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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTRACT AWARDED FOR SCUDDER FALLS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

NEW HOPE, PA – The Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project took another step forward Monday when the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission awarded a multi-year public involvement consultant services contract to McCormick Taylor, Inc. of Philadelphia, PA.

Under the contract, McCormick Taylor and its team of subconsultants are to prepare and implement a public involvement program that will begin during final design -- which is currently underway -- and continue through construction to project completion in 2021.

Given the length and complexity of this project, the McCormick Taylor team is expected to provide a wide array of tasks, including:

- Development of comprehensive mailing, email and contact lists of project stakeholders.
- Updating the project-specific website.
- Assisting in raising public awareness of major project milestones and travel-route changes.
- Planning and staging events such as open houses, public hearings and other meetings.
- Designing and distributing informational brochures, fact sheets and info-graphics.
- Conducting a multi-medium educational campaign about how the replacement bridge's all-electronic toll collection system will work.
- Encouraging motorists' use of E-ZPass as a means of saving money.
- Mitigating conflicts and disputes.
- Gathering public comment from residents, motorists, business leaders, elected officials and other project stakeholders.

The McCormick Taylor team is expected to work closely with project managers, design consultants, engineers, and the Commission's E-ZPass, communications and community affairs personnel.

"We'd like to get this public outreach effort underway as soon as possible," said Joseph Resta, the DRJTBC's executive director. "With final design underway and moving toward completion next year, we expect a variety of public involvement activities will be needed to advance this project to full construction in 2017."

Public involvement is the process of alerting and engaging the public in capital project planning and execution. Input gained from interested parties on specific projects can enhance the planning process and prevent conflicts and delays during construction.

The Commission has utilized public-involvement practices in a wide variety of capital projects since 2001. A formal policy statement and corresponding internal guidelines efforts for public-involvement programs was adopted in 2009.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, public involvement activities enable transportation agencies to “make better informed decisions through collaborative efforts and builds mutual understanding and trust between the agencies and the public they serve.”

McCormick Taylor was selected to perform public involvement activities for the Scudder Falls project as a result of a competitive procurement process initiated during the spring. The other members of the McCormick Taylor team are Stokes Creative Group, Inc. of Vincentown, N.J.; Shelly Lyons Communications of Harrisburg, PA., Informed Logistics, Inc. of Pennsauken, N.J.; and Undeland Associates of Alexandria, VA.

The group is expected to begin providing consulting services and assistance by November. The McCormick Taylor team is expected to remain engaged with the project until construction is completed and a bridge dedication ceremony is held.

The Commission approved the contract with McCormick Taylor at its monthly meeting on Sept. 28. The cost of the contract is \$1.8 million.

The Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project involves a heavily commuted 4.4-mile portion of the I-95 corridor extending from the Route 332/Yardley-Newtown Road exit in Bucks County, PA. and the Bear Tavern Road/Route 579 exit in Mercer County, N.J. The congestion-prone highway segment is a choke point for job-commuter traffic between Bucks County, PA and Central Jersey.

The nearly 55-year-old bridge and nearby interchanges are classified as functionally obsolete. To address recurring traffic safety and capacity problems at the bridge, its adjoining interchanges and I-95 approaches, the Commission is pursuing a comprehensive project for the highway segment. Project elements include:

- Replace the existing four-lane Scudder Falls Bridge with a twin-span structure carrying six lanes of through traffic (three in each direction), and three auxiliary lanes (two northbound, one southbound) for traffic merging on and off the bridge.
- Overhaul the accident-prone Route 29/175 interchange on the New Jersey side.
- Reconfigure the Taylorsville Road interchange in Lower Makefield, PA. to improve the safety and efficiency of the interchange.
- Make drainage upgrades and other improvements along the approach highway between the Route 29/175 interchange and Bear Tavern Road in New Jersey.
- Inside widening of the Pennsylvania I-95 approach between the Route 332 exit and the bridge by adding an additional lane and full shoulders in each direction.

- Provide a bicycle/pedestrian walkway alongside the main river bridge connecting the recreational canal paths on both sides of the river.
- Construct full inside and outside shoulders on both replacement bridge spans, a current highway standard requirement. (The bridge's inside shoulders will be sized to allow for future bus rapid transit service.)
- Install an all-electronic toll (AET) gantry and related infrastructure in the southbound direction consisting of high-speed E-ZPass tag readers and video cameras for license-plate billing.
- Construct noise-abatement walls along the approach roadways leading to and from the bridge.

Full construction activities are expected to get underway in early 2017. The project is expected to take three to four years to complete. More precise construction start and end dates will be established toward the end of the final design.

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 about 138.2 million cars and trucks in 2014. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient travel for its customers, please see: www.drjtbc.org.