



Summit Bridge Farms Community Meeting

August 22, 2011

Middletown Town Hall

Attendees: Project Team members Andrew Bing, Bill Hellmann, Joe Hofstee, Susan Maldonado and Ed Thomas; 20 people from the community including Representative Rebecca Walker and Senator Bethany Hall-Long.

Andrew Bing began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and expressed appreciation for Eric Carr's assistance in arranging the meeting. He stated that this is one in a series of Summit Bridge Farms community meetings that have been held since the US 301 project began. Andrew pointed out that Senator Bethany Hall-Long and Representative Rebecca Walker were in attendance. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide a preview of the August 31 (Postponed to September 6th) US 301 Public Workshop and to update Summit Bridge Farms residents about project refinements, especially those in the vicinity of Summit Bridge Farms, that have been made or are under consideration, since the last public workshop held in March 2009. Andrew mentioned that the project has been divided into four design sections and that the focus this evening would be on Section 4 that includes the Summit Bridge Farms area. He introduced Bill Hellmann who used a PowerPoint presentation to:

- review the project purpose and need,
- provide a brief history of the project, and an update since the March 2009 Public Workshop
- review recent economic development and jobs data,
- provide a brief description of the approved Green North + Spur Road Alternative and refinements, and
- point out the location of Summit Bridge Farms in relation to the New US 301 Mainline, the northern segment of the Spur Road and the SR 896 Sharp Curve.

Bill introduced Joe Hofstee, who described Section 4A, Bethel Church Road Interchange and proposed improvements to the Sharp Curve and the earth berm that would be located between the community and the Spur Road. Mr. Hellmann concluded his presentation with a summary of the project next steps.

Andrew pointed out that the end of the comment period for the August 31st (postponed to September 6th) Public Workshop was September 12th (extended through September 16th) and urged residents to attend and provide comments which will be considered as the project moves forward. He emphasized the importance of providing written comments. Andrew stated that the project website has recently been updated and that all display boards that would be presented at the workshop are now available to

be viewed on the US 301 project website (<http://deldot.gov/information/projects/us301/>). The PowerPoint presentation that will be provided at the workshop will also be shown on the project website within a few days. He stressed that the website is now the focus for providing information to the public as the project progresses and encouraged people to visit the website frequently.

A question and answer session followed the introductory presentations. The following questions and comments have been arranged into several categories. As will be seen, a number of the comments could be placed in more than one category:

Summit Bridge Farms Impacts

1. Will property lines at Summit Bridge Farms be affected?

The properties to the west of Summit Bridge that back to SR896 will experience minor right-of way. The berm along these properties will not be impacted. The requested design change to provide deceleration and/or acceleration lanes on SR896 at the Summit Bridge Farms entrance may require some acquisition from parcels that have their back property lines along SR896, but any acquisition is expected to occur within the existing drainage easement and is not expected to impact the existing berms in this area; however this issue is being studied in more detail. Also see response to #7 below.

2. How can we travel north from Summit Bridge Farms?

Travel onto southbound SR 896 to Old Summit Bridge Road, making a u-turn to travel north on SR 896.

3. Will there be access to Chesapeake City from Summit Bridge Farms?

Access to Chesapeake City will require traveling south on SR 896 to Churchtown Road to Bethel Church Road.

4. Will traffic using Summit Bridge Road use the Spur Road?

Northbound Summit Bridge Road (SR 896) will not have direct access to the Spur Road. Northbound travel across Summit Bridge will include traffic from: SR 896, the proposed US 301 Spur Road and Bethel Church Road. Southbound traffic crossing over Summit Bridge can either continue south on SR 896, continue south on the proposed US 301 Spur Road or travel south on Bethel Church Road to Choptank Road.

So the road will be straight and there will be increased higher speed truck traffic!

The US 301 Spur Road will have a design speed of 70 mph and a posted speed of 65 mph. The posted speed will be reduced as the northbound US 301 Spur Road traffic approaches the SR 896/Bethel Church Road interchange.

5. There will be ditch between the berm and our property lines, where will the water go when it exits at the lower end?

It will drain into an existing ditch that eventually drains down to Back Creek.

6. With the sharp curve design speed increased from 55 to 65 mph, with the posted speed increased from 45 to 55 mph, with the existing 45 mph advisory sign and the traffic signal removed, speeds on the curve will increase significantly and there will be no breaks in traffic as a result of signal removal. Therefore, it will be difficult to exit our community.

Statement by community (also see response to question 7 below).

7. Need to add an entrance and exit road (acceleration and deceleration lanes) from Summit Bridge Farms.

DelDOT is evaluating the potential for providing deceleration and an acceleration lane on southbound SR 896 at the Summit Bridge Farms entrance/exit and will report back to the community when the evaluation is complete. The existing northbound SR896 median deceleration lane for the left turn into Summit Bridge Farms will remain.

8. How will school buses get onto SR 896 from Summit Bridge Farms? It will be unsafe!

School bus access to SR 896 will be considered as part of the evaluation noted in the response to question 7 above.

9. There is a traffic signal for a community down the road, how did they (Summit Pond) get it approved? We asked for a light and were denied. Why them and not us?

DelDOT Traffic is researching this question; and we will get back to the community.

10. Realign the road, combine the two traffic signals into one in front of our community. The end result will be one light and no additional signals.

Placing a signal at the Summit Bridge Farms entrance at the end of the improved curve would still be considered a safety problem. Also, realigning Bethel Church Road, east of SR 896, and cul-de-sac'ing Old Summit Bridge Road would result in additional impacts and costs.

Spur Road

1. What will be the elevation of the Spur Road?

The northbound Bethel Church Road ramp will pass over the southbound US 301 Spur Road, then merge with the northbound US 301 Spur Road before passing over the SR 896 improved curve and merging into northbound SR 896, just south of Summit Bridge. The northbound Bethel Church Road overpass of the southbound Spur Road will be approximately 30' above existing ground and approximately 500' from the closest Summit Bridge Farms property line. The northbound Spur Road will be approximately 340' from the closest property line and also approximately 30' above the existing ground. The proposed 11' high visual earth berm would be located between the Spur Road and the Summit Bridge Farms community.

2. Have you considered noise impacts from the future roads?

In addition to visual impacts, noise impacts have been considered for design year 2030, including existing and proposed roads such as the SR 896/Bethel Church Road interchange and the US 301 Spur Road.

3. From Summit Bridge Farms where will you see the Spur Road?

The Spur Road and the northbound Bethel Church Road ramp will be visible from properties along Laks Drive.

4. Why does the Spur Road have to be elevated?

The northbound US 301 Spur Road needs to be elevated in order to pass over the improved Summit Bridge Road (SR 896) curve. The northbound Bethel Church Road ramp needs to be elevated to pass over the southbound US 301 Spur Road, before merging into the northbound US 301 Spur Road.

5. Do the north bound lanes of the Spur Road go over the south bound lanes of the Spur Road?

No, the northbound Bethel Church Road ramps cross over the southbound Spur Road, then merge with the northbound Spur Road, which passes over the improved SR 896 curve.

What will the height be at that location?

The elevation of the northbound Bethel Church Road ramp, as it passes over the southbound Spur Road and merges with the northbound Spur Road then passes over the improved SR 895 curve, is approximately 30' above existing ground.

6. If the Spur Road is being delayed is it definitely going to happen?

The Spur Road continues to be a section of the approved US 301 project. The General Assembly has directed that the US 301 project be implemented in sections, beginning with the US 301 Mainline. The General Assembly has provided this consistent direction in the FY '10, FY '11 and FY '12 bond bills, thus the US 301 Mainline is a higher priority and more advanced in design than the Spur Road.

7. Economic factors in Delaware and Maryland on which the Spur Road was based have changed, is it still needed?

The need for the Spur Road has not changed as a result of the economy. The Spur Road would address existing and projected traffic congestion (e.g. existing Summit Bridge Road and Choptank Road/Bethel Church Road), improve safety and manage and separate truck traffic to and from the north (Glasgow, Newark, Pennsylvania, etc.)

8. Will DelDOT purchase land for the Spur Road?

DelDOT currently anticipates acquiring the properties required for construction of the Spur Road in 2012 and 2013. Funding for this property acquisition has been approved.

9. How long will it take to build the other sections before the Spur Road is built?

See Attachment No. 1

10. Does the Spur Road get built after the Mainline and Section 4A (Sharp Curve)?

As noted in Attachment No. 1, current plans have the US 301 Mainline being constructed prior to the Spur Road. It is unknown at this time whether Section 4A (the SR 896/Bethel Church Road Interchange/Improved Sharp Curve and remove traffic signal) will be constructed before or with the Spur Road. However, Contract 4A, while being designed to accommodate the Spur Road, has independent utilization, addresses an existing safety condition and can be constructed separate from the Spur Road. It is also further advanced in design than the Spur Road.

11. So the 20' high interchange will be built years before the Spur Road is built, right? What will it look like from our community?

There is a possibility that Contract 4A, the SR 896/Bethel Church Road Interchange, may be constructed before the Spur Road. As noted above, the community will be able to see the northbound Spur Road from the Laks Drive Properties.

12. Will trucks headed south use the Spur Road?

Southbound trucks crossing over Summit Bridge will have access to the Spur Road.

13. Is the purpose of the Spur Road to serve traffic or improve safety?

The purpose of the Spur Road is to address existing and projected congestion (e.g. Summit Bridge Road and Choptank Road), improve safety and manage and separate through truck traffic (to and from the north – Newark / Pennsylvania).

14. What will the speed be on the Spur Road and will there be entrances and exits?

The Spur Road design speed will be 70 mph and the posted speed will be 65 mph.

There will be no local entrances/exits on the Spur Road (for example, there will be no access at Armstrong Corner Road, Old Schoolhouse Road or Churchtown Road). Northbound traffic from Maryland and from the northbound ramp at the Levels Road Extended Interchange will have access to the northbound Spur Road. Southbound traffic crossing Summit Bridge will have access to existing SR 896, Bethel Church Road and the southbound Spur Road to the Levels Road Extended Interchange, or to Maryland.

15. Will traffic using 896 decrease as a result of the Spur Road?

Yes, projections indicate that the Spur Road will reduce traffic on Summit Bridge Road (SR 896) and Choptank Road in the design year, when compared to the No-Build alternative.

16. Assuming everything happens perfectly, what would be the earliest construction date for the Spur Road?

Were everything to go perfectly and should funding be available, Spur Road construction could occur in approximately 2017-2019.

Sharp Curve (Section 4A SR896/Bethel Church Road Interchange)

1. Will the current curve stay or be removed?

The existing curve for traffic on SR896 will be improved by increasing the radius and moving the roadway to the north. A small section of the existing road surface would remain to provide access to certain utilities in the area of the curve.

2. When does Section 4A (Sharp Curve) get built in relation to the Mainline and the Spur Road?

See Attachment No. 1.

3. Is Section 4A tied to the Spur Road?

No, while Section 4A will be designed to accommodate the Spur Road, it can be constructed independent from the Spur Road.

4. Since the traffic signal was put in there have been fewer accidents!

- ***The signal was installed in about January 2003.***
- ***The Spur Monitoring Report reviewed the intersection for the 2006 through 2010 period. Data indicated a total of 25 crashes over that 5-year period, with four (4) crashes resulting in injuries and the remainder resulting in property damage only. These crashes were pulled from the sections of US 301 within 0.1-mile of the intersection.***
- ***Looking at fatal crashes, records indicate four (4) fatal crashes occurring at, or in close proximity to, this intersection. These accidents occurred in November 2003, February 2004 (two separate crashes that month), and May 2005.***
 - ***Records show no fatal crashes at the intersection prior to 2003.***
 - ***No fatal crashes have been reported at this intersection since the crash in May 2005.***

5. The curve was unsafe until the light was installed!

See response to question 4 above.

6. Will traffic on the curve be faster after the improvements have been made?

The current design speed for the curve is 55 mph with an advisory speed of 45 mph. The improved curve will have a 65 mph design speed and will be posted at 55 mph. Increased operating speeds on the curve can be expected.

7. Will straightening the curve result in a lower speed limit?

Improving the curve will not result in a lower speed limit.

8. Why not put a guard rail along the curve?

Guard rail in itself provides a conflict area and a potential safety issue and is avoided where possible. The AASHTO Roadside Design Guide provides the nation-wide accepted guidance for the placement of guardrail. In accordance with the Guide, guardrail is not warranted along the curve.

9. If a driver speeds and loses control on the improved curve will he end up closer to houses in Summit Bridge Farms?

While possible, it is believed that the improved curve with appropriate superelevation (banking of the roadway) banking will reduce the potential for vehicles running off the road. In addition, the improved road curve is moved further to the north.

10. Why does DelDOT want to remove the traffic light?

The traffic signal provides a point of conflict, exacerbated by the curve, creating an undesirable safety condition. DelDOT is attempting to address both issues by improving the curve and eliminating the traffic signal.

11. Will more traffic coming from the Summit Bridge pass our community?

See response to Spur Road Comment #15 above. If the US 301 Mainline and Spur Road are not constructed, in 2030, 54,500 vehicles are projected to cross the Summit Bridge and 42,900 of them would pass by the community on SR 896. If the US 301 Mainline and Spur Road are constructed, in 2030, 50,800 vehicles are projected to cross the Summit Bridge and 31,000 of them are projected to pass by the community on SR 896. Therefore, the US 301 Mainline and the Spur Road will reduce traffic passing by the community in 2030, as compared to the No Build condition.

12. Why not increase the radius of the curve and add a merge lane from Summit Bridge Farms?

DelDOT is currently evaluating the potential to provide acceleration/deceleration lanes at the community entrance.

13. Can the traffic signal be moved to the entrance of our community with entrance and exit lanes?

No. DelDOT considers it unsafe to provide a traffic signal at the end of the improved curve. Also see response to Summit Bridge Farms Impacts #10 above.

14. Is having no traffic light safe?

Yes in this situation, which includes a right-turn only out of the community, when compared to having a traffic signal on or at the end of the improved curve.

15. Changing the curve will create a straight drive to a community setting!

See response to question 9 above.

16. What is the earliest date when the curve will be fixed?

See Attachment No. 1.

Berm

1. Is the berm on the east or west side of the Spur Road?

East side, between the Spur Road and the west side of Summit Bridge Farms.

2. What will the berm look like, what will be its composition, can the design be changed, what size will it be, will it have trees, will there be a fence?

The berm will be constructed of clean excavation material or topsoil and will be landscaped. DelDOT is currently evaluating options regarding the height and location of the landscaped visual earth berm and will provide results to the community.

3. What does landscaped mean?

Plantings (trees) will be placed on the berms. We are currently developing a typical landscape plan for the Summit Bridge Road berm that will be provided to the community.

4. What type of trees will be on the berm?*

The planting design on the berm utilizes native plants that includes a mix of major deciduous trees (such as Oaks, Maples and Sycamores), evergreen trees (such as Hollies, Pines and Junipers) and minor deciduous trees (such as Hawthorn, Witchhazel and Magnolia). This provides a variety of sizes and foliage density to create an effective screening for all seasons.

5. How far away will the berm be from our property lines?

The berm and drainage swale at the bottom of the berm are currently located immediately adjacent to the community's west property line. The community has requested that DelDOT consider shifting the berm further to the west. DelDOT is currently evaluating this request and will report back to the community upon completion.

6. Must the berm follow property lines?

To be determined – see question 5 above.

7. Why build a berm when the Spur Road will be higher than the berm?

The proposed berm, although not totally blocking the Spur Road and SR 896/Bethel Church Road Interchange, would visually block a considerable portion of both facilities.

8. Why will the berm be only 11' high

In developing the recommended cost effective height of a visual earth berm, consideration is given to visual and aesthetic benefits, the elevation of the roadway and the community, the distance between the community and the road, along with the number of noise impacts, the severity of noise impacts, and the cost-effectiveness/relative performance of increased berm height. Per our commitment at the August 22nd meeting, the US 301 Project Team is currently evaluating the effectiveness of various berm heights and locations along the westside of the Summit Bridge Farms community. The US 301 Project Team will report back to the community, after we have completed our evaluation.

9. How far will the berm be from the Spur Road?

The distance between the northbound Spur Road and the berm based on the preliminary location will vary from 340' feet to 600' feet.

10. How far out into the farm field will the berm be located?

See response to question 5 above.

Tolls

1. Can you get off the Mainline without paying a toll?

No. Everyone who uses US 301 will pay a toll, either a ramp toll or the toll at the Mainline plaza. The north-serving ramps (to and from the north) will be tolled at each of the three interchanges (Levels Road Extended, Summit Bridge Road north of Armstrong Corner Road and Jamison Corner Road). The Mainline toll plaza will be located between the Maryland/Delaware state line and Levels Road Extended (there will be no connection at the MD / DE line between new and existing US 301).

2. Will the tolls be less than those on I-95?

The tolls at the US 301 Mainline plaza are anticipated to be similar to the I-95 Newark plaza. The truck tolls at the north-serving interchange ramps are anticipated to be similar to the US 301 Mainline plaza tolls, in order to avoid truck diversions to local roads. The auto tolls at the north-serving interchange ramps are anticipated to be similar to the auto ramp tolls on SR 1.

3. Will having tolls on New US 301 move trucks to I-95?

Projections indicate that by tolling new US 301, trucks are not likely to divert to I-95, primarily due to the improved travel conditions that the new US 301 will provide them (eliminating stops and starts at traffic signals and reducing their travel times).

4. Where will the toll booths be located?

The US 301 Mainline toll booth will be located just north of the MD/DE line. Toll booths will also be located on the north-serving (to and from the north) ramps of the three interchanges (Levels Road Extended, Summit Bridge Road north of Armstrong Corner Road and Jamison Corner Road).

5. When traveling south on the Spur Road will there be a toll?

Yes, southbound traffic passing over Summit Bridge and accessing the Spur Road would pay a toll if exiting at the Levels Road Extended Interchange or at the Mainline toll plaza, prior to traveling into Maryland.

6. Will there be an exception from tolls for Delaware residents?

No, free passage is not possible for the proposed toll facility. Financial analyses conducted in the past have assumed no discounts for local users; however, frequent user discounts may be considered during the preparation of the final Financial Plan.

General

1. Will New US 301 remove trucks from existing US 301?

New US 301 is projected to carry approximately 6,800 trucks per day, north of the Levels Road Extended interchange in 2030. Without new US 301, most of these trucks would use existing US 301 through Middletown. Also, without new US 301, existing US 301 is projected to carry 5,100 trucks per day through Middletown in 2030. With the new US 301 constructed, existing US 301 is projected to carry approximately 1,400 trucks per day, a 70% reduction.

2. What will the lighting impacts be from the road elevated 40' above us (light fixtures, type of lighting) what alternatives have or can be considered?*

The lighting will be low-level lighting, including high pressure sodium cobrahead fixtures mounted on poles with a mounting height approximately 40 feet above the road. The design currently provides partial interchange lighting, or lighting only for acceleration and deceleration areas. The lighting is being designed such that the footcandle footprint will not spill over onto private property. However, lamps will be visible from the surrounding properties.

3. Why will a pond be needed to the west of the community?

In general, stormwater management ponds are required to treat increases in impervious areas for stormwater quality and quantity management. The pond in question, near the Summit Bridge Farms community, has been downsized and moved as far as practically possible to the west and away from the community and as close as possible to the proposed highway.

4. What will happen to the land (farm field) located between Summit Bridge Farms and the Spur Road?

This area will likely be land-locked (not accessible). This area is part of current evaluation regarding location of the visual earth berm.

Attachment 1

When Will US 301 Get Built?

- We cannot provide you with a specific construction start date for the US 301 Mainline or US 301 Spur Road.
- US 301 will be constructed once we confirm that traffic and revenue projections will result in a financial plan that will be favorably received by the bond market and is acceptable to the Secretary of Transportation, the Governor and the General Assembly.
- We intend to update the financial plan this fall and present the results to the Secretary of Transportation in December.
- It remains the goal of the Department to fund the construction of the US 301 project with primarily toll revenue bonds and some federal funds, thus minimizing impact on the state's Transportation Trust Fund and the statewide Capital Transportation Program.
- Once the General Assembly authorizes the sale of toll revenue bonds, about 3 ½ to 4 years would be required to bid and award the construction contracts and to complete the actual construction of the US 301 Mainline.
- The US 301 Mainline has been and continues to be a higher priority than the US 301 Spur Road.
- Contract 4A, the 896 and Bethel Church Interchange, can be constructed and become operational prior to or as part of the US 301 Spur Road.
- It is anticipated that construction on the US 301 Spur will not happen for a number of years. It is currently contemplated that construction of the US 301 Spur Road would begin sometime after the opening of the US 301 Mainline.
- More information is available on Public Workshop Display Boards 1, 5 and 14.