

V. AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Agency coordination and public involvement are important components to the Christina River Bridge Project and will continue as the project moves forward into design and construction to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to share their questions and comments.

A. Agency Coordination

An Agency Kick-off Meeting (i.e. Scoping Meeting) was held on February 6, 2008. Over twenty federal, state, and local agency representatives met with the project team at the Chase Center on the Riverfront. First, the Agency representatives were given a tour of the west bank of the Christina River along the Riverwalk. The meeting then moved into the Chase Center where the agencies were presented the draft purpose and need and preliminary alternatives. The agencies requested the orange and green alternatives be studied in more detail, and recommended the addition of the purple alternative as an extension of Beech Street. Additional information was also requested on navigation of the Christina River (**Appendix A**).

An additional Agency Meeting was held on March 4, 2011 to reinstate the project with the agencies. Sixteen agency representatives were in attendance. The meeting provided an update on the project since the last meeting, including a summary of the purpose and need and the preliminary alternatives analysis. Navigational clearance on the Christina River was discussed, as well as potential impacts to the Riverwalk associated with each preliminary alternative.

An Agency Meeting was held on November 15, 2011 to present DelDOT's Recommended Alternative and results of the technical studies for which the recommendation was made. The Agency representatives present stated support for the project and DelDOT's recommendation. As a result of the meeting, additional refinements were made to the Navigation Memorandum (refer to **Appendix A**) at the request of DNREC. The analysis and reasons for the selected alternative presented at this meeting are described in this document.

B. Public Involvement

1. Technical & Steering Committee Meeting and Open House, May 16, 2011

On May 16, 2011, the Christina River Bridge Project along with 15 other DelDOT and City of Wilmington Transportation Enhancement Projects were on the agenda for the Wilmington Initiatives Technical & Steering Committee Meeting. This meeting was held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and was followed by a Public Open House from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The meeting and open house were advertised by: letter to committee mailing list; postcard mailing to residents and businesses in the vicinity of the projects; e-newsletter and reminder email; WILMAPCO newsletter, press release, and website; Southbridge Community flyer; Browntown Community flyer; a Browntown Civic Association meeting; a News Journal article published on May 9, 2011; and advertisements on local talk radio and television stations. (Refer to **Appendix F** for a complete listing and summary from the Meeting and Open House.)

The presentation on the Christina River Bridge Project, which provided an overview of the project purpose and need, preliminary alternatives, and DelDOT's Preferred Alternative, was given to both the Technical & Steering Committee as well as the public. Following the presentation, project team members were available with display boards to answer questions and collect comments.

Thirty-one state, city, and other local agencies along with community representatives attended the Technical & Steering Committee meeting. The Public Open House portion of the meeting was attended by approximately 81 people.

2. Community Meetings – Southbridge and Browntown, May 2011

DelDOT attended the Browntown Civic Association Meeting on May 11, 2011 to announce the community meeting date of May 16, 2011 and provide a description of the project. Approximately 25 people were in attendance and no questions were raised regarding the project.

DelDOT presented the project to the Southbridge Community Association at their monthly meeting on May 17, 2011. Marvin Thomas, President of the Southbridge Civic Association, raised the issue of pedestrian connectivity between the Southbridge community and the proposed bridge crossing. The group discussed possible pedestrian connections along Garasches Lane, A Street and Walnut Street.

3. Summary of Comments Received

During the Public Open House, the public had the opportunity to ask specific questions to DelDOT staff and were encouraged to fill out a comment form. DelDOT received 13 comments on comment forms or by email. A summary of the comments is listed below.

- Six of the 13 comments stated they would like to see the Riverwalk go under or over the new the bridge so that the new bridge does not block the Riverwalk.
- Four of the 13 comments stated support for Orange A or Orange B Alternatives.
- Two comments stated the importance of access along the Riverfront on the west and east banks, and the importance of a neighborhood grid network.
- One comment stated that during mean high tide boats are navigable under the bridges except the railroad bridge.
- One comment from the President of the Wilmington Rowing Center stated support for the project and the need for some land on the east bank where the Orange B option traverses for a relocated Wilmington Rowing Club facility.
- Two comments stated support for the Orange B Alternative over the Orange A Alternative because of the impacts to businesses along James Court with the Orange A Alternative.

In response to the comments received at the Open House, DelDOT revised the bridge design so that the Riverwalk would pass under the roadway bridge on a boardwalk out over the Christina River.

4. Other Public Involvement Efforts

The EA will be made available for public review, so the public will have an opportunity to comment on the EA document and the Preferred Alternative.