



## Airmont/Mt. Hope Community Meeting

August 24, 2011

Middletown Town Hall

**Attendees:** Project Team members Andrew Bing, Bill Hellmann, Sasmit Bhayde, Bryan Townsend and Ed Thomas; 18 people from the community including Karen Barlow representing County Councilman Bell.

Andrew Bing began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and expressed appreciation to Bill Weller for arranging the meeting. He stated that this is another in a series of US 301 project meetings with the residents of Airmont/Mt. Hope. Andrew acknowledged Karen Barlow, representing New Castle County Councilman Bell, and pointed out that Senator Bethany Hall Long and Representative Rebecca Walker were unable to attend and conveyed their apologies. At their request, copies of the sign-in sheets for the meeting will be sent to them. Andrew explained that the purpose of the Airmont/Mt. Hope community meeting is to provide a preview of the August 31, 2011 US 301 Public Workshop (postponed to September 6, 2011) and to update Airmont/Mt. Hope residents about project refinements, especially those in the vicinity of their community, that have been made or are under consideration, since the last Public Workshop held in March 2009. Andrew outlined the information to be presented at the upcoming workshop. He mentioned that the US 301 project website (<http://deldot.gov/information/projects/us301/>) has been updated and all display boards that will be available at the workshop are on the website. The PowerPoint presentation that will be presented at the workshop is also shown on the project website. Andrew provided the workshop hours and when the PowerPoint presentation will be shown. He stated that the project has been divided into four design sections and that this evening's focus would be on Section 1, which includes the Airmont/Mt. Hope area. He introduced Bill Hellmann who used a PowerPoint presentation to:

- Review the project purpose and need;
- Provide a brief history of the project, including the role and direction provided by the General Assembly;
- Provide 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 Airmont/Mt. Hope in relation to the New US 301 Mainline.

Bill introduced Bryan Townsend who described Section 1, US 301, East of Norfolk Southern Railroad to SR 1; the berm located between Airmont and the Mainline; and other projects in the area. Mr. Hellmann summarized the project's next steps including final design of the Mainline, purchase of remaining right-of-way and update of the project financial plan.

Andrew pointed out that the end of the comment period for the August 31<sup>st</sup> Public Workshop (postponed to September 6<sup>th</sup>) was September 12<sup>th</sup> (extended through September 16<sup>th</sup>) 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. He stressed that the website is now the focal point for obtaining information and encouraged people to visit the website frequently. He concluded the presentation by informing attendees how to provide comments and stay informed.

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

### **Community Impacts**

1. We already get cut-through traffic, will this project result in even more cut-through traffic?

***Yes, the closing of Hyetts Corner Road has the potential to increase cut-through traffic.***

2. Have effects of emissions been considered?

***Yes, air quality analysis has been conducted, in accordance with EPA requirements, on both a regional and project level and the results incorporated into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The US 301 project is consistent with and does not violate State/National Ambient Air Quality Standards (S/NAAQS).***

***See the US 301 Record of Decision (ROD) on the project website (Pages 105 to 110).***

***Also, see the US 301 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the project website (Page III-67 to Page III-80).***

***With respect to project level analysis results in the vicinity of the Airmont community:***

- ***For the No-Build Alternative, the predicted 2010 CO Concentration for the Airmont community (receptor location: 236 Oak Drive) for 1 hour is 2.0 ppm vs. S/NAAQS of 35.0 ppm and 1.3 ppm vs. S/NAAQS of 9.0 ppm for a maximum 8 hour average.***
- ***For the Selected Alternative, the predicted 2010 CO concentration for the Airmont community (receptor location: 236 Oak Drive) for 1 hour is 2.5 ppm vs. S/NAAQS of 35.0 ppm and 1.6 ppm vs. S/NAAQS of 9.0 ppm for a maximum 8 hour average.***
- ***A comparison of the 2010 No-Build Alternative (2.0 ppm – 1 hour /1.3 ppm – maximum 8 hour average) to the 2010 Selected Alternative (2.5 ppm – 1 hour / 1.6ppm – maximum 8 hour average) shows that CO concentrations increased slightly. The slight increases in relative CO concentrations under the Selected Alternative do not come close to S/NAAQS and are not considered an impact. This was the case for all receptors analyzed for the US 301 project. An increase is typically seen at receptors, such as Airmont, that are located near a proposed alignment and that is currently located away from major roadways.***
- ***For the Selected Alternative, the predicted 2030 levels for 1 hour and maximum 8 hour average are 2.4 ppm and 1.5 ppm, respectively. The CO analysis incorporates the effect of changes/improvements in vehicle emission control system technologies, as well as emissions regulations and standards that will be in place in 2030. The result is that vehicles are anticipated to be cleaner in 2030 when compared to 2010, thus reducing the effect on CO. The levels predicted for the Selected Alternative in 2030 are slightly lower than those predicted for the Selected Alternative in 2010.***

***\*PPM – Parts per million***

3. Will DeIDOT purchase the land between the berm and Airmont? Does Whitehall own that land, how wide is it, what can be built on it?

***The land opposite Airmont, on the south side of Hyetts Corner Road, is currently owned by the Welfare Foundation, Inc. There is a subdivision plan recorded at New Castle County, named Scott Run Business Park at Whitehall. DeIDOT would acquire the property between the berm and Airmont, if it is determined to be an un-economic remnant and if the property owner is agreeable to the purchase. The property owner has the right to retain the property, even if determined to be an un-***

*economic remnant. The width of the property, between the berm and Hyetts Corner Road, will depend on the height of the earth berm. Appraisals are currently being prepared for the property. Once reviewed and approved, DeIDOT will be in a position to determine whether the acquisition results in an un-economic remnant and to determine the effect of increasing the berm height on project right-of-way costs. The information will be a key component in the evaluation of raising the berm.*

4. With four lanes of traffic with many trucks, the houses that back up to Hyetts Corner Road may experience pollution and noise particularly at their second story level.

*Current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance suggests that analysis of upper story use areas, such as balconies, is only appropriate for multi-family residences such as apartments, condos etc. DeIDOT has not analyzed noise levels for the second story levels. However, with no berm, the predicted noise level increase along Airmont ranges from 3 dBA to 5 dBA and is not considered an impact under current FHWA approved DeIDOT noise regulations. Also see response to question 2 above, regarding air quality.*

5. Can the noise that we will hear from the Mainline be compared to what we hear now from SR 1?

*The distance is at least 3,000' from the east side of Mt. Hope to SR 1 and the noise prediction model is not accurate to that distance, so it is not possible to determine the effects of the SR 1 traffic on the existing noise levels. The existing ambient noise levels were measured under current conditions, which include the traffic on SR 1.*

6. The slight curve in the Mainline near us will result in noise from downshifting and braking.

*The US 301 Mainline curve near the west end of the Airmont community is designed for 70 mph and downshifting or braking by trucks is not anticipated.*

7. How long will it take to build the Mainline near our community?

*Construction of the project in the vicinity of the Airmont community will take approximately 3 to 3 ½ years.*

8. Where will the construction workers park?

*The construction documents do not direct the contractor's employees where to park. The construction workers are likely to park near their worksites. Several staging areas are suggested for the contractor, with the primary site being on the east side of Scott Run, south of Hyetts Corner Road (access via US 13/Hyetts Corner Road, east of the closure, not Lorewood Grove Road). Additional sites may include the Jamison Corner Road interchange area, and across from the high school.*

### **US 301 Mainline (Section 1)**

1. How far will the entrance to SR 1 move south?

*The toll-free ramp entrance will move approximately 4,500 feet south, to the US 13/Port Penn Road intersection.*

2. Will the Mainline be lowered (at earlier meetings we were told that it would be dug down)?

*The elevation/profile of the Mainline is generally unchanged from that shown to the community in 2009. Any changes are less than 1 foot. It is not feasible to lower the Mainline profile further, because of the need to accommodate highway drainage. The elevation/profile of the southbound SR 1 off-ramp to Jamison Corner Road has been raised approximately 5 to 10' in certain areas. The off-ramp will act as an extension of the earth berm to the west and Jamison Corner Road, between the US 301 Mainline and the community.*

3. How low will the Mainline be, what does shallow mean?

***There will be some minor cut and fill sections, however, the Mainline, for the most part, will be approximately at the same elevation as existing ground, for much of the distance along the Airmont community.***

4. Do not want to see the trucks, their lights etc., or hear them?

***With a 6' earth berm, the Airmont community will be able to see the tops of large trucks on the Mainline.***

5. How high will the ramp be above the Mainline?

***The elevation of the ramp will vary from 0 feet at the ramp exit point from the US 301 Mainline to approximately 18' above the Mainline at the ramp tie into Jamison Corner Road.***

6. Can you compare the height of the ramp on SR 1 at Delaware City to the ramp at our community?

***The existing SR1 interchange at Delaware City (SR72) and the proposed US301 interchange at Jamison Corner Road are both full diamond interchanges. The relative difference in elevation between the main roadway and the intersection of the ramps at the side roads is very similar when comparing the two interchanges. At the SR1 interchange, this relative elevation difference is approximately 20 feet and at the US301 interchange this relative elevation difference will be approximately 17 feet. The difference at the US301 interchange is slightly less than at the SR1 interchange because the depth of the Jamison Corner Bridge structure is less and the proposed grades on Jamison Corner Road are steeper than on SR72 which minimizes impacts and costs.***

7. How wide is the Mainline?

***The width of the US 301 Mainline right-of-way, assuming a 6' high earth berm, is approximately 350'.***

8. What will the speed limit be on the Mainline?

***The US 301 Mainline speed limit along the Airmont community will be 65 mph.***

9. In moving the toll-free ramp has the impact on traffic using St. Georges Bridge been considered (local drivers will use the bridge)?

***Yes. The majority of traffic using the existing toll-free ramp arrives from the south along US 13. Recent counts show that approximately 90% of the traffic entering SR 1 via the toll-free ramp arrives from the south versus 10% from the north. When the ramp is shifted further south, all of the traffic arriving from the south would be expected to continue using the toll-free ramp. A portion of the traffic arriving from the north may opt to use the St. Georges Bridge rather than travelling further south to the relocated toll-free ramp. This volume represents a relatively small portion of the total toll-free ramp volume and was considered as part of the impact of traffic using the St. George's Bridge.***

10. Will construction begin on all three sections of the Mainline at the same time? **Yes**

When will construction start? ***See Attachment No. 1 – When Will US 301 Get Built?***

11. What is the projected percent of trucks on the Mainline along Airmont?

***The mainline section of US 301 between the Jamison Corner Road interchange and SR 1 is projected to carry 14% trucks in design year 2030.***

12. Will the southbound SR 1 off-ramp to Lorewood Grove Road be affected by the US 301 Project?

***No.***

## Berm

1. If the Mainline gets built does the berm get built?

***Yes, the berm is a commitment in the Record of Decision.***

2. Why does Chesapeake Meadow get an 11' berm and we get a 6' berm?

***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 berm height. Per our commitment at the August 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, the US 301 Project Team is currently evaluating the effectiveness of various berm heights at the Airmont community. The US 301 Project Team will report back to the community, after we have completed our evaluation.***

3. What is the cost comparison between the Chesapeake Meadow berm and the Airmont berm?

***The design engineers for Section 1 and Section 4 are currently preparing cost estimates for the Airmont and Chesapeake Meadow berms, respectively. We will report the results to the community.***

4. Is there an air quality difference associated with berms of different heights?

***There is no current method to analyze this condition. EPA, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is currently studying this issue. However, the study is ongoing with no conclusions to date.***

5. What is the relationship between the height of the berm and the elevation of the Mainline?

***The proposed berm height is a minimum of 6' above the highest elevation of the Mainline roadway.***

6. How does the height of the berm relate to the height of trucks that will be on the Mainline?

***The berm height is 6', while the height of large trucks is approximately 13'. With a 6' high berm, residents of Airmont will be able to see the tops of large trucks traveling on the Mainline.***

7. Will the berm be built before construction begins on the Mainline?

***DelDOT has committed to constructing the berms as early as practicable during construction. Based on our evaluation of the potential project schedule, the Project Team believes that early construction of the berm along Airmont is possible.***

## Closing Hyetts Corner Road

1. How will closing Hyetts Corner Road affect the Vo Tech High School?

***Hyetts Corner Road will be closed just to the east of the Vo Tech school. Access to the school will be via Lorewood Grove Road and Jamison Corner Road to Hyetts Corner Road. A separate DelDOT project is ready to start construction to improve Jamison Corner Road from Boyds Corner Road north to the US301 project and is scheduled to be complete before the beginning of the US301 project. The US301 project includes a temporary run-around round to maintain traffic on Jamison Corner Road during construction while Hyetts Corner Road is closed. Another DelDOT project to improve Road 412A between Lorewood Grove Road and Hyetts Corner Road is scheduled to be under construction next year and includes improvements to Hyetts Corner Road from Road 412A to the Vo-Tech school. This project is also scheduled to be complete prior to the beginning of the US301 project.***

2. Will any other roads be closed during Mainline construction?

***Yes, Strawberry Lane (near the MD/DE state line during the construction of the Strawberry Lane Bridge over new US 301) will be closed for an extended period of time until the new bridge over US301 is completed. Other roads will experience intermittent closures for bridge construction or to tie in new roads to existing roads.***

3. What parts of Hyetts Corner Road will be closed?

***See response to question 1.***

4. Will the Jamison Corner Road and Road 412A improvements be made prior to the closing?

***Yes, along with improvements to Hyetts Corner Road, west of the Vo Tech school.***

5. The closing will result in even more cut-through traffic in Airmont.

***See response to Community Impacts Question #1.***

6. Can the back entrance to Airmont from Hyetts Corner Road be closed?

***If formally requested by the community, DeIDOT is agreeable to evaluating the temporary closing of Airmont Drive at Hyetts Corner Road, during the period in which Hyetts Corner Road is closed, east of the Vo Tech school, for US 301 construction. The request will need to include approval by 2/3 of the residents of Airmont. Should the community decide to pursue the temporary closing, we will provide you with sample approval forms for each of the Airmont residents.***

7. What will the impact be on emergency service responses?

***Access to the community will be via Lorewood Grove Road, Jamison Corner Road, Hyetts Corner Road (west of closure) and Airmont Drive (assuming Airmont Drive remains open).***

8. What is the soonest Hyetts Corner Road will be closed?

***Late 2012, if everything goes perfectly and the project financial plan is acceptable to the DeIDOT Secretary, the Governor and the Legislature in the December 2011 / January 2012 time period.***

9. How long will the road be closed?

***Approximately 3 years.***

Is there any way to reduce the length of time of the closure?

***The Project Team will continue its efforts to identify ways to reduce the length of the road closure and the overall project construction time.***

10. What route will the contractors and the equipment take to get to the Hyetts Corner Road construction area?

***The contract documents do not specify material delivery routes. However, primary material deliveries are likely to be on Hyetts Corner Road from US 13 to just east of Scott Run. Deliveries to specific parts of the project will also occur, likely on Jamison Corner Road. Some select materials are likely to be delivered on Hyetts Corner Road's west side, such as the concrete girders (beams) for the Hyetts Corner Road bridge over Scott Run.***

## **Tolls**

1. When you get on New US 301 will you have to pay a toll?

***Everyone who uses US 301 will pay a toll, either a ramp toll or the toll at the Mainline plaza.***

2. Will tolls be collected at all three interchanges?

***The north-serving ramps (to and from the north) will be tolled at the three interchanges (Levels Road Extended, Summit Bridge Road north of Armstrong Corner Road and Jamison Corner Road).***

3. Where will the toll plaza be located?

***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).***

4. Will the toll-free ramp remain free?

***Yes, the SR 1 toll-free ramp, just south of the Roth Bridge, will remain toll-free.***

5. Is there a way local residents can avoid tolls for the entire length of the Mainline?

***Traveling on new US 301 will require paying a toll. The SR 1 toll-free ramps to and from the north (just south of the Roth Bridge) are not affected by new US 301. Local residents can still travel along local roads to avoid paying a toll, i.e., via Boyds Corner Road and existing US 301 to Levels Road Extended and relocated Warwick Road, through Warwick, via MD Rt 282 (Cecilton-Warwick Road) to MD Rt. 213 to existing US 301 south of the Delaware/Maryland line.***

6. Will trucks pay the same toll regardless of where they enter?

***Trucks are likely to pay a very similar toll, regardless of where they access new US 301. Truck tolls may be similar to those at the I-95 Newark Toll Plaza. For example, truck tolls at the US 301 Mainline plaza may be \$9 and they may be slightly less, say \$8, at the ramp plazas. The US 301 Mainline plaza and ramp plaza truck tolls will be kept similar in order to minimize truck toll diversion; the goal being to keep trucks on the US 301 Mainline.***

7. Will there be a way to exempt or give a discount to local residents?

***Financial Analyses conducted in the past have assumed no discounts; however, frequent user discounts may be considered as part of the final financial plan.***

## **General**

1. Will a driver be able to get on the Spur Road and go north?

***A driver traveling north on new US 301 from Maryland or from the Levels Road Interchange will be able to travel north on the Spur Road. A driver traveling south on SR 896, across Summit Bridge, will be able to either travel south on the Spur Road, continue south on existing SR 896 or travel south on Bethel Church Road to Choptank Road.***

2. When will the Spur Road be built?

***See Attachment No. 1.***

3. If it took a long time to acquire 20% of the right-of-way how can 80% be purchased in a year?

***Much of the 20% of the right-of-way already acquired involved advanced acquisitions protecting the project corridor from development and properties that were total acquisitions. In order to complete the remaining acquisitions, final construction plans are required in order to identify the portions of properties needed to construct the project. The final design of the US 301 Mainline is nearing completion, the needed properties have been identified, and the right-of-way acquisition process (appraisals and negotiations) is actively underway. It is projected that the right-of-way acquisition of properties required for the US 301 Mainline will be completed about this time next year. Right-of-way acquisition for the US 301 Spur Road is projected to be [performed](#) in 2012 and 2013.***

4. Will NEPA documents have to be revised as a result of Whitehall's new plans?

***NEPA documents will not be revised as a result of Whitehall's new plans. The US 301 FEIS was based on the latest land use plans at the time the document was prepared. Those land use plans assumed a portion of the Whitehall development would occur during the planning period (2030). The current land use projections (2040) are generally similar to the 2030 projections.***

5. How old is the 87% population data?

***The 87% projection is from the current WILMAPCO /Delaware Population Consortium figures.***

6. Does DelDOT use early construction completion bonuses?

***DelDOT has bid a number of projects using a procurement process that bases the award of construction contracts on both dollars and time to complete (I-95 5<sup>th</sup> Lane Widening and I-95 / SR 1 Interchange at Christiana Mall are examples). It is not anticipated that such a process will be used for US 301. However, since US 301 will be a toll facility, it is important that the entire project be constructed as quickly as possible, in order to minimize capitalized interest payments during construction and so that the collection of tolls can begin at the earliest possible date. Significant penalties will be imposed upon contractors should they not complete their construction projects on time.***

7. Is the multi-use trail part of the US 301 project, will the trail be built before the highway?

***A portion of the multi-use trail will be constructed as part of the US 301 project (e.g. across the Jamison Corner Road overpass of US 301). This portion of the trail will not be built before the US 301 project. The remainder of the trail along Hyetts Corner Road and Jamison Corner Road will be built in advance of US 301, [as part of the separate DelDOT projects for Jamison Corner Road and Road 412A.](#)***



## 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 Rd.
- 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, the Governor and the Legislature.
- We intend to update the financial plan this fall and present the results to the Secretary 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.