

The existing Highlands Bridge is in need of major rehabilitation or replacement. In response to this condition, NJDOT proposes to eliminate structural deficiencies and substandard features, and improve safety and traffic operations at the bridge and along its approaches.

The Proposed Project

The proposed recommended alternative plan will replace the existing double leaf bascule with a 65 foot high fixed structure that would be constructed with a slight shift (35-40 ft.) in the alignment to the south at the channel but meets the existing alignment at the east and west abutments in Highlands and Sea Bright. The bridge deck will be widened to provide for a center median and shoulders. The proposed structure would result in elimination or reduction of many existing substandard features such as bridge structural deficiencies, substandard design features and vehicular and marine traffic conflicts. Improvements to both the eastern and western approaches to the bridge, new turn around within the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway Recreational Area and bicycle/pedestrian connectivity throughout the project limits will be included in this project.

Project Cost

The estimated cost for this project is \$70 million, not including engineering or environmental mitigation. This project is anticipated to be funded by Federal funds.

Community Relations

The NJDOT is committed to developing the bridge replacement project that satisfies local and regional transportation needs and safety concerns. Residents from the surrounding area are encouraged to actively participate by attending Public Information Centers and providing comments and input. By participating in the Public Information Center, interested citizens can provide insight and suggestions, which will assist in developing the most appropriate, cost effective and environmentally sensitive solution for improving the transportation needs within their community.

Impacts

- The new bridge will restrict navigation to vessels of 65 ft. height.
- The new profile and alignment will result in the need for construction/maintenance easements but at this time no additional ROW takings are anticipated.
- The revision of the Toll Plaza and associated roadways within NPS property will result in wetland impacts.
- Eight driveways within the project area will be impacted.

Environmental Review Process

The environmental review and analysis will be performed in accordance with Federal Laws and FHWA guidelines pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, in conformance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and pursuant to National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The Route 36 Highlands Bridge was determined individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on June 6, 1991. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the proposed project with respect to the positive and negative social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Next Steps in the Process

- Address comments received from the Public Information Center and incorporate them into the recommended alternative where appropriate.
- Tentatively begin design in Spring 2003.
- Tentatively acquire right of way 2004, and
- Tentatively begin construction in 2005.

For Further Information Contact:

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MEETING INFO	Public Information Center
	Monday, September 30, 2002, 4:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. Henry Hudson Regional School, One Grand Tour, Highlands Borough
	Tuesday, October 1, 2002, 3:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Sea Bright Borough Hall, 1167 Ocean Avenue, Sea Bright Borough
	Wednesday, October 2, 2002, 3:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Auditorium (Chapel), Sandy Hook Gateway National Park

**Proposed Replacement of Route 36 Highlands Bridge
 Highlands Borough/Sea Bright Borough
 Monmouth County**

The Meeting

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) cordially invites you to attend an informal Public Information Center on either September 30, October 1, or October 2, 2002, at the locations noted above. Each meeting will present the proposed recommended alternative plan for the replacement of the Route 36 Highlands Bridge. In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the United States Coast Guard, Highlands Borough, Sea Bright Borough and National Parks Service (NPS), the NJDOT has developed this plan to address existing substandard structural deficiencies, geometric deficiencies, safety concerns, and existing and future traffic needs for navigation, vehicles and bicycle/pedestrians. This plan is the culmination of an extensive data collection effort, alternatives analysis and Community Partnering Team meetings including local officials. The evaluations have included impacts on the environment, right of way (ROW), cost, and quality of life.

The Project Background

Opened to traffic in 1933, the Route 36 Bridge is a four-lane structure consisting of 11 simple fixed spans and one double leaf bascule span. Each lane is 11 feet wide. No shoulders are provided on the almost quarter-mile long bridge.

There are approximately 2,200 bridge openings annually. Delays approaching the bridge are exacerbated when Route 36 is closed during bridge openings, particularly during the summer months. These conditions impact emergency services in the area. The bridge opens regularly twice an hour throughout the day during the heavily traveled summer season.

A related seasonal issue concerns days when the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreational Area fills its parking lots to capacity. On those days, traffic is closed to the Park and directed to Ocean Avenue southbound (Route 36 eastbound) into Sea Bright, resulting in congestion and associated extensive delays. This condition adds to overall congestion and delay on and in the vicinity of the Bridge.

The Existing Problem

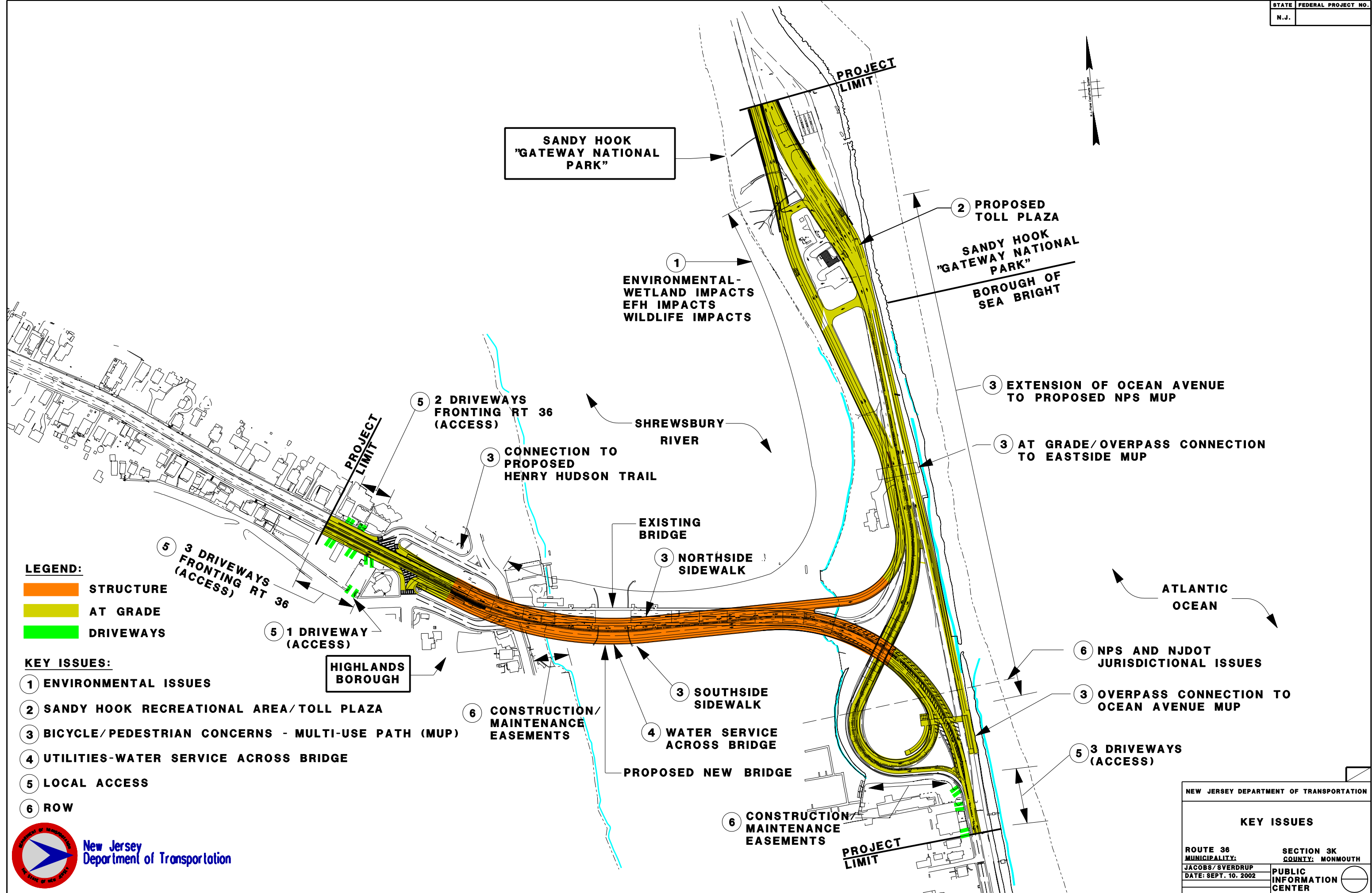
The Route 36 Highlands Bridge is considered a principal “link” within the urban roadway system of the area and must be maintained. During the seasonal months, the frequent bridge openings cause unacceptable delays to local residents and tourists traveling to and from Sandy Hook. These delays are critical in times of emergency, as the Route 36 Highlands Bridge is a planned evacuation route for the residents of Sea Bright as well as an ambulance route for the residents in Highlands.

The bridge is currently rated in poor condition. The bridge is structurally deficient and is functionally obsolete. It has a number of geometric features that either do not meet or meet only minimum current AASHTO and NJDOT design criteria.

The bridge does not provide an efficient crossing for current or forecasted traffic. It has a limited live load capacity and minimal earthquake resistance.

The geometric features that could improve safety on the bridge, such as shoulders and a center median are absent. Lane widths on the Bridge only meet minimal NJDOT standards. The roadway surface on the bascule span and guardrail appurtenances are substandard.





- LEGEND:**
- STRUCTURE
 - AT GRADE
 - DRIVEWAYS

- KEY ISSUES:**
- ① ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
 - ② SANDY HOOK RECREATIONAL AREA/TOLL PLAZA
 - ③ BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN CONCERNS - MULTI-USE PATH (MUP)
 - ④ UTILITIES-WATER SERVICE ACROSS BRIDGE
 - ⑤ LOCAL ACCESS
 - ⑥ ROW

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	
KEY ISSUES	
ROUTE 36	SECTION 3K
MUNICIPALITY:	COUNTY: MONMOUTH
JACOBS/SVERDRUP	PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER
DATE: SEPT. 10, 2002	

