

PLAINSBORO: Schalks crossing project delayed

By Greg Forester, Staff Writer

Posted: Thursday, August 20, 2009 5:21 PM EDT

PLAINSBORO — The pace of planning for work to refurbish the bridge that carries Schalks Crossing Road over the Northeast Corridor tracks has elicited concerns from township officials, who say the span is in disrepair.

The project, which at one point had a \$6.4 million price tag, according to state documents, seeks to replace the “structurally deficient” bridge deck and add wider sidewalks for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, said state Department of Transportation spokesman Tim Greeley.

He said the project is currently in “preliminary design phase” and state officials expect work to commence in late 2011.

Township Mayor Peter Cantu said Thursday that he and other township officials recognize that the nature of the project — one that requires interagency cooperation between state Department of Transportation officials, Amtrak, and other entities — naturally results in delays.

Work on railroad crossings like the Schalks Crossing bridge require special work and timetables to ensure that construction does not interfere with busy railroad lines, like the Northeast Corridor.

But the same officials, however, have growing concerns as they have seen the project pushed back. “We’re concerned about whether this thing keeps moving,” Mayor Cantu said.

To try and move the project forward Mayor Cantu recently held a conference call with DOT Commissioner Stephen Dilts.

During the project discussion Mayor Cantu offered the township’s help, including opening dialogue with federal officials. “We want to make sure it happens,” said Mayor Cantu, who noted Committeeman Michael Weaver has taken the bridge repair on as “a special project.”

State officials are working with Amtrak to develop what’s known as a formal preliminary engineering agreement.

The project will be advertised in June of 2011 with the hope that the project contractor can commence with work in September.

The undertaking should take more than a year to complete, Mr. Greeley said, with the finished bridge ready at the end of 2012.

gforester@centraljersey.com

Close Window

