

Mark F. Jehnke, P.E.
Ocean County Engineer

Sean M. Arcia, P.E.
Assistant County Engineer

Gregory L. Smith, P.E.
Assistant County Engineer

Thomas E. Hartman, Jr., P.E.
Chief Engineer

Lukasz Praski, P.E.
Chief Engineer

Lynn A. LaMunyon, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Engineer



Voice (732) 929-2130

Telefax (732) 506-5182

Road Opening Permit (732) 929-2124

Traffic (732) 349-8165

OFFICE OF THE OCEAN COUNTY ENGINEER

129 Hooper Avenue • P.O. Box 2191
Toms River, New Jersey 08754-2191

Virtual Public Information Center

Construction of CR 539 Overpass (Structure No. 1523-031), Whiting-New Egypt Road over Ridge Way at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst September 8, 2025 through September 21, 2025

Presentation Transcript

Slide #	Transcript
1	Hello. On behalf of the project sponsor, Ocean County, and the project designers, Mott MacDonald, we welcome you to this virtual public information center for the Local Preliminary Engineering Phase of the County Route 539 project, at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst located in the Plumsted and Jackson Townships, of Ocean County, New Jersey. This virtual information center follows the previous one held during the Local Concept Development Phase and will be live for two weeks from September 8 th through September 21 st . At any time during this period, all members of the public are welcome to visit the project website at cr539atjbmdl.com , to view this presentation, view frequently asked questions, review additional project information, and submit any additional comments or questions. This process will be explained in more detail later in this presentation.
2	The agenda of this brief presentation will be as follows. We will start with a description of the project location and existing conditions, then explain the project purpose and the goals that are guiding the design. Next, we will provide an update on the project status and the work conducted to date. Following that, we will then present the latest design, and finally, we will discuss the project funding and provide an explanation of how you can ask questions or provide feedback.
3	As previously noted, the project is located within the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in the Plumsted and Jackson Townships, about 4 miles north of New Jersey Route 70. This slide shows the approximate project limits outlined in red. You can see here that County Route 539 runs in the approximate north-south direction. This roadway is classified as a rural major collector with an average daily traffic volume of over 10,000 vehicles per day. We would also like to point out Ridge Way, Ridge Way is an unimproved military path running approximately in the east-west direction. We will expand on the importance of this path further in the presentation. As part of their operations, Joint Base traffic occasionally needs to cross from one side of the roadway to the other. Currently this is done by entering County Route 539 at the southern end of the Equipment Concentration Area and traveling to the north at the "Hole-in-the-Wall" where they exit the road. This travel introduces operational challenges, traffic delays, and safety risks for both the public and the military.
4	This leads us to the project purpose, which is to improve roadway safety and efficiency by providing a safe and efficient military crossing of County Route 539, all the while reducing travel delays for all users.
5	Outside of the primary purpose, the design of the project is also considering several additional goals including, but not limited to, those you see on this slide here. These include minimizing environmental impacts, minimizing or eliminating substandard features, minimizing traffic impacts during construction, avoiding or minimizing impacts to existing utilities on both sides of the roadway, improving traffic operations, and avoiding or minimizing impacts to properties. All of these goals were considered when selecting the Preliminary Preferred Alternative, which we will be described later.
6	This project is being advanced following the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Local Capital Project Delivery Process, which includes 4 general phases: Concept Development, Preliminary Engineering, Final Design, and Construction. The Local Concept Development Phase is complete and had the primary output of selecting a Preliminary Preferred Alternative to be advanced. We are currently in the Local Preliminary Engineering Phase where we are performing preliminary engineering for the Preliminary Preferred Alternative, as well as, evaluating project impacts and preparing the necessary environmental documentation. The next phase is Final Design where we will complete the engineering, obtain all necessary permits, and prepare the necessary documents for public advertisement for construction.
7	Here is an overall anticipated schedule. The Concept Development Phase was completed last year, and we are currently in the Preliminary Engineering Phase, scheduled to be completed later this year. Next year we will be advancing the Final Design with Construction starting as early as the fourth quarter of 2026. A more precise construction duration will be determined as the design progresses, but it is preliminarily assumed that the project will take approximately 18 months to construct.

8	Before we review the proposed design, let's recap what was done in the Local Concept Development Phase. During that time, four alternatives were considered and evaluated against the project purpose and needs as well as its goals and objectives. They included a no-build (or do nothing) alternative, grade separations of Ridge Way and County Route 539 by either raising County Route 539 and constructing an overpass over Ridge Way or raising Ridge Way and constructing an overpass over County Route 539, and finally an alternative that introduced an at-grade signalized intersection at the Equipment Concentration Site driveway at the southern end of the project. Ultimately, the raising of County Route 539 over Ridge Way was selected as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative, this is shown in the figure on the right of this screen. Note, that during the Concept Development Phase, it was anticipated that the raised roadway would be on the same alignment as the existing roadway with temporary bypass roadways constructed to maintain traffic during construction. This has since changed and will be described further in a few slides. A public information center was held in July 2024 where these alternatives were presented in detail and can be found on the project website. During this period, a total of 11 comments were received from the public for consideration.
9	Since then, we have been advancing the Local Preliminary Engineering Phase and it has generally consisted of the activities shown on this slide. The design is being advanced to the point that we can accurately identify the overall project limits and the impacts. We are also advancing the utility coordination and accommodation. For this project, we are anticipating the need to relocate overhead utility lines, prior to the start of construction. We are also coordinating with the Joint Base to acquire the necessary property rights to construct the proposed design. In parallel, we are performing a number of environmental technical studies to assess existing environmental constraints and identify and mitigate impacts. Finally, through this Public Information Center, we are continuing to perform public outreach. All of these things have the ultimate goal of preparing and seeking approval of a Categorical Exclusion document which is a federal requirement under the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, a final report with preliminary drawings and cost estimates will be prepared for review by the various agencies.
10	As part of the Preliminary Engineering Phase, design of the Preliminary Preferred Alternative has advanced with some improvements. First, you will notice that the project limits have increased to the north and south to address the substandard features at the curves at each end of the project. Second, the proposed road will now be constructed slightly to the west, allowing the work to be performed offline and traffic to be maintained on the existing roadway during construction instead of via temporary bypass roads. The offline construction also allows utility relocations to be done ahead of time, reducing the construction duration overall. On this slide you will see an overall colorized plan with a zoomed in insert to explain the key features. The yellow here represents the proposed roadway, just west of the existing roadway, illustrated in grey. It's important to note that a portion of the existing roadway will become a permanent access road following the completion of construction. In red, illustrates the bridge and the long retaining walls that run parallel to the alignment, and will be constructed to support the elevated County Route 539. This elevation can be seen on the profile here. It is difficult to see on this slide, but the existing grade is shown as dashed and the proposed grade as solid. Note that there is a 10 to 1 vertical exaggeration, so the grade is not nearly as steep as it appears (only 3%). Finally, the light blue areas represent proposed shallow drainage swales that will be constructed on either side of the roadway to treat and control the release of stormwater during rain events.
11	Here you can see a final typical section of the corridor near the middle of the project looking south. I would like to point out a few things. This is the new elevated roadway constructed to the west of the existing roadway, shown here. You can also see that a portion of the existing roadway will remain as a permanent access road, as we previously mentioned. Please also note that the existing overhead utilities along the east side of the existing roadway will be shifted prior to construction to the west side of the roadway.
12	This slide shows the proposed configuration during construction. The important thing to note here is that traffic on the existing County Route 539 will be maintained at all times during construction with only limited overnight closures needed for final paving and tie ins. A temporary concrete traffic barrier will be installed along County Route 539 and both lanes will be shifted to the east, as much as possible, to provide sufficient room for construction and maintain the safety of the public.
13	This slide shows the proposed County Route 539 typical section on the proposed overpass bridge looking south. You can see that the new roadway will include the same number of lanes as the existing roadway, but will be widened nominally to provide standard 8 foot wide shoulders versus the existing 4 to 5 foot shoulders.
14	This is a section of Ridge Way underneath the proposed overpass bridge looking east. The bridge will provide at least 16 1/2 feet of vertical clearance and 30 feet of horizontal clearance for exclusive use by military vehicles. Ridge Way will remain an unpaved pathway under the bridge.
15	A common question that has been received is with regards to the project's cost and funding. The project is currently estimated to cost between \$10 and \$15 million. Approximately eighty percent of the project will be paid for by federal funds that have already been allocated by the United States Congress as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. The remaining portion will be matched by Ocean County. These funds are being administered and authorized through the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Division of Local Aid and Economic Development.
16	As noted in the beginning of this presentation, we will welcome any comments or questions from the public. They may be submitted from September 8 th through September 21 st via the project's website (and again that address is cr539atjbmdl.com). Alternatively, they can be submitted via e-mail or mail to Matthew Colon of Mott MacDonald. His contact information can be found on this slide and also on the website. If and as appropriate, the project team will respond to any inquiries received. Frequently Asked Questions will also be updated during the comment period if repetitive questions are noted.
17	Thank you again for taking the time to listen to this presentation and for your interest in this important project. Ocean County is committed to developing transportation improvements that best balance transportation needs, the environment, community concerns, and costs, and looks forward to the successful completion of this project. Please stay tuned for future public information centers as the project progresses. Thank you.