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**From:** David Mark Brown < >  
**Sent:** Friday, July 01, 2016 1:32 PM  
**To:** DOT Environmental Planning  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Saugatuck Swing Bridge comments  
**Importance:** High

Mark W. Alexander  
Transportation Assistant Planning Director  
CTDOT, Bureau of Policy and Planning  
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131

Dear Mr. Alexander,

My name is David Mark Brown and I have owned the property located at Bridge Street since 1995. Bridge Street is the closest property to the Saugatuck Swing Bridge. I strongly support preservation of the Saugatuck Swing Bridge.

Born and raised in the mountains of East Tennessee. I am a long time resident of New York City. I am an avid but ageing runner and bike rider; an ex-sneaker designer who happens to be writing a novel about a truck driver. More on trucks later.

Question: how did a Southerner, like me, from New York stumble onto Bridge Street???

Answer: In 1994, I rode my bike from the Westport Train Station down the Riverside Avenue hill and across what is know as the Saugatuck Swing Bridge. Yes, I rode my bike across the bridge to Bridge Street and noticed the 'FOR SALE' sign on the property.

I repeat: I RODE MY BIKE ACROSS THE BRIDGE. I also walk my bike across the bridge.

So I, David Mark Brown, would like to make two points.

1) Although I was not at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, I watched the entire 3-½ hour CT DOT CRIBARI BRIDGE STUDY video. Nine minutes into the DOT presentation, we have this statement from the CT DOT presenter:

***“This bridge is also part of the East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway is a 3000-mile urban greenway, a rails-to-trails project linking cities from Florida to Maine for non-motorized human transport. This bridge is not suitable for bikes due to its narrow width.”***

Huh? Since when?

Being a cyclist with no car, one might make the initial impression that the Connecticut Department of Transportation has an understanding or perhaps even a warm spot in their hearts for bike riders AND pedestrians. In my opinion, nothing could be further from the truth!

Why is the CT DOT focused on bike rider safety and pedestrian safety for a distance less than a football field and at the same time proposing to build a 20' wide and nearly 15' high structure that would hurl heavy trucks and speeding cars down Riverside Avenue, Bridge Street, Greens Farms Road, and Compo Road where protected bike paths are non-existent? CT DOT is proposing a

‘catapult’ –not a bridge –that will endanger cyclists, pedestrians, school children, and even those traveling in cars. [see below]

2) The Connecticut Department of Transportation seems clueless of the surrounding areas. On Bridge Street alone there are, not one but, two dangerous [from East and West] ‘doglegs’ before the T-junction where Imperial Avenue runs into Bridge Street [aka the ‘T-bone junction’ as in accidents].

For example, less than a year ago on Bridge Street, a speeding heavy-duty pickup truck swerved to avoid rear-ending a Mercedes turning onto Imperial Avenue. The truck sideswiped the Mercedes on the passenger side and crashed into my stonewall at Bridge Street and knocked over the mailbox. The Mercedes was damaged on the passenger side. The mailbox post was destroyed and about 4 feet of the retaining wall collapsed. If my mailbox had been a pedestrian, we would have had a tragedy. Note: I have photos of this incident.

Yet, the truck that did all that damage *only* had a weight rating of between 15,000 and 20,000 pounds. Imagine for a moment the CT DOT *enabling* Cribari Bridge access for larger trucks – including the lethal 18-wheelers with weight ratings of 80,000 pounds –with weight ratings 3 to 5 times that of a simple pickup truck? Speeding trucks, with no knowledge of the local streets and roads, with stopping distances 40% longer than the average car? Imagine speeding vehicles far heavier than an M4 Sherman tank –with less stopping distances than a Sherman tank –on Riverside Avenue, Bridge Street, Greens Farms Road, and Compo Road?

In New York City, all commercial vehicles (including vans and pickup trucks) are banned from all sections of the FDR Drive. FOR PUBLIC SAFETY.

And in New York City, commercial vehicles in classes 4, 5 and 6 (four-, five- and six-axle trucks) are prohibited from using the Holland Tunnel for public safety but CT DOT’s proposal for "major rehabilitation" or "structure replacement" would allow for even the deadly 18-wheeler Class 6 trucks.

To me, Westport’s Bridge Street having far lower safety standards than NYC’s FDR Drive seems ludicrous.

In conclusion; while others have pointed out that the Saugatuck Swing Bridge is the nation’s oldest, active span of its type and beloved by many in Westport; I also feel that the CT DOT’s "major rehabilitation" or "structure replacement" proposals endanger cyclists, pedestrians, and school children rather than protect them. For these reasons; and the preservation reasons mentioned by many others; the bridge should be repaired and preserved in its current dimensions, not enlarged, raised, moved or replaced. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

David Mark Brown

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Subject: Reminder: DOT's Deadline for Comments This Friday  
From: Info@PreserveWestport.Com  
To:  
Date: Thu, 30 Jun 2016 02:33:44 +0000

Reminder This Friday is DOT'S Comment Deadline!  
[View this email in your browser](#)



## Reminder: This Friday is the Deadline to email your Bridge Comments to DOT.

The WPA wants to thank all of you who have already emailed your comments to DOT. If you haven't already done so, and you're concerned about the preservation of the bridge, we **STRONGLY** urge you to email your comments to DOT by this **FRIDAY, JULY 1st**. This is DOT's deadline for all public comments that will be included in its federally mandated environmental review report.

If you are at a loss for words, below is a template letter that you might consider using. Just cut and paste it into your own email system.

Please send your comments to:

Mark W. Alexander  
Transportation Assistant Planning Director  
CTDOT, Bureau of Policy and Planning  
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131  
Email: [dot.environmentalplanning@ct.gov](mailto:dot.environmentalplanning@ct.gov)  
(and let us know that you did by cc'ing us at [info@PreserveWestport.Com](mailto:info@PreserveWestport.Com))

**TEMPLATE LETTER:**

***Dear Mr. Alexander,***

**I am a Westport resident and I strongly support preservation of the Saugatuck Swing Bridge. The bridge is one of Westport's most important and iconic historical resources and it is greatly valued by those of us who live here and use it every day. It contributes to the special character of Saugatuck Village and it prevents large trucks from using our local streets and endangering pedestrians and bikers.**

**It has been pointed out that the Saugatuck Swing Bridge is the nation's oldest, active span of its type. For this reason, and those mentioned above, the bridge should be repaired and preserved in its current dimensions, not enlarged, raised, moved or replaced. Thank you.**

**Your Name and Contact Info Here**

**Many thanks,**

**Westport Preservation Alliance**



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