



COUNTY OF PASSAIC
Local Preliminary Engineering for the
Sixth Avenue Bridge Replacement over the Passaic River
City of Paterson, Borough of Prospect Park and Borough of Hawthorne, New Jersey

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NO. 1
MEETING REPORT

DATE: Monday, June 23, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Online – Microsoft Teams
ATTENDEES:

STAKEHOLDERS		
Nagiyan	Sylejmanovski	Administrator, Prospect Park
Hawthorne	Official (<i>name not listed</i>)	Borough of Hawthorne
Jason	Bruno	Accurate Box Company, Inc, Paterson
James	Lee	Kim Chee Pride, Inc., Prospect Park
Anna	Hendershott	Shotmeyer Brothers, Hawthorne
Judy	Tate	Local resident
Tanya	Haney	Local resident
PROJECT TEAM		
Jonathan	Pera, P.E.	County Engineer, Passaic County
Michelle	Lowry-Babula	Principal Engineer/Project Manager, Passaic County
Matthew	Jordan	County Administrator, Passaic County
Joe	Romano, P.E.	Project Manager, Michael Baker Int'l
Hamid	Ikram, P.E.	Deputy Project Manager, Michael Baker Int'l
Kristopher	Kozlowski, P.E.	Highway Engineer, Michael Baker Int'l
Anthony	Daino	Utility Lead, Michael Baker Int'l
Ellen	Fyock	Environmental Specialist, Michael Baker Int'l
Meb	Mezgebo, P.E.	Structural Engineer, Michael Baker Int'l
Daniel	Quiroga, P.E., PTOE	Traffic Engineer, Michael Baker Int'l
Martine	Culbertson	Community Involvement. Facilitator, M.A. Culbertson LLC
Val	Aylesworth	Project Assistant, M.A. Culbertson LLC
John	Riggi	Environmental Project Manager, NJDOT BEPR
Harrison	MacDowall	Environmental Specialist, NJDOT BEPR
Sarbjit	Kahlon	Project Manager, NJTPA

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project team, present the project status and schedule for the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Phase, and to obtain input on community interests associated with the Sixth Avenue Bridge Replacement over the Passaic River (Agenda attached).

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Meeting attendees were welcomed and informed of the following guidelines for the meeting:
 - The meeting would be recorded for internal use in writing an accurate meeting summary report.
 - Microphones should be kept muted unless the attendee was speaking.
 - Questions could be submitted through the meeting Chat or held until the discussion period after the presentation.
- b. Martine Culbertson, Community Involvement Facilitator, introduced the project team members from Passaic County, the Michael Baker International (MBI) Team, and the cooperating agencies of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).
- c. Jonathan Pera P.E., Passaic County Engineer, welcomed everyone and thanked them for their time and participation.

2. Project Overview

Joe Romano presented the meeting agenda and provided an overview of the project location, existing conditions and history of bridge, including the following points:

- The bridge is located at the convergence of the municipalities of Hawthorne, Prospect Park and Paterson.
- The project limits extend from the bridge to East Main Street in Prospect Park and to Shady Street in Paterson.
- The bridge was originally constructed circa 1900.
- Temporary Acrow panel trusses were constructed 1987.
- The 2023 bridge report identified several safety concerns, however the bridge is safe for travel.
- The width of the bridge, width of the sidewalk, and the guide rail are currently substandard.
- There is insufficient radius for turning trucks.

3. Local Project Delivery Process

- a. The Local Concept Development (LCD) phase of the project was completed 2018 and resulted in a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) to replace the bridge in the current alignment.
- b. The project is now in the Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) phase.
 - The LPE phase began in May 2024 and is anticipated to be completed in May 2026.
 - The LPE phase includes tasks such as developing preliminary design plans, developing cost estimates, and obtaining an approved environmental document.
- c. After the LPE phase is the Final Design (FD) phase, which is expected to start in the Spring of 2026. The last phase of the project, Construction, is tentatively estimated to begin in Winter 2028-2029.

4. Project Purpose and Need

- a. The Purpose and Need Statement was developed during the LCD phase:

The overall purpose of this project is to address structural, geometric, and operational deficiencies of the Sixth Avenue Bridge (Structure 1600-012) over the Passaic River and to provide safe, efficient, and reliable passage for all modes of transportation.

- b. The Project Goals and Objectives are to:
- Avoid delays or disruptions caused by aging infrastructure.
 - Avoid or minimize impacts to social, economic and environmental resources.
 - Provide bicycle compatibility and connectivity within the project limits.
 - Provide ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities and crossings within the project limits.
 - Accommodate public access where feasible.
 - Improve corner radii to facilitate truck turning movements at the western intersection.
 - Avoid or minimize complete or long-term roadway closures during construction.
 - Implement context sensitive design solutions.

5. Current LPE Work Efforts & the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA)

- a. Work is ongoing in the following areas:
- Geodetic Survey
 - Utility Verifications & Risk Analysis
 - Geometric Design (Establish Project Footprint)
 - Temporary Traffic Control & Construction Staging
 - Roadway, Structure, Traffic & Drainage Design
 - Environmental
 - Right-of-Way (ROW) Report
- b. A slide showed the PPA, including the footprint of the proposed bridge and the project limits.
- The substructure work will be performed while maintaining traffic on the existing bridge.
 - The traffic signal at the intersection in Prospect Park will be replaced.
 - ROW property will be acquired to accommodate trucks turning onto Goffle Road.
 - ADA-compliant crosswalks and sidewalks will be provided.
- c. The proposed fixed bridge replacement structure will have three spans, and some structural elements will be prefabricated or fabricated offline in order to reduce construction time.
- d. The proposed roadway will include:
- Two 12-foot travel lanes
 - 3-foot shoulders on both sides
 - 5-foot ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides
 - Traffic and pedestrian signals upgraded to current compliance standards
 - Redesign of the intersection to accommodate tractor-trailers as they turn north from Sixth Avenue onto Goffle Road
- e. There are existing overhead and underground utilities within and near the project limits, including a Williams-Transco gas line near the west abutment. MBI is working in coordination with the utility companies for relocation and to identify and mitigate conflicts.
- f. Construction access and staging involves:
- Full closure of the bridge for demolition and construction;
 - Placement of temporary trestles in the river for construction and for demolition;
 - Shifting of roadway travel lanes at the intersection in Prospect Park and construction easements to allow for construction access;

- Detour routes for vehicles and pedestrians that will have signage:
 - The westbound detour route is approximately 1.5 miles long, utilizing E. Seventh Street, River Street, and Haledon Avenue to E. Main Street.
 - The eastbound detour for northbound traffic is approximately 2.5 miles, going north on Goffle Road to Wagaraw Road, crossing the river on Lincoln Avenue to River Street to get to Fifth Avenue and access Sixth Avenue.
 - The eastbound detour for southbound traffic is approximately 2.1 miles, going south on E. Main Street to Haledon Avenue, crossing the river and using Lawrence Street to access River Street and get to Sixth Avenue.
 - The pedestrian detour will be a temporary trestle-mounted route from the south side of Sixth Avenue to a new, mid-block crossing on East Main Street.
- g. The environmental process involves completing technical environmental studies for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and documenting historical properties in the area to submit to the NJ State Historic Preservation Office. Additional NJDEP permit applications will be submitted during the Final Design (FD) phase.

6. **Community Involvement & Public Outreach**

- a. During the LCD Study, two rounds of outreach meetings were held with local officials, community stakeholders, and the general public.
- b. For LPE, there was a Local Officials Meeting No. 1 held online in April in addition to today's Community Stakeholders Meeting. Another Local Officials Meeting No. 2 will be held prior to the Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1 to be scheduled before the end of the LPE phase.
- c. There will be continued coordination and outreach with local officials, community stakeholders and the public through the future FD phase and the Construction phase.
- d. Meeting notices include information in both Spanish and Arabic in order to reach everyone in the communities around the project area.
- e. The project website (sixthavenuebridge.com) has been updated for the LPE phase and is available to share information with, and obtain input from, the community and the general public.
- f. A project-specific email address has been added to the outreach efforts and will continue through the duration of the project: contactus@sixthavenuebridge.com. Local officials, community stakeholders and the public can submit comments and questions that go directly to the project team.

7. **Community Input - Discussion and Q&A**

Question/Comment #1: Will you wait until all surrounding construction on other bridges, Route 20, etc., is completed, before commencing work? Significant traffic, if this is not accounted for.

Response: Yes, there will be coordination with other transportation improvement construction projects in the area so the Sixth Avenue Bridge detour routes will function effectively and any temporary disruptions would be communicated to the local officials and the community.

Question/Comment #2: Hi. Is this only to address bridge questions or concerns?

Response: Yes, but please share your questions or concerns if we can assist, we'll try.

Note: *The comments shared by the participant were in regard to a request for speed bumps on East Main Street in Hawthorne which is outside the scope of the bridge replacement project. The County's response is provided in Additional Notes Item 10.*

Question/Comment #3: What kind of trucks will be allowed to go on (use) the bridge? Is there a weight limit? Because that creates a large problem on that street with the trucks. Then pothole creations on the street because of the weight of the big trucks that are coming through now.

Response: With the design and construction of the new bridge, there will not be a weight restriction (load posting) for the new bridge. There's a bus depot and other businesses that depend on crossing the river that need to use the bridge. However, there will also be improvements to the turning movements that will ease truck access and backups including new traffic signal.

Additional Response from County: If participants are aware of any potholes on Passaic County roads, please send an email via the project email address or to the County Roads Department and a pile crew will address those issues. The County tries to address potholes once email received within a week or the following week; can be weather dependent.

Additional Comment from Attendee Will definitely send the email, because there are two potholes right now on East Main Street. Thank you for looking into it.

Question/Comment #4: Can we get the slides via email? Great! Thank You.

Response: Yes, we will create a meeting report that once reviewed and approved by the County and team, will post to the project website with the presentation slides. An email will be sent to anyone who provided their email address, to let them know the report and slides are available to view.

Question/Comment #5: Once this project is completed will this increase or decrease traffic?

Response: There isn't an anticipated change in traffic from the old to new bridge because the existing number of lanes on the bridge will remain the same. However, there will be enhanced safer movement of vehicles and pedestrians over the bridge because the design includes adding roadway shoulders and turning movements which aren't possible with the existing bridge. It is narrow now and sometimes the mirrors of opposing cars clip each other, so that too should be eliminated with standard lane widths and shoulders.

Question/Comment #6: Is there any thought about putting like a bike ramp? Because even at the intersection by the bridge it's so narrow. I like to ride my bike with my daughter up and down there to the park. It's very hard to get through, so can you address the left of it or only the right shoulder of it?

Response: There will be shoulders on both sides. Also, there will be better pedestrian access with sidewalks on both sides and the shoulders to distance cars too from pedestrians and bicyclists, much better than today. In addition, the traffic signals will have push buttons up to current standards and ADA compatible ramps at crosswalks.

Additional Comment from Attendee: Yes, narrow and shaky (*the existing bridge*). Thank you!

Question/Comment #7: How long will construction take?

Response: The construction of the new bridge is anticipated to be done in two stages. The timing and duration is dependent on environmental seasonal restrictions on when the contractor can get out over the water or not permitted. Given permits and weather, it's anticipated to take an estimated two plus years. Basically, a construction season per stage and this is a two stage bridge replacement project.

Question/Comment #8: Thank you all for addressing this issue. The repairs are much needed. (*existing bridge*)

Response: For everyone's information, an email was sent to the county road supervisor to examine East Main for any potholes to be addressed.

Question/Comment #9: I heard Sixth Street will be made as a one way?

Response: There is a municipal proposal to change Sixth Street to one-way, however the street is under the jurisdiction of Prospect Park Borough and is not part of the bridge replacement scope of work.

Note: *As this item is outside the scope of the bridge replacement project, the County's response is provided in Additional Notes Item 11.*

8. Next Steps and Action Items

- a. Activities expected during the remainder of the LPE phase include:
 - Local Officials Meeting No. 2 – Summer/Fall 2025
 - Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1 - Fall 2025
 - Completion of Environmental Categorical Exclusion Document (CED)
 - Preparation of Local Preliminary Engineering (LPE) Report
- b. The PIC Meeting No. 1 will be held online and is anticipated to be held in the evening 6-8pm.; once the date is determined, a meeting notice will be provided at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled date.
 - The Meeting Notice will be sent by mail and email as well as posted to two local newspapers and on the project website.
 - The Notice will also be provided to the municipalities and the County to post on their websites.
 - A 30-day comment period will follow the PIC meeting to allow the public to submit comments and questions that will become part of the LPE Report.
- c. The LPE Report will be submitted to an Intra-Agency Review Committee (IRA) made up of representatives from the cooperating agencies for approval to concur on moving the bridge replacement project forward to the FD phase.
- d. The Community Stakeholders Meeting No. 1 presentation slides and meeting report will be available to view on the project website, once reviewed and approved by the Project Team and County.

8. Closing Remarks

Jonathan Pera thanked everyone for joining and participating in this meeting. He also thanked the design team for all of their efforts with the presentation and the website. He noted that Passaic County is making a major investment to design and replace this bridge in the next few years and thanked everyone for their support.

Michelle Lowry Babula is the key contact for the project. Please visit the website for information and to submit any additional comments or questions to the project email address that distributes to the County Project Manager and the project team working on the bridge replacement project.

Michelle Lowry Babula, P.E.
Passaic County Principal Engineer / Project Manager
973-881-4450
contactus@sixthavenuebridge.com

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

10. Item outside the project scope: a meeting participant asked if speed bumps could be placed along Main Street in Hawthorne to slow cars down (*from Item 7, Question/Comment #2*).

County Response: Main Street is a County roadway under Passaic County jurisdiction; but speed bumps are not permissible on County roads due to access for emergency vehicles, OEM providers and part of the regional transportation system rather than local. Perhaps additional signage and speed enforcement can address the issue. However, the County will consider if other traffic calming strategies may be feasible to assist in addressing the speeding concern, beyond signage and local law enforcement monitoring and ticketing.

11. Item outside the project scope: a meeting participant asked if Sixth Street would be changed to a one-way street (*from Item 7, Question/Comment #9*).

County Response: The County Engineer noted that the Borough of Prospect Park may have received an NJDOT grant to advertise and award a project making North Sixth Street one way towards the river. That work would be completed before this County bridge replacement project and any updates will be incorporated into the current design and traffic signal upgrades for the bridge replacement if needed.

NEXT OUTREACH MEETING

Public Information Center (PIC) Meeting No. 1

Date: Fall 2025 (*Date to be determined*)

Time: Evening (*Anticipated to be 6-8 p.m.*)

Location: Online via MS Teams

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

Sixth Avenue Bridge LPE Project Team