

Atlantic City Expressway Third Lane Widening Public Information Center Transcript

3/25/24 – 4/5/24

Slide 1:

Welcome to the Public Information Center for the Atlantic City Expressway Third Lane Widening Project from MP 31.6 to MP 44.2. The project is being performed by the South Jersey Transportation Authority supported by their design consultant STV and program management team Michael Baker International. The project is currently in Preliminary Engineering.

Slide 2:

The presentation consists of a review of the Project Overview, Purpose and Need Statement, Goals and Objectives, and the Existing Conditions of the Atlantic City Expressway from MP 31.6 to MP 44.2. Then we will review the Preliminary Preferred Alternative identified during Concept Development and being advanced under Preliminary Engineering and conclude with an update on the Project Schedule and how to stay informed on the status of the project.

Slide 3:

The Atlantic City Expressway Third Lane Widening project limits are highlighted in red. Within the project limits, MP 31.6 to MP 44.2, the Atlantic City Expressway is two lanes in each direction.

East of MP 31.6, the Atlantic City Expressway is three lanes in each direction continuing to the Eastern terminus of the Expressway. At the western end of the project the Atlantic City expressway ties into NJDOT Route 42. The project limits extend for about one mile of roadwork on Route 42 and terminate at the College Drive overpass.

The project is primarily located in Camden County in Winslow and Gloucester counties with a portion in Washington Township in Gloucester County. The township and county limits are depicted on the map.

Slide 4:

The purpose of this project is to improve the overall traffic operations and general safety along the Atlantic City Expressway corridor while aiming to minimize environmental, right-of-way, and structural impacts.

The Atlantic City Expressway has reoccurring heavy congestion, typically during the peak summer periods, which can be attributed to the geometric complexities throughout sections of the project, especially at the Western limits at the Route 42 Interchange. This

heavy congestion results in excessively high numbers of rear end crashes. The level of service is currently poor at a level of service E and is expected to degrade to a level of service F by the design of 2045.

Slide 5:

The project has a comprehensive list of goals and objectives including to mitigate summer traffic throughout the corridor, increase mobility in the Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia regions, improve coastal resiliency in the region, improve safety along the Atlantic City Expressway and Route 42, provide enhanced accommodations for emergency evacuation purposes, eliminate as many substandard geometric features as possible, and update the roadway to the latest design standards where practical.

The project aims to improve the quality of life for residences and businesses along the corridor and the feeder roadway network, especially during the peak summer months. The project will improve access to employment by improving mobility and support efforts, increase economic growth and competitiveness in the Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia regions. Other objectives of the project are to reduce air and noise pollution that results from the congestion, avoid and minimize any adverse impacts to sensitive environmental and cultural resources, and implement a cost-effective and financially feasible alternative for the South Jersey Transportation Authority.

Slide 6:

The Atlantic City Expressway is classified as an urban principal arterial freeway / expressway. The average daily traffic is approximately 22,500 vehicles per day in each direction. The speed limit on the expressway is 65 mph and the speed limit on Route 42, which again is the last mile of the project on the Western limits, is 55 mph. Existing typical sections are two lanes in each direction with varying shoulder width, separated by variable width grass median from mileposts 31.7 to 43.9, and a concrete barrier median at the Eastern terminus of the project.

Slide 7:

The existing level of service on the Atlantic City Expressway is currently poor at a level of service E and is expected to degrade to a level of service F by the design of 2045.

The graphics on this slide depict the traffic analysis that was performed for the No Build 2045 Scenario compared to the Preliminary Preferred Alternative Build 2045 Scenario.

Under the No Build the red depicts the corridor operating at a LOS F in both directions. With the Preliminary Preferred Alternative improvements shown in the 2045 Build Scenario the graphic depicts the traffic operational improvements anticipated by constructing the Preliminary Engineering enhancements.

Slide 8:

Within the project limits there are a variety of existing Controlling Substandard Design features including horizontal stopping sight distances, superelevation, horizontal curve radius, minimum grade in the longitudinal directional on the expressway, vertical clearances at each of the overpass bridges on the expressway, and acceleration and deceleration lane length at each of the interchange's on and off ramps to the expressway. The Preliminary Preferred Alternative aims to eliminate as many substandard geometric features as possible.

Slide 9:

The next several slides depict the proposed improvements for the Atlantic City Expressway Widening. The current slide depicting the improvements in the western limits of the project, primarily the Atlantic City Expressway and Route 42 interchange. The interchange will be reconstructed with geometric improvements to improve mobility and safety. On subsequent slides, around MP 43.5, the project improvements consist primarily of widening the Expressway to the inside to provide a continuous three lane section in each direction.

Traveling from left to right on this figure, on Route 42 SB, existing movements are maintained. Motorists can exit Route 42 and travel to the Blackhorse Pike NB, CR 168. Motorists can continue to travel on Route 42 SB or stay to the left to travel to Atlantic City Expressway EB. There is also an Atlantic City Expressway EB On Ramp from Route 42 NB.

Following the figure from right to left, motorists traveling on the Atlantic City Expressway WB can exit to Sicklerville Rd, Blackhorse Pike NB, CR 168, and Route 42 SB. The exit ramps merges with Route 42 NB, which goes under the Atlantic City Expressway. Traveling on the Atlantic City Expressway WB the mainline traffic merges with Route 42 NB and continues as Route 42 NB. After the Atlantic City Expressway WB and Route 42 NB merge there is an On Ramp for traffic from Sicklerville Rd.

Within these limits there is the South Branch of the Big Timber Creek which runs along the western side of Route 42. It crosses Sicklerville Road, then goes underneath the Route 42 via a large culvert, and then continues along and crosses back-and-forth a couple times to the east.

Improvements consist of eliminating the center lane merge on Route 42, widening the Route 42 Bridge over Sicklerville Road, improving stopping sight distance on the mainline along the curve including shoulder widening, and constructing new bridges over Route

42 NB. A retaining wall is proposed due to the difference in roadway elevation between the EB and WB direction.

Slide 10:

The figure on this slide depicts the third lane widening with widening to the inside. The typical section of the three-lane section consists of three, 12' lanes in each direction with 5' inside shoulders and 10' outside shoulders. Numerous stormwater management features are included and highlighted in dark blue in the median and the outside of both the EB and WB.

To the right side of the figure is the Atlantic City Expressway and Berlin Cross Keys Road Interchange. The existing acceleration and deceleration lanes will be reconstructed to provide full length lanes and tapers for each of the on and off ramps at the interchange. The Berlin Cross Keys Road over the Atlantic City Expressway Bridge will not be modified. The overpasses within the project limits will not be reconstructed. The existing vertical clearance will be maintained at each of the overpasses.

Slide 11:

Similar to the previous slide, the widening of the Expressway continues with the construction of numerous stormwater management features. The Atlantic City Expressway and Williamstown Road Interchange will have acceleration and deceleration lane improvements and the overpass structure will not be reconstructed. The vertical clearance will be maintained. Impacted existing culverts throughout the project limits will be extended and existing emergency vehicle turnarounds will be improved.

Slide 12:

The Atlantic City Expressway continues to be widened to the inside. The Malaga Road is an overpass over the Atlantic City Expressway and will not be reconstructed with the vertical clearance remaining the same. Malaga Road delineates the start of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission to the East.

The Atlantic City Expressway travels over Great Egg Harbor River. The EB and WB structures will be replaced with wider structures, including the proposed three lanes in each direction and inside and outside shoulders.

Slide 13:

On this slide, the inside widening continues, and the Atlantic City Expressway and West Fleming Pike Interchange is on the right side of the figure. Similar to the other project interchanges, the acceleration and deceleration lanes are improved and the vertical clearance for the structure for West Fleming Pike will remain as existing.

Slide 14:

This slide depicts the eastern terminus of the project where the newly widened Atlantic City Expressway terminates at the existing three lane section to the east.

During Preliminary Engineering, Technical Environmental Studies are being performed for the entire length of the project including Air Quality, Noise, Hazardous Waste, Cultural Resources, Socio-Economic, and Ecology. These studies have been submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for review per Executive Order 215.

Slide 15:

Concept Development was completed in 2022, which included the stakeholder and public information center, public comment period, and concluded with the Preliminary Preferred Alternative.

Since that time, the design team has been working with South Jersey Transportation Authority to progress the Preliminary Preferred Alternative to obtain environmental clearances and refine design elements from Concept Design. The Preliminary Engineering will be completed this Spring.

Final Design will be initiated in the Summer of 2024 and will consist of finalizing the design and developing construction packages, securing environmental permits, and continuing public outreach.

Construction packages are currently being determined and additional information will be provided during Final Design.

Slide 16:

The public comment period is through May 10, 2024. Please look for additional project information at www.acewidening.com and submit any questions or comments to info@acewidening.com.