



Executive Offices
2492 River Road
New Hope, PA 18938-9519
TEL. (215) 862-5284 FAX (215) 862-7665

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Contact: Joe Donnelly or Ethan Vickers
Phone: 215-862-7693 or 412-926-5730

**I-95/SCUDDER FALLS BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
OBTAINS APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

*FHWA'S Finding of No Significant Impact Ends 9-Year Environmental Documentation
Preparation Process; Project Planning Now Moves to Final Design Phase*

NEW HOPE, PA – The I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project took a significant step forward today when the Federal Highway Administration issued a formal Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the project's environmental documentation, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission announced.

The FHWA's determination officially completes a 9-year process of evaluation, analysis, report compilation, public hearings, and peer review regarding the project's compliance with the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

"This is an eagerly awaited regulatory green light," said Frank G. McCartney, the Commission's executive director. "With the FHWA's action, this project shifts out of the concept phase and moves a giant step closer to becoming a reality. This is a herculean leap in the planning process for this important regional transportation project."

The FONSI document was issued June 14, but the Commission did not receive official notification of the determination until today. The document and its related appendices may be viewed today through a link on the home page of the Commission's website: www.drjtbc.org. (It is an 892-page document that may take several minutes to download.) The Commission also is moving to make the document available on the project website and at repositories previously used for public viewing of project materials.

To complete the NEPA process, the Commission filed 870 pages of documentation – a 561-page Environmental Assessment (EA) in December 2009 and a subsequent 65-page Addendum with 224 of pages of corresponding appendices in November 2011. The materials remain available for public viewing at the project website.

The NEPA process, a federal requirement, was carried out in cooperation with the Pennsylvania and New Jersey transportation departments and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). A variety of other federal and state also participated in the process.

The original EA document identified and assessed how the project may impact the environment, including aesthetics, air quality, noise, water quality and aquatic life, historic resources, and cultural resources.

The subsequent Addendum was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts of a cashless tolling system – without tollbooths – that is to be established in the southbound direction at the Scudder Falls Replacement Bridge. (The Commission approved tolling at the replacement bridge in December 2009 citing the absence of federal and state funds and stating that it would be unfair to burden users of the agency’s current seven toll bridges – notably those using I-78, I-80 Route 1 and Route 22 – with the costs of the Scudder Falls project.) The Addendum also officially disclosed the Bridge Commission’s April 2010 decision to include the construction of a bicycle/pedestrian pathway on the new bridge.

Where to View the FONSI

Besides the Commission’s website, the FONSI and appendices will be available for viewing at www.scudderfallsbridge.com, the special website the agency created for the project in October 2003. (This Internet link should become available no later than tomorrow morning.)

Copies of the document also will be made available for viewing at the following seven locations:

- Lower Makefield Township Municipal Building, 1100 Edgewood Road, Yardley, PA. 19067;
- Ewing Township’s Municipal Clerk’s Office, 2 Jake Garzio Drive, Ewing, N.J. 08628;
- The Yardley-Makefield branch of the Bucks County Free Library, 1080 Edgewood Road, Lower Makefield Township, PA .19067;
- The Mercer County Library – Ewing Branch, 61 Scotch Road Ewing, N.J. 08628;
- The DRJTBC’s Administration Building at 110 Wood & Grove Streets Morrisville, PA. 19067;
- The DRJTBC Executive Offices at 2492 River Road, New Hope, PA 18938; and
- PennDOT District 6, 7000 Geerdes Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA. 19406.

Next Steps – Final Design and Construction

With the FONSI determination secured, project preparations can now move to the final design phase, which could take up to 18 months to complete. Construction activities are not anticipated to begin until 2014. The EA documentation states that it could take three to four years to complete all construction activities.

The timeline could change if the Commission were to pursue the project as a public-private partnership (P3). The Governors of Pennsylvania and New Jersey asked the Commission to consider P3 procurement options. Commissioners are evaluating a draft report on whether to use a P3 project-delivery method, but a date for making a “go/no go” decision on a potential P3 process has not been set.

Project Background – More Than Just a Bridge

Currently estimated as a \$328 million regional transportation investment, the I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project is the marquee element of a comprehensive \$1.2 billion capital improvement program the Commission initiated 11 years ago to refurbish, expand and modernize its network of 20 Delaware River crossings and related transportation facilities. Some of the major capital program projects completed under this program include the three-year, \$104 million Trenton-Morrisville (Route 1) Toll Bridge Widening and Rehabilitation Project, the \$50 million I-78 Roadway Rehabilitation in Warren County, N.J. and the \$19 million Delaware Water Gap (I-80) Toll Bridge Rehabilitation.

The Scudder Falls project area will extend 4.4 miles along I-95 -- from the Route 332 interchange in Bucks County, Pa. to the Bear Tavern Road interchange in Mercer County, N.J. The work will include a complete replacement of the existing four-lane Scudder Falls Bridge over the Delaware River with six lanes of through traffic (three in each direction), two auxiliary northbound lanes for entry/exit travel, and one auxiliary southbound lane for entry/exit travel.

Other major components of the project include:

- Widening of I-95 from the Route 332 exit in Pennsylvania to the bridge by adding an additional lane in each direction (widening to the inside of the highway).
- Reconfiguration of the I-95/Taylorsville Road Interchange in Lower Makefield Twp., Pa. by eliminating the existing eastern southbound off-ramp from I-95 and combining it with the existing western southbound off-ramp.
- Reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Route 29 interchange through the use of roundabouts; this option would avoid traffic signals, resulting in a folded diamond interchange with two roundabout intersections at the ramps with I-95.
- A multi-use bicycle/pedestrian pathway on the southbound span; the Commission approved the pathway's inclusion in April 2010.
- Full inside and outside shoulders/breakdown lanes on both bridge spans, a current highway standard requirement; the inside shoulders will be 14-foot wide (two feet wider than the 12-foot width required under current highway design criteria) to allow for future bus-rapid transit routes in the region.
- \$7.5 million of noise-abatement walls along the approach roadways leading to and from the bridge.

Project Need

Contrary to some published reports, the Commission has never stated it is pursuing the project because the current bridge is structurally unsound. Instead, the Commission repeatedly has stressed that the bridge is structurally safe and has done so despite the fact that the bridge is of the same non-redundant, pin-connected two-girder type as the infamous I-95/Mianus River Bridge that collapsed in Connecticut in 1983, killing several motorists. (The Commission took steps in early 1990s to prevent a Mianus-type collapse at the Scudder Falls Bridge.)

According to the volumes of documentation the Commission has filed, the project is being pursued for the following reasons:

- The current bridge is functionally obsolete and needs to be replaced to alleviate recurring current traffic congestion and projected future traffic increases.
- The project is needed to upgrade commuter safety and traffic conditions on the bridge and adjoining highway segments and interchanges in the two states.
- The project will improve mobility and provide a safe and reliable river crossing for vehicles, including interstate commercial shipments.
- The bridge does not meet current Federal Highway Administration or state Department of Transportation standards.
- The facility suffers from roadway geometry that does not meet current standards, an inordinate number of accidents – some of them fatal, and poor operational performance during peak-traffic periods.
- The bridge lacks shoulders for breakdowns and emergencies and it lacks acceleration and deceleration lanes to carry traffic entering or exiting I-95 at two interchanges that were constructed decades ago in close proximity to both ends of the bridge (shoulders and proper auxiliary lanes are required elements for interstates under current design criteria).
- Motorists encounter 700,000 hours of delays annually due to traffic congestion at this location – roadway capacity is inadequate during peak-travel periods.

The congestion and safety problems on the bridge were first articulated in the 1990 *Traffic Study of Trenton-Morrisville Bridge Crossings over the Delaware River*. In 2000, the Commission retained a consultant to conduct the *Southerly Crossings Corridor Study*, which examined ways to meet the future traffic demands of the Scudder Falls Bridge and the three nearby vehicular bridge crossings between Trenton, N.J. and Morrisville, Pa. This study attributed the Scudder Falls Bridge's congestion and safety problems to its narrow configuration and the close proximity of adjoining interchanges.

Public Input

The Commission held a series of publicized meetings and public hearings with respect to the preparation of environmental documentation and the subsequent issuance of the EA and EA Addendum.

There were five stakeholder meetings, 10 public open houses, four presentations with area business groups, four coordination meetings with environmental regulatory agencies, and four meetings with transportation planning agencies. Three public hearings also took place on the project's environmental documentation and one of those hearings was specifically dedicated to the issue of tolling the replacement bridge.

An open house/public hearing on that document on January 19 and 20, 2010 resulted in 382 signed-in attendees, 295 written or e-mailed submittals from the public and advocacy organizations, and 20 addition responses from government agencies and officials. The public hearing the Commission held December 15, 2011 on the EA Addendum attracted

more than 65 signed-in attendees, including 25 people who provided oral or written testimony.

Scudder Falls Bridge Tolling Plan – No Toll Booths

The core focus of the Addendum is the all-electronic cashless tolling facility the Commission plans to construct on or near the Pennsylvania side of the replacement bridge. The Commission plans to use an all-electronic cashless tolling (AECT) system consisting of an overhead gantry supporting E-ZPass toll-tag readers, high-resolution cameras and near-infrared lights.

Vehicles would pass beneath the gantry at highway speeds. Tolls would be collected using the E-ZPass system or through video capture of vehicle license plates and billing.

Such gantries are increasingly being used by toll agencies nationally and internationally to collect tolls while avoiding the congestion drawbacks and environmental impacts associated with conventional toll plazas. The Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway (in New Jersey) are two major toll roads where cashless tolling is being actively considered.

The Commission already owns and operates two open-road-tolling gantries at the agency's I-78 and Delaware Water Gap (I-80) toll bridges, where Express E-ZPass service – toll paying at highway speeds – is offered adjacent to conventional barrier toll booth plazas.

The recommended method of toll paying at the Scudder Falls Bridge would be through E-ZPass. Non-E-ZPass customers would be billed by mail through the video capture of license plates. An administrative fee would be attached to each non-E-ZPass transaction. Non-E-ZPass customers who pre-register their license plates with the Commission would be charged lower fees than customers who do not register their license plates.

The Commission has not determined toll rates or the schedule of administrative fees for the new bridge.

The administrative fees for non-E-Z Pass customers are necessary because the cost to the Commission to collect video tolls is significantly higher than the cost to collect tolls via E-ZPass. The fees help offset the cost of looking up vehicular information, printing and mailing the statement and any subsequent actions needed to recover the toll.

Analyses conducted prior to the issuance of the Addendum concluded that up to 84 percent of customers at the new bridge would be E-ZPass users. The Addendum states that the Commission will conduct E-ZPass sign-up efforts in the region prior to implementation of tolling at the bridge.

Traffic Diversion Findings

The analytical work in the EA Addendum shows that, during peak travel times, the volume of traffic using the Scudder Falls Replacement Bridge will not be appreciably

different than the volume of traffic that would use the existing bridge without a toll. The Addendum also stated that the environmental consequences disclosed in the original EA document will remain valid once cashless tolling is implemented and that cashless tolling will have “little or no additional effects on natural and human resources in the project area.”

The Addendum’s diversion findings are based on traffic study work that was conducted to gain an understanding of potential impacts to local roadway and other bridges in the region, including the Washington Crossing Toll-Supported Bridge to the north and three Trenton-area bridges to the south – the Trenton-Morrisville (Route 1) Toll Bridge, Lower Trenton (“Trenton Makes”) Toll-Supported Bridge, and Calhoun Street Toll-Supported Bridge.

Facility History – Facility More than 50 Years Old

The 50th anniversary of the Scudder Falls Bridge’s official opening was in June 2011. While construction of the 1,740-foot span was completed on October 29, 1959, the bridge did not open to traffic until June 22, 1961 due to incomplete highway approaches on both sides of the river. The bridge was built by a contractor hired jointly by Pennsylvania and New Jersey and the two states annually paid the Commission to maintain and operate the bridge until July 1, 1987, when they transferred ownership of the Scudder Falls Bridge and 12 other non-tolled Delaware River spans to the DRJTBC.

The bridge was not built with federal interstate highway funds. Its construction was financed half with federal highway money (non-interstate program) and half by the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Scudder Falls construction project took 1 year, 2 months, and 22 days to complete. It was one of six bridges that were built within the Commission's jurisdictional limits during the 1950s.

The bridge is a 10-span structure, consisting of two-span continuous steel-plate girders with alternating cantilever suspended spans and a concrete deck.

The bridge was the Commission’s most heavily used span during the past decade. The bridge carried an average of 57,500 vehicles per day in 2011.

Future Concerns – Traffic Volumes Projected to Grow

Congestion on the current Scudder Falls Bridge results in average delays for motorists of 27 minutes per day. Those delays are expected to grow more severe, with traffic volumes on the existing bridge projected to rise above 70,000 vehicles per day by the year 2030. Enhancing safety also is a major project goal, since approximately 105 accidents occur within the project-area limits each year, including the bridge, its interchanges and approach roadways.

More Project Information

For more information, individuals should access the project Web site – www.scudderfallsbridge.com – or call the project information line at 1-800-879-0849.

About the Commission

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission was formed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey in 1934. It operates seven toll bridges and 13 toll-supported bridges, two of which are pedestrian-only spans. The Commission is a self-supporting public-service agency that receives neither federal nor state tax dollars to finance its projects or operations. Funding for the operations, maintenance and upkeep of its bridges and related transportation facilities is solely derived from revenues collected at its toll bridges. The Commission's jurisdiction extends along the Delaware River from the Philadelphia-Bucks County line north to the New Jersey/New York border. The bridges carried more than 137.4 million cars and trucks in 2010. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient bridge travel for its customers, please see: www.drijtbc.org.

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