

Route 57 and County Route 519 Intersection Improvements

PE Virtual Public Information Center, April 2024

Script

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Welcome to the virtual public information center for the Route 57 and County Route 519 Intersection Improvement project. The New Jersey Department of Transportation is committed to developing transportation improvements that best balance transportation needs, the environment, community concerns and costs. This virtual public information center is being presented to provide you with information about the project. At the conclusion, you will be able to complete a questionnaire where you can submit questions and comment on the project.

Slide 2 – Project Location

The proposed project area is at the intersection of Route 57 and County Route 519, also known as Uniontown Road, in Lopatcong Township, Warren County, New Jersey. Route 57 is a two-lane Principal Arterial with 11-foot-wide lanes running east-to-west, and County Route 519 is a two-lane Minor Arterial with 12-foot-wide lanes in each direction running south-to-north. The existing intersection is signalized, and the posted speed limit on both roadways is 50 miles per hour. The land use at this intersection is primarily rural farmland with a single abandoned commercial property in the southwest quadrant. Close to the intersection, Route 57 and County Route 519 cross over Lopatcong Creek via bridges. Norfolk Southern Railroad crosses over County Route 519 south of the project. The entire project is within the Highlands Planning Area, while the Highlands Preservation Area is adjacent to the northeastern quadrant. Lopatcong Creek is considered a Category 1 waterway by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) with exceptional resource value.

Slide 3 – Project Purpose

The project's purpose is to improve the safety and operations of the intersection of Route 57 and County Route 519 and to improve the structurally deficient and functional obsolete bridges over Lopatcong Creek. The Route 57 bridge is in poor condition and does not have adequate width for the existing conditions or to improve the intersection. The County Route 519 bridge is in overall fair condition but again is of inadequate width. The existing guiderails and shoulder widths do not meet current NJDOT design standards, and the intersection is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, known as ADA.

Slide 4 – Project Overview

The project improvements at the intersection include the addition of turning lanes, wider shoulders, replacement of two bridges over Lopatcong Creek, new traffic signal system, ADA compliance, and roadside safety improvements. Due to the widening of the roadways and bridges, increasing impervious area, and to comply with NJDEP Stormwater Regulations, a series of stormwater management facilities, including bioretention swales and basins, will be constructed along the project area. The intersection will also shift slightly to the southwest to accommodate the roadway widening while avoiding impacts to the Highlands Preservation Area and minimizing impacts to the Lopatcong Creek flood hazard area.

Slide 5 – Project Overview

Looking closer at the intersection, proposed safety measures include providing wider bridges to accommodate bicycle compatible shoulders, sidewalks, an exclusive left turn lane on each approach, and a new northbound right turn lane on County Route 519. Other proposed safety measures include resurfacing the roadway to improve the pavement skid resistance, installation of long-lasting pavement stripping, rumble strips, raised pavement markers, and delineators mounted on new, updated guiderails. Not only will the addition of turn lanes increase the intersection capacity to acceptable levels for the design year, but they will also increase safety using lead left turn signal phasing.

Slide 6 – Route 57 Section and Elevation

The proposed Route 57 bridge is a 43-foot, 4-inch single-span structure constructed on a 25 degree skew normal to the baseline. Prestressed concrete beams are proposed since the Lopatcong Creek water level is less than six feet from the bottom of the beams, and raising the bridge is not viable because that would impact the Highlands Planning Area. The hydraulic bridge opening is increasing to comply with NJDEP design storm events. A conceptual stone architectural surface treatment is shown here; however, this requires final approval from stakeholders. The roadway approaches are widened to accommodate the new left turn lanes, bicycle compatible shoulders, and sidewalks.

Slide 7 –County Route 519 Section and Elevation

The proposed County Route 519 bridge is a 70-foot single-span structure constructed on a 30 degree skew normal to the baseline. The longer bridge is needed to span over the winding Lopatcong Creek increasing the hydraulic bridge opening while complying with NJDEP design storm events. Like the Route 57 bridge, prestressed concrete beams are proposed, a conceptual stone surface treatment is shown, and the roadway approaches are widened to accommodate the proposed improvements.

Slide 8 – Construction Stage 1

Preliminary Engineering Construction Staging has been developed. During Stage 1 construction, the existing Route 57 and County Route 519 roadways and bridges will remain open to traffic. Stage 1 construction consists of building approximately 34-feet of abutments, roadways, and bridge sections to the south of Route 57 and to the west of County Route 519, which moves the proposed intersection to the southwest of the existing intersection. A precast prestressed NEXT Beam style section is utilized for the superstructure to minimize construction duration. Temporary traffic stoppages are anticipated during beam erection. Sidewalk construction is deferred to Stage 3 to provide sufficient roadway width for traffic during Stage 2 construction. Also included in this construction phase is the construction of bioretention swales and basins. There are no utility impacts during Stage 1 for County Route 519 roadway and bridge; however, for Route 57 the gas main will be relocated by directional drilling or temporarily supported until Stage 1 is complete and relocated in the first outer bay.

Slide 9 – Construction Stage 2 &3

Before Stage 2 demolition begins, traffic is transferred to the newly built roadway and bridge sections. After demolishing the existing bridges, the final 28-foot 3-inch abutments, roadways and bridge sections are constructed. Temporary traffic stoppages are anticipated during bridge demolition and beam erection. A small retaining wall along Route 57, to avoid right of way acquisition, is also constructed during this stage. The Verizon utility will be temporarily supported and relocated to the northern outer bay. Stage 3 construction consists of building the sidewalks that were deferred from Stage 1, and final pavement reconstruction shown in green.

Slide 10 – Final Bridge Sections

Final bridge sections for Route 57 and County 519 are presented here. Utilizing precast NEXT Beams sections for the construction provides a quick construction schedule, avoiding concrete formwork, pouring and cure time for decking, which will minimize impacts to the surrounding environment and the traveling public.

Slide 11 – Environmental

The project has been designed to minimize environmental impacts to the extent practicable as required by The National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA requirements and to obtain funding. Due to the potential presence of archaeological resources in the project area, it may be necessary to develop steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to artifacts. Potential conditions or commitments may include the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement with the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office to establish mitigation for adverse effects, archaeological data recovery prior to construction, and/or monitoring during construction to document or recover archaeological resources.

Historic preservation organizations, historical societies, and similar groups, or individuals with information about cultural resources (archaeological or architectural) in the project area are encouraged to view the Public Information Center and submit comments to the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Contact information will be provided at the end of this presentation.

The intersection of Route 57 and County Route 519 roadways cross over Lopatcong Creek, a Category One water that is protected from measurable changes in water quality due to its exceptional ecological significance. Disturbance within the floodway and 300-foot riparian zone will require a Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit, and disturbance in wetlands and their 150-foot wetland transition areas will require a Freshwater Wetland Individual Permit from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Disturbances to wetlands and the riparian zone will require mitigation.

The roadway widening will increase the impervious surface in the project area, which will require water quality treatment by providing forested bioretention swales and basins along the improved roadway. A basin is proposed to provide the primary treatment for water quality and flow reductions outside the 300-foot riparian zone.

Soil erosion and sediment control measures, such as silt fencing and inlet protection, will be implemented to minimize any sediment runoff during proposed activities. Upon completion of activities, the temporarily disturbed areas will be revegetated with a native seed mix and in some cases with trees and shrubs in accordance with the NJDOT Landscape Plans.

Slide 12 – ROW Impacts

The project proposes right-of way impacts to eight properties. Some of the impacts include Drainage Easements and Partial Fee Acquisition Areas for the construction of several bioretention swales and basins, and a Construction and Maintenance Easement for the intersection widening improvements. Temporary Access is required for the proposed driveway reconstruction, and bridge construction will require Temporary Construction Easements. This graphic shows the overall view of the project's right-of-way impacts.

Slide 13 – Project Status

The project is currently in the Preliminary Engineering phase, which is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2024. The next stage of the project is the Final Design phase, which includes preparing construction plans and specifications, acquiring needed right-of-way, and obtaining environmental permits and is estimated to be completed in fall of 2026.

Construction is expected to start in Spring 2027 and last two years.

The project cost including utility relocation is approximately \$24 million.

Slide 14 – Contact Information

For further information, please contact:

Shivon A. Harris

Office of Community & Constituent Relations

Please add all other comments in your response to the survey below.