



**MONMOUTH COUNTY**

**Final Design Phase for  
County Route 537, West Main Street, Corridor Roadway Improvements  
Between Sentinel Road and U.S. Route 9 Interchange  
Township of Freehold, New Jersey**

**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1  
MEETING REPORT**

DATE: Friday, September 17, 2021

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Online via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

STAKEHOLDERS		
First name	Last name	Representing
Scott	Adler	65 Old Post Road, Freehold
Tammy	Brooke	377 W. Main St / 373 W. Main St
Cody	Brooke	
Jacob S.	Elkes	Direct Title / 400 W Main St
Tawney	Farmer	Macerich / Freehold Raceway Mall
AJ	Garito Jr, PE	Two River Engineering
Matthew	Kolan	SITE Centers Corp. / Freehold Market Place
William	Kurtz	Kurtz Consulting Engineers, Planners & Land Surveyors
Frank	Lucia, CSM	Macerich, Freehold Raceway Mall
Joe	Luongo	Freehold Township Historic Preservation Commission
Anthony J.	Marrazzo	385 W. Main St
Anthony	Massari	Director of Facilities CentraState Healthcare System
Larry	Metz	Capital Realty & Investment Co. Colonial Plaza
Ellen	Mount	South Shore Properties
Chuck	Mount	
Donald	Pigford	NJTRANSIT Bus Planning
Arlene	Schwartz	51 Ivy Road
Matt	Slotman	NJTRANSIT Bus Service Planning Southern Region
Peter	Valesi	Township Administrator Freehold
Robert	Werkmeister	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Tim	White	Township Engineer Freehold
Unknown	Caller	

<b>PROJECT TEAM</b>		
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Val	Aylesworth	Project Assistant M A Culbertson LLC
Shilpa	Bhojappa	Environmental Engineer Monmouth County Engineering
Arnab	Biswas	Engineer NJDOT Local Aid District 3
Martine	Culbertson	Community Involvement Facilitator M A Culbertson LLC
Cody	Dietrich	Hardesty & Hanover
Inkyung	Englehart, PE	Environmental Project Coordinator Monmouth County Engineering
Joseph	Ettore, PE	County Engineer Monmouth County Engineering
Brian	Medino, PE	Project Engineer Hardesty & Hanover
Angela	Perry	Dir of Communications Hardesty & Hanover
Kumudika	Somaratra	NJDOT Project Manager NJDOT Local Aid District 3
Robert	Strang-Wolf, PE	County Project Manager Monmouth County Engineering
Michael	Swietanski, PE	H&H Project Manager Hardesty & Hanover
Matt	Witkowski, PE	Traffic Engineer Hardesty & Hanover

## **PURPOSE OF MEETING**

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the Final Design project team, provide the project status for the Final Design (FD) Phase, provide an update on the proposed roadway and intersection improvement plans, and to obtain input on community interests during this phase of the project (see attached Agenda).

## **ONLINE MEETING GUIDELINES & INTRODUCTIONS**

Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, welcomed participants to the online meeting noting the following guidelines and review of the meeting agenda.

- (a) Anyone experiencing technical difficulty seeing the screen or hearing the audio, were asked to call or text Angela Perry, H&H, 443-853-1843, for assistance.
- (b) For any questions or comments it was possible to type them in the chat box and the project team would review and respond either immediately or during the Q&A part of the meeting agenda.
- (c) The meeting was recorded to assist in creating a meeting summary report for Project Team use only and not post to the project website.
- (d) Some project team members' cameras were on during introductions as a courtesy welcoming participants and attendees welcome to have on. However during the presentation no cameras would be on, so the focus would be on the presentation slides. Cameras could be turned on again during the Q&A period, but not necessary and if working from location where it could be distracting, understandable and appreciated.
- (e) This online meeting is Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1 for the Final Design Phase of the Monmouth County Route 537, West Main Street, Corridor Roadway Improvements Project. This is a Monmouth County roadway under their jurisdiction for operation, maintenance and repairs. In this phase, Monmouth County is the lead agency, however because project is funded with Federal dollars, there is oversight and coordination with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

- (f) The purpose of this online Community Stakeholders Meeting is to:
- introduce the project team;
  - provide the project status for the Final Design Phase;
  - present the proposed roadway & intersection improvement design plans;
  - briefly share the on-going FD work effort;
  - community and public outreach that will include future outreach meetings and the project website;
  - receive input from community stakeholders such as local residents and business owners with any questions or comments and to hear of any development or other projects in the corridor that may impact the final design plans.

## MEETING SUMMARY

### 1. Opening Remarks & Project Overview

After introductions, Joseph Ettore, Monmouth County Engineer, welcomed attendees and thanked them for taking the time to attend this Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1 for the Final Design Phase of this project. He provided the project background and current status.

- (a) The traffic signal operation and roadway maintenance of Route 537 is the responsibility of Monmouth County. As such Monmouth County will continue to make this corridor improvement project a priority as it serves both the local community and regional area.
- (b) County Route 537 is a major east-west transportation corridor serving regional travel needs between Burlington, Monmouth and Ocean Counties. The roadway serves as a connector between several regional routes, namely U.S. Route 9, NJ 33 Freeway and Business as well as NJ Routes 34,79 and Interstate Route 195. It is also used regularly by the residents and businesses within Freehold Township.
- (c) The corridor has substandard design elements, a history of safety concerns, and suffers from heavy traffic congestion and delays due to inadequate roadway capacity. Solutions were developed in the prior phases to improve safety and reduce congestion while still taking into account practical measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts to the natural environment.
- (d) Monmouth County is now finalizing the design for operational and safety improvements to the CR 537 West Main Street corridor between Sentinel Road and U.S. Route 9 Interchange in Freehold Township.

### 2. Project Status

Joseph Ettore then provided the project schedule via power point presentation slide, which indicated:

- (a) Local Concept Development (LCD) Study took place from 2011-2014 and the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase began in 2015 and was completed in 2019.
- (b) The project is now in the Final Design (FD) phase that began in 2020 and will be completed by 2023 and then transition to the Construction phase which the duration is anticipated for two years from 2023 to 2025.

### 3. Monmouth County Route 537, West Main Street, Corridor Roadway Improvements – Presentation

Michael Swietanski, Hardesty & Hanover Project Manager, and Brian Medino, Hardesty & Hanover Deputy Project Manager, provided information on the following presentation agenda items with power point presentation slides to present each topic.

- (a) An overview of the steps completed in the LCD and LPE phases and what steps are currently underway in the FD phase as well as those expected during the Construction were shown via power point slides.
- (b) The engineering plans were provided as the proposed improvements for each of the main intersections and the roadway corridor, which are similar to the displays shown from the end of the LPE phase (*available to view on the project website under Maps and Plans*).
- (c) A description of the improvements for the corridor roadway typical section, the turning lane movements and vehicle capacity at each intersection was described.
- (d) After presenting the intersection and roadway improvements for each section of the corridor, a list of work effort items for the FD Phase was provided as follows:

- Surveying
- Geotechnical Borings
- Environmental Permits & Approvals
- Community Involvement & Public Outreach
- Property Right-of-Way (ROW) Negotiations & Acquisitions
- Utility Coordination
- Construction Staging
- Engineering Technical Design Plans

(e) Environmental items were presented as follows:

- Cultural Resource Studies, Phase III
- NJDEP Permits – *Freshwater Wetlands and Flood Hazard Area*
- Contamination Site Investigations – *Field Soil Sampling/Testing and Asbestos*
- Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Certification

(f) Right-of-Way (ROW) coordination was summarized as the following:

- The County will send letters to property owners, begin property appraisals/reviews, hold negotiations and finalize acquisitions.

(g) The presentation slides will be available as a pdf file posted to the project website after the meeting.

#### 4. Community Involvement Efforts

Martine provided the schedule of meetings anticipated during the FD phase. To achieve the community public outreach goals of effective and broad-based support for improvements, the final design phase has three levels of outreach similar to the prior project phases:

- Information exchange with local officials at Local Officials Meeting No. 1 and a follow-up meeting will be held with results of the FD work effort as noted earlier in presentation slides;
  - Meetings with community stakeholders, such as this Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1, held to introduce the FD phase and then a follow-up Community Stakeholders Meeting at a future time to present signage, landscaping and other aesthetic design elements/treatments;
  - A Public Information Center meeting will be held for all members of the public to present the final design plans including proposed traffic management and construction staging plans with a 30-day public comment period.
- (a) Future public outreach meetings will be either in-person or online depending on the COVID-19 mandates for safety if there are limits to large gatherings.
- (b) A project website has been developed as a means for information sharing and future communication for this phase and into the construction phase. The Project Team will provide Recent News updates and will email blast if there is important project information to share with the community such as meeting notices. Please use the website to provide contact information if participants wish to receive future email blasts. The website address is: [www.cr537westmainstreet.com](http://www.cr537westmainstreet.com)
- (c) There is also a project-specific email address for submission of questions and comments, [info@cr537westmainstreet.com](mailto:info@cr537westmainstreet.com), which forwards emails to the County Project Manager and members of the Project Team for review and response.

#### 5. Discussion / Q & A Session – Community Stakeholders Input

Upon completion of the presentation, Martine Culbertson thanked participants for listening and opened the meeting to the Q&A session and discussion part of the online meeting agenda.

- (a) Questions and comments were read first from the chat box input and project team members responded as appropriate.
- (b) After the chat box questions and comments were read and responses given, if participating by phone, participants could raise hand and un-mute audio if wish to comment or ask question.
- (c) The list of questions/comments and responses are in Report Attachment No. 1.

## 6. Next Steps – FD Community Outreach

The next steps for FD phase community outreach were shared with participants as provided on a slide as follows:

- ROW Letters to Property Owners – Fall 2021 (*awaiting ROW authorization*)
- ROW Negotiations & Acquisitions – Fall 2021 to Spring 2023
- Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 – Spring 2022
- Public Information Center –Spring 2023

Community coordination and public outreach will continue during the Construction Phase, anticipated Fall 2023 through 2025.

## 7. Closing Comments and Remarks

In summary, Robert Strang-Wolf, County Project Manager, thanked participants for their input. He is available for questions or comments via the project email address or by phone 732-431-7760.

- (a) Future Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 2 may be held in-person or online (*to be determined*). The Public Information Center meeting may be held in the evening in-person or held online live or pre-recorded and posted on website for viewing over a range of days (*to be determined*).
- (b) Right-of-Way (ROW) letters to property owners along CR 537 will be mailed once the ROW process has authorization to proceed by the cooperating agencies (NJDOT, NJTPA and FHWA).
- (c) The action items are listed in the section below.

In closing, Joseph Ettore, Monmouth County Engineer, thanked participants, on behalf of the Monmouth County Board of Commissioners and the Department of Public Works and Engineering, for their time and comments. The County looks forward to continuing to work with Freehold Township and the community in finalizing the engineering plans and constructing the needed County Route 537 corridor roadway improvements. The County will continue to stay in touch informing the community of the project's progress via the website.

For further questions or comments, please submit them via the project email address and the Project Team will respond either via email or phone call as appropriate. Meeting adjourned by noon.

## **KEY ACTION ITEMS**

1. The Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1 presentation slides will post as a pdf file on the project website.
2. A meeting summary report will post on project website upon review and approval. An email notice will be sent once the meeting report has posted to the project.
3. Community stakeholders to provide contact information for future communication and meeting notices; and to share any new activity or developments along the corridor that may be of interest to the Project Team while they develop the final design plans.
4. Project Team will proceed with engineering technical design plans, required environmental permit application processing, ROW authorization requirements and public outreach steps.
5. As the project progresses, future information will be provided via the project website: [www.cr537westmainstreet.com](http://www.cr537westmainstreet.com) and comments can be submitted to: [info@cr537westmainstreet.com](mailto:info@cr537westmainstreet.com)

We believe the foregoing to be an accurate summary of discussions and related decisions. We would appreciate notification of exceptions or corrections to the meeting summary within three (3) working days of receipt. Without notification, this meeting summary will be considered to be record of fact.

CR 537 West Main Street Corridor Roadway Improvements Project Team





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**Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1**

**Friday, September 17, 2021**

10:00 a.m. – Noon

*Online via Zoom*

<https://hardestyhanover.zoom.us/j/83665809839?pwd=OUJKTmFFMjFGWHFBTm9rUkx4dkdiQT09>

Meeting ID: 836 6580 9839 Passcode: 466297

*Or call in (audio only) Telephone 929-205-6099 Access Code 83665809839#*

**AGENDA**

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the Final Design project team, provide the project status for the Final Design (FD) Phase, provide an update on the proposed roadway and intersection improvement plans, and to obtain input on community interests during this phase of the project.

I. *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION*

- Project Overview and Background
- Project Status and Schedule - *Final Design (FD) Phase*

II. *COUNTY ROUTE 537, WEST MAIN STREET, CORRIDOR ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS*

- Engineering Plans – Proposed Improvements
- Final Design Phase Work Effort
- Environmental Items - Cultural Resource Studies, Permits
- Right of Way (ROW) Coordination
- Community Involvement – *Project Website*

III. *DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS*

- Community Stakeholders Input – Q&A, *Community Interests*
- Public Outreach Meetings
- Feedback and Closing Remarks



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**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1**  
**REPORT ATTACHMENT NO. 1**

**Discussion (Q&A) Questions and Responses**

Q: Will Moore's Tavern be affected?

A: Moore's Tavern building and parking lots itself will not be impacted. There is a small right of way taking required at the intersection, and modifications to make the driveway access on CR 537 as right in, right out.

Q: How will construction in front of Barkalow Middle School be coordinated with school hours?

A: The Project Team will coordinate and inform the school when construction is anticipated in front of their property. Hours of construction will generally be during the day, so the Project Team will direct the Contractor to try to work around the bus schedules, events, etc., as much as is feasible within the project schedule. Further outreach meetings will be held during the Construction Phase to work with community stakeholders, including a pre-construction meeting with the construction contractor to view traffic management and construction staging.

Q: What is the time frame for appraisals?

A: Appraisals will begin as soon as the County receives an executed agreement with NJDOT.

Q: Will all work be done using lane closures or will any detours be required/allowed?

A: The Project Team has not finalized traffic staging at this point. The intent is for the work to be performed on one side of the roadway as much as we can while shifting traffic to the north or south, and then vice versa do the other side. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained at all times to the greatest extent possible.

Q: What is the plan to maintain access to CentraState Medical Center?

A: Access to/from CentraState Medical Center will always be maintained. The Project Team will minimize the County footprint within the driveways as much as we can. If we need to be in a driveway, we will keep the other driveways open. Any work within existing driveways will be coordinated with CentraState.

Q: How will we navigate on Stillwells to Wemrock - to the mall - and West on 537 during construction for one year?



A: This is part of construction staging. The entire intersection will not be under construction at one time. Construction is staged to minimize disturbances to the travelling public. Further details will be developed and presented at the future public information center meeting.

Q: Will the minutes of the meeting be distributed?

A: A Community Stakeholders Meeting summary report will be posted to the project website once reviewed and approved by the Project Team. An email blast will be sent to participants and those on the project contact list once it's posted on the project website.

Q: What actual time delays at intersections?

A: The goal of the project is to reduce the time delays that are currently being experienced. With improvements, there will be less delays over time. The County is working with Hardesty & Hanover, and a sub-consultant, on an integrated system that will connect all the signals and help to further reduce delays in each intersection and corridor. The goal with construction staging and widening is to maintain the current number of lanes, thereby keeping delays to a minimum. The Project Team is also coordinating with NJ Transit to ensure that during construction access to public transportation is maintained.

Q: Will electric, cable, etc., lines be moved underground?

A: The Project Team has had meetings with all the overhead utilities. The plan is to relocate the poles that are out there, to relocate them in a line further north. There are no plans to move or relocate utilities underground at this time.

Q: Is there a concern about the foundation of Moores Tavern when the expansion begins?

A: There is no concern regarding the foundation due to the excavation in the vicinity of the structure will be shallow. The signal foundations, which are deeper are located next to the roadway and are far enough from the foundation not to warrant a concern.

Q: Which lots are being looked at first for the appraisal process?

A: The Project Team will attempt to contact all property owners with a letter around the same time period. It is the Counties intention to concentrate on the full property acquisitions first since these would take the longest to acquire and involve relocation of occupants. A schedule of contacts will be developed by the appraiser and attorney.

Q: Does the size of the bus cutouts meet NJDOT guideline?

A: The final design plan cutouts will meet NJ Transit and NJDOT bus design standards.

Q: Will either of the pylon signs at Colonial Plaza be affected?





A: Depending on the final geometry, the sign may or may not be affected. The County will meet with the property owner of Colonial Plaza to discuss impacts to the sign and other equipment once the ROW process is initiated. Please note, the parking lot will not be affected by the widening.

Q: Will demolition of properties precede utility relocations and what is the schedule for each?

A: Demolitions cannot occur until properties have been acquired and any occupants of the buildings are relocated. The County may demolish the buildings as they are acquired prior to the Construction Phase.

The timing of any utility relocations will be determined during the Construction Phase.

Q: How long is the entire process, how long is it expected to take?

A: The Construction Phase of this project is anticipated to take two years.

Q. Will a detailed NJDOT-issued pre-construction/construction schedule be issued/posted and available for review?

A: A pre-construction schedule reviewed by NJDOT and approved by the County would be available prior to the start of construction and information about the schedule will be posted on the project website.

Q: Will demolition of the strip of houses on CR 537 happen at one time?

A: Demolition will happen once the properties have been acquired, occupants relocated, and the demolition permits with the town are secured.

Q: When do you expect the NJDOT agreement?

A: Right of way documentation has been approved, but we are waiting for the signed agreement that authorizes the County to proceed with the ROW negotiations with Federal funding. Subsequently, ROW was authorized in January 2022.

Q: Why is the bridge not being widened?

A: The Route 33 bridge is owned and maintained by NJDOT. Widening of the structure is not being proposed by NJDOT at this time. A sidewalk is being added to the north side of the bridge to facilitate pedestrian movement along the corridor.