

**PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

Utilize the *Route 1 – Penn’s Neck Area* traffic and safety needs as the framework for developing a model Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process that embraces the principles of Context Sensitive Design, including flexible design, respectful communications and negotiation and conflict resolution.

**PROJECT APPROACH**

The Penns Neck Area EIS will be undertaken in three (3) phases; however, all the tasks described herein are intended to be completed in a seamless process without interruption. **Phase I** includes background project familiarization and the design and initiation of a public involvement process for the “scoping” phase of the EIS analysis and to begin to screen the mobility strategies/alternatives that emerge from the scoping process. **Phase II** will involve: a) continuation of the public involvement process begun in Phase I; b) working with the project roundtable and technical team to complete the preliminary analysis and screening of the mobility strategies identified as part of the Phase I scoping process; c) working with the project roundtable and technical team to complete detailed impact analysis on the strategies remaining after the preliminary screening; d) working with the technical team to develop the DEIS document for publication; and e) facilitation of a public hearing on the DEIS. **Phase III** will involve: a) working with the project roundtable and technical team to complete final strategy screening; b) working with project roundtable and the technical team to complete additional impact analyses, as needed, based on the outcome of the public hearing; and c) working with the technical team to prepare the Final EIS for publication.

PHASE	MONTH			
	6	12	18	24
I. Scoping				
II. DEIS				
III. FEIS				

**PHASE I – SCOPING (Months 1-6)**

**Task 1 – Project administration**

Provide project oversight, accounting, pre/post meeting logistics and documentation, and other administrative support associated with execution of the work program described herein. While listed only as part of Phase I, it should be understood that this task will apply throughout the duration of the project.

**Task 2 – Conduct literature review, NJDOT briefings and site visits**

The project team will work with NJDOT and its planning/engineering consultant, F.R. Harris, to compile and review current regional, county and municipal master plans and transportation plans; available data; previous transportation studies, plans, and environmental documents prepared by and for NJDOT relevant to the study area; and to investigate best practices in public involvement for transportation decision-making and the preparation of EIS documents in the current environmental and transportation policy

framework. In addition, site visits and briefings with NJDOT staff will be conducted to ensure that the project team has a working knowledge of the physical environment, transportation system and community context within the study area.

### **Task 3 – Design and initiate a public involvement process**

In close consultation with NJDOT, a project advisory committee or “Project Roundtable” will be established. The Project Roundtable should have a strong community orientation and should be comprised of representatives from the project team, local officials, key community constituencies, NJDOT, NJ Transit, NJDEP, FHWA, USEPA, DVRPC, and other key stakeholders (to be determined) to assist in the development of a public involvement strategy for Phase I of the EIS process and to inform and advise the EIS process as it progresses. The goal will be to design a process that can achieve consensus on:

- the goals and objectives for the public involvement process;
- “rules of engagement” that will govern the process from start to completion, including an agreed process schedule (no more than 2 years) with defined decision points;
- the problem statement on the nature of the transportation problem(s) to be addressed;
- vision statement and objectives for addressing the problem(s) identified;
- the scope of the study area;
- a process by which strategies/alternatives will be screened, including clear and understandable decision criteria;
- the information/analyses needed to support screening decisions; and
- an annotated list of interim and long term mobility solutions to be evaluated in the next phase of the DEIS.

The project team will work in close consultation with NJDOT’s Office of Community Relations to ensure that the public involvement process complies with *NJDOT Public Involvement Action Policy* and any other state or federal regulations (NEPA, ISTEA, TEA-21, etc.) governing the preparation of an EIS. The Project Roundtable will meet monthly, or more often as needed, throughout the process.

It is anticipated that the process will begin with a series of interviews with transportation/mobility providers, local elected officials, community constituency groups, and other stakeholders as needed to promote a full understanding of the issues to be addressed and the current sentiments of those likely to participate in the process. In addition, early involvement efforts will include one public “scoping” forum. It is further anticipated that the process will also include a series of smaller public “listening sessions,” open houses, issue specific focus groups, workshops/“place-making” sessions, and other steps as needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the public involvement process.

Finally, the project team will work with NJDOT and F.R. Harris to develop an information dissemination strategy. This strategy will likely include media coordination (press releases, briefings, etc.), production and distribution of a newsletter, assistance with the creation and maintenance of a project website and the establishment of a project

listserv to ensure an open and continuous flow of information about the process and project to interested parties.

This task includes the following:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>No.</u>
Interviews	75
Public “Scoping” session (early in process)	1
Project “Roundtable” meetings (Advisory Committee)	10
Small group listening sessions	40
Issue groups/workshops	8
Open Houses (end of 6 months)	1
Project team meetings	12
Newsletters	6
Website materials (initial content design & 5 updates)	6

**Task 4 – Coordinate with and review the work of technical consultants**

At this time it is anticipated that all planning, engineering and environmental analyses will be performed by F.R. Harris, Inc. and that any required traffic analyses will be conducted by others. It is also assumed that FR Harris will write the DEIS and FEIS documents. The project team will communicate and coordinate with the technical consultants to ensure that any analyses required as part of the Phase I – Scoping process are completed in conformance with federal and state laws and in a way that complements the process. The project team will review all analyses and outputs and provide comment back to the technical consultants and the Department.

**Task 5 – Initiate process for screening mobility strategies/alternatives.**

The project team will work with the Project Roundtable and the technical consultants to begin the process of screening the mobility strategies/alternatives that emerge from the public involvement process described in Task 3 and in accordance with parameters of the screening procedures agreed to by the Project Roundtable. It is anticipated that this preliminary screening will result in three tiers of strategies/alternative, including: 1) strategies that clearly will not meet the goals and objectives for the project; 2) strategies that may warrant additional analysis; and 3) strategies that clearly warrant further detailed analysis.

**Task 6 – Coordinate with the Central NJ Transportation Forum (CNJTF)**

The project team will coordinate with the CNJTF public advisory committee and DOT working group.

**Task 7 – Design and launch project website**

The project team will design, launch and maintain a publicly accessible project website to be hosted by Rutgers University. It is anticipated that the website will contain general information regarding the EIS process, the project team, contact information, electronic versions of the project newsletter, and other information deemed appropriate on an as needed basis.

**Task 8 – Prepare interim report on Phase I**

Based on the outcomes of the Phase I public involvement process, an interim report will be prepared. This report will document the issues raised during the process and the points of agreement regarding the items listed under Task 4. The report will also include an annotated list of the conceptual strategies/alternatives (including a no-build alternative) to be evaluated in the next phase of the EIS analyses. It is not anticipated that a preferred alternative will be selected at this stage in the process. The format and content of the document will be geared to the lay audience so that the information is easily understood by the general public. The content of the report will be supported by technical information and/or analyses as appropriate and will be attached to the report as appendices.

**PHASE II – DEIS (Months 7-18)**

**Task 1 – Maintain on-going public involvement process and communication function**

The public involvement process and communication strategy launched as part of Phase I will be continued. The goal of Phase II will be to maintain the active engagement of the Project Roundtable and an open line of communication with the public throughout the strategy screening and impact analysis process. Phase II will culminate with a public hearing planned in close consultation with NJDOT and F.R. Harris.

As envisioned, the hearing will be an all day event with daytime and evening sessions. This will provide a formal opportunity for receiving broad-based input on the DEIS. It is anticipated that an all-day information center/open house will be conducted in conjunction with the hearing to enable the public to informally review project exhibits and discuss the technical studies, alternatives under consideration, and DEIS with project staff. Interactive computer graphics, user-friendly exhibits, and a videotape of the official hearing presentation will encourage maximum participation in the hearing process. Widespread notification of DEIS availability and the public hearing will include display ads, letters of invitation, and media announcements. Documentation of the hearing will include the official transcript, as well as an executive summary detailing the hearing proceedings and recapping statements received at the hearing or submitted during the designated comment period.

Phase II will include the following:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>No.</u>
Project “Roundtable” meetings (Advisory Committee)	12
Small group meetings/presentations	40
Issue groups/workshops	6

Open Houses	2	
Public Hearing		1
Project team meetings	24	
Newsletters/Website Updates	12	

**Task 2 – Coordinate with and review the work of technical consultants**

The project team will continue to communicate and coordinate with F.R. Harris and other technical consultants to ensure that the analyses conducted as part of Phase II are completed in conformance with federal and state laws and in a way that complements the process. The project team will review all analyses and outputs from the technical consultants and provide comment back to the technical team and the Department. The project team will assist in writing the sections of the DEIS pertaining to the public involvement process.

**Task 3 – Continue strategy screening process**

The project team will continue to work with the Project Roundtable and the technical consultants to screen the mobility strategies/alternatives that emerged from the public involvement process described in Phase 1 – Task 3 and in accordance with parameters of the screening procedures agreed to by the Project Roundtable. It is anticipated that this task will result in two categories of mobility strategies to be included in the DEIS document. Category 1 will include those strategies that were considered but for documented reasons have been eliminated from further detailed investigation. These strategies will be presented in brief. Category 2 will include those mobility strategies that warranted further detailed impact analyses.

**Task 4 – Coordinate with the Central NJ Transportation Forum (CNJTF)**

The project team will continue to coordinate with the CNJTF public advisory committee and DOT working group.

**Task 5 – Assemble and convene expert panel**

Given the history of the Penn’s Neck area project, the analysis and screening of mobility strategies is likely to be very controversial. One way to ensure the on-going credibility of the process is to periodically assemble and convene a panel of experts on specific areas of concern to project participants. This panel can be convened at critical points in the process to act as an independent reviewer of the impact assessment methodologies and the outputs derived from applying the methodologies to specific mobility strategies under consideration.

**Task 6 – Prepare interim report on Phase II**

Based on the outcomes of the Phase II public involvement process, an interim report will be prepared. This report will document the issues raised during the process and results of the preliminary strategy screening and impact analyses. In addition, it will include a summary of the public hearing held on the DEIS and an executive summary of the hearing for broad dissemination. The format and content of the document will be geared to the lay audience so that the information is easily understood by the general public. The content of the report will be supported by technical information and/or analyses as appropriate and will be attached to the report as appendices.

**PHASE III – FEIS (Months 19-24)**

**Task 1 – Maintain on-going public involvement process and communication function**

The public involvement process and communication strategy carried out as part of Phase I and II will be continued. The goal of Phase III will be to maintain the active engagement of the Project Roundtable and an open line of communication with the public throughout the final strategy screening and impact analysis phase of the process.

Phase III will include the following:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>No.</u>
Project “Roundtable” meetings (Advisory Committee)	6
Small group meetings/presentations	20
Issue groups/workshops	4
Open Houses	1
Project team meetings	12
Newsletters/Website Updates	6

**Task 2 – Coordinate with and review the work of technical consultants**

The project team will continue to communicate and coordinate with F.R. Harris and other technical consultants to ensure that the analyses conducted as part of Phase III are completed in conformance with federal and state laws and in a way that complements the process. The project team will review all analyses and outputs from the technical consultants and provide comment back to the technical team and the Department. The project team will assist in writing the sections of the FEIS pertaining to the public involvement process.

**Task 3 – Coordinate with the Central NJ Transportation Forum (CNJTF)**

The project team will continue to coordinate with the CNJTF public advisory committee and DOT working group (If CNJTF is still active)

**Task 4 – Assemble and convene expert panel**

As needed.

**Task 5 – Prepare final report**

Based on the outcomes of the overall public involvement process, a final report will be prepared. This report will incorporate the Phase I and Phase II reports and present the outcomes of Phase III and the FEIS. In addition, the report will present the Penn’s Neck Area EIS experience in a format that would support NJDOT replicating the process for future environmental impact statement analyses. The format and content of the document will be geared to the lay audience so that the information is easily understood by the general public. The content of the report will be supported by technical information and/or analyses as appropriate and will be attached to the report as appendices.

**Task 6 – Produce training video**

The project team will work closely with the Department and an outside media consultant to script and produce a training video on the EIS process developed for this project.

## **PROJECT DELIVERABLES**

Interim Report on Phase I – An interim report on Phase I will be prepared. This report will include an annotated list of conceptual strategies/alternatives (including a no-build alternative) to be evaluated in the next phases of the EIS analyses, a summary of the issues raised during the process, and documentation regarding the agreements reached relative to the items listed under Task 4. The format and content of the report will be geared to the lay audience, so that the information is easily understood by the general public. The content of the report will be supported by technical information and/or analyses, as appropriate, and will be attached to the report as appendices.

Interim Report on Phase II – An interim report on Phase II will be prepared. This report will include documentation on the results of the preliminary screening of mobility strategies and a summary of the issues raised during the process. The format and content of the report will be geared to the lay audience, so that the information is easily understood by the general public. The content of the report will be supported by technical information and/or analyses, as appropriate, and will be attached to the report as appendices.

Final Report - The Penn's Neck Area EIS experience will be presented in a format that would support NJDOT replicating the process for future environmental impact statement analyses.

Educational Video – An educational video will be produced to facilitate the replication of the EIS process in the future.

Minutes – Record of all stakeholder interviews and minutes of all meetings.

Project website hosted by Rutgers University

Miscellaneous print and electronic documents – Materials as needed in support of the information dissemination and communication strategy developed in Task 3 will be produced.