies know that DeIDOT was ready to move forward with the detailed study phase and to seek comments and input from the agencies on all project information they have been provided to date. Agency input included recommendations that detailed study examine issues such as pedestrian safety along Webbs Lane and visual impacts of the proposed bridge over Norfolk Southern Railroad in Alternative 7C and 7D on historic properties.