

# Traffic patterns on Arrigoni Bridge to change again at the end of January

Published: Friday, January 13, 2012; Last Updated: Saturday, January 14, 2012 12:44 AM EST

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff

MIDDLETOWN – The existing side-by-side traffic pattern on the Arrigoni Bridge is scheduled to change over the weekend of Jan. 28-29.

Westbound traffic into Middletown will continue to use the northern-most lane on the bridge; but eastbound traffic to Portland and beyond will now use the southern-most lane. In the meantime, construction will shift to the middle two lanes.

The state Department of Transportation is in the midst of an estimated 18-month- long renovation of the center span of the nearly 75-year-old bridge across the Connecticut River.

During a meeting this morning at the offices of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, DOT and construction company officials defended themselves against complaints the project has slipped as much as seven weeks behind schedule.

That led to sometimes confusing and even contradictory explanations for the current state of the project.

What's more, the changeover of lanes was originally supposed to take place in the week before Christmas. But when pressed about the seeming delay, Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the DOT official who is overseeing the work, insisted, "The project is on schedule."

"I believe we will finish on time," Fagnoli added.

The work is scheduled to be completed by Oct. 31.

John Johansen, the project supervisor for the contractor, Middlesex Construction, said a delay had been built into the schedule in anticipation of a more typical winter.

That prompted Chamber President Larry McHugh to say, "Suppose we do end up with snow. We could really wind up behind the eight ball."

Both Fagnoli and Johansen disagreed with that assessment, however.

“We will be fully on scheduled by April 30,” Fagnoli insisted.

Johansen concurred, saying Middlesex has overcome some issues that had pushed back the project timeline. “The learning curve is over and the vendor issue is solid,” he said.

Johansen explained that there had been delays in getting bridge decking sections on scene in a timely fashion from the vendor who was fabricating them.

Cromwell Police Chief Anthony J. Salvatore noted that while both the state and contractor had promised to work at least double shifts each day in an effort to speed up the project, now only one shift is working.

In part, the delay in getting the decking sections is the reason that work has gone from the two shifts a day that had been demanded by McHugh to one shift, Johansen said.

Following up on Salvatore’s question, Middletown Acting Police Chief William McKenna said, “We were told that work would probably continue up until 11 p.m. if not 24 hours a day. So why is there not an evening shift?”

“We don’t have the materiel; we’re waiting for the vendor to supply us with the materials,” Johansen responded, “That’s why we haven’t been working two shifts.”

But, he added, 40 sections of grid deck are already on scene for the second phase of the project, and an additional 100 are being fabricated, which Johansen said leaves only 20 sections yet to be made.

At present, Johansen continued, he has 25 men and women working on the bridge from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Once the switch over to the second phase begins, he will split that number of workers in half to staff the two-a-day shifts.

“The controlling factor on the whole thing is when the asphalt plants open,” Johansen said. That usually occurs during the first week of April.

Jeff Mill can be reached by email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com)



## Arrigoni Bridge repairs enters second phase

*Posted: Jan 13, 2012 1:16 PM EST Updated:*  
By WFSB Staff

PORTLAND, CT (WFSB) -

Project leaders involved in the repair of the Arrigoni Bridge say that first phase took longer than they expected because of some delays getting materials in on time from vendors, but they insist phase two of the plan is getting done on time.

"I do not see a problem having stage two completed. When the asphalt plants open, that puts us right back on schedule," said John Johansen, the project superintendent.

When phase two begins in two weeks it will change the way traffic moves over the bridge. Instead of two lanes on one side of the bridge, [vehicles](#) will go to the outside lanes on either side, with construction in the middle.

Officials expect the split lanes to be easier on motorists, but more challenging for emergency responders if something happens on the bridge. They'll be spending the next week coming up with a new plan of action.

"I'd just like to see this project completed sooner rather than later," Portland Police Chief Anthony Salvatore said.

Salvatore, along with 33,000 drivers go over the bridge every day.



## **DOT: Next stage of construction on Arrigoni Bridge scheduled**

By The Connecticut Department of Transportation

Published: **Jan 13, 2012 - 4:43 PM**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is announcing that motorists can expect a change in the traffic pattern on the Arrigoni Bridge in Portland and Middletown beginning Saturday, January 28, 2012, weather permitting, as the next stage of construction begins.

The east and westbound travel lanes will be separated as work on the middle section, referred to as Stage 2, begins. Stage 3, the last stage on the northern side of bridge, is anticipated to begin in mid-May 2012 with overall completion of the project still on schedule for November 2012.

The eastbound travel lane to Portland will be relocated to the south side of the bridge onto the newly installed deck. Westbound traffic to Middletown will continue to travel in the current lane that is in place. Motorists will continue to merge into a single lane approaching the bridge from either the Middletown or Portland sides. View Stage 2 Traffic Diagram by clicking here.

The stage change will begin at 2 p.m on Saturday, with anticipated completion Sunday morning. Weather conditions may require modifying the schedule, with work beginning on Sunday, January 29, 2012 and being completed by Monday at 6 a.m.

The current lane markers with red X's and green arrows will be turned off prior to the stage change operation and will be reactivated once the stage change is completed. The contractor will be relocating barriers, pavement markings and work zone devices as part of the traffic shift.

Motorists can expect alternating one way traffic to be in effect during the stage change. Portable concrete barriers and crash systems will be installed in the two middle lanes of the bridge to allow for work in the center section of the main spans.

### **Pedestrian and Bicyclists Advisory**

The sidewalk located on the north side of the bridge will continue to be open to pedestrians and bicyclists. The sidewalk on the south side will remain closed during Stage 2.

DOT Project No. 0082-0299 was awarded to The Middlesex Corporation on April 26, 2011 at a cost of \$16,946,864.00.

For more information on the Arrigoni Bridge Project visit the Department's website at [www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni](http://www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni). Any questions or comments related to the Arrigoni Bridge should be sent to [DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov](mailto:DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov).

## Officials Vow Arrigoni Work is on Track

The DOT and contractor told business and town leaders today that the project is not seven weeks behind schedule, as rumored.

By [Eileen McNamara](#)

[Email the author](#)

10:32 am

Nicholas C. Mandler, a DOT engineer, explains the next phase of the project during Friday's meeting of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.



Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)

Officials from the region who attended a meeting today in Middletown on the Arrigoni Bridge reconstruction project expressed concerns that the work might not finish on time this year.

During the morning meeting hosted by the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, officials with the state's Department of Transportation and the contractor doing the bridge work assured local leaders that the work will be done on schedule by November.

"The project is on schedule and we believe we're going to finish on time," said Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the DOT engineer coordinating the bridge project.

Chamber president Larry McHugh said some business owners in the city's north end and on the Portland side of the bridge have expressed concerns because they've heard rumors that the project is seven weeks behind schedule.

Fagnoli and representatives for the contractor said that rumor is not true. While the bridge work fell a few weeks behind schedule during the first phase of the project in the fall, the second phase, which begins in two weeks, will move along much faster, putting the project back on track.

But some officials who attended the meeting questioned why the work is behind schedule at all and why, given the warm, snow-free winter so far, it isn't ahead of schedule.

"I thought ... they'd be ahead more than they are, especially with this weather," said Anthony Salvatore, Cromwell's police chief.

DOT officials said the project fell behind because of delays in the delivery of materials, a situation that was not under the contractor's or DOT's control. They also said that while workers will make up that lost time this spring, they can't begin laying the asphalt on the new bridge decking until the state's asphalt plants open for the spring in the first or second week of April.

Middletown Acting Police Chief William McKenna said he hopes the project wraps up on time because it is beginning to take a financial toll on the city. McKenna said he recently went to the Common Council with a request for an additional \$100,000 for his department for extra police coverage on Main Street and the bridge. The council gave him \$50,000 instead.

"It's a financial impact to the businesses and to us as a city," he said.

McHugh asked if the state had any funds available to offset the city's cost for the additional police coverage, but Fagnoli said the project is running nearly \$1 million over budget.

The second phase of the project will start the weekend of Jan. 28 when workers will shift the flow of traffic to the two lanes that are now closed. To do that, only one lane of the bridge will remain open starting at 2 p.m. on Jan. 28 through Jan. 29. Two lanes will reopen in time for the morning commute on Jan. 30, officials said.



Editor [Cassandra Day](#): Send your news tips, comments or ideas to [cassandra.day@patch.com](mailto:cassandra.day@patch.com)

## Motorists Urged to Remember Arrigoni Bridge Construction

Middletown Police ask drivers not to block intersections closest to the bridge repair off Main Street.

- 9:45am October 20, 2011

DOT construction barrels line the roadway on the Portland side of Route 66 leading up to the bridge.

Photos (2)

### Photos



Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)



Credit Connecticut DOT

Due to the ongoing construction to the Arrigoni Bridge, the Middletown Police Department is reminding motorists not to block intersections. In particular, Main Street at Washington Street, Main Street at Grand Street/Rapallo Avenue, and St. John's Square.

Motorists should not enter an intersection when it obstructs or impedes traffic. Motorists who violate State Statute are subject to fine.

Additionally, the Middletown Fire Department would also like to remind motorists not to block the boxed area in front of the firehouse

# Arrigoni Bridge project two weeks behind schedule

Published: Friday, September 30, 2011; Last Updated: Fri. Sep 30, 2011, 2:01am

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff



MIDDLETOWN – The renovation of the center span on the Arrigoni Bridge has fallen some two weeks behind schedule at the same time as officials have revised the cost of the project upwards by nearly \$2 million.

But a spokesman for the contractor and the senior DOT official in the charge of the project both say they expect to make up the time as more pieces of decking become available

Kenneth E. Fagnoli, a DOT assistant district engineer, said the increased cost would not affect the project. The increased cost includes repairs to the sidewalks on the bridge and replacing all the rail posts on the bridge.

Neither project “will extend the contract time,” Fagnoli said.

The original cost of the repair project, which is expected to take 18 months, was \$17 million. That number has now grown to \$19.8 million, Fagnoli said.

Middletown’s acting police chief and the city’s mayor, meanwhile, are demanding that more be

done to ease traffic congestion in the downtown area.

Acting Chief Patrick McMahon and Mayor Sebastian Giuliano pressed DOT officials to allow traffic on Washington Street to turn north onto route 9.

At present, traffic from Washington Street/Route 66 can only turn south onto Route 9.

Nicholas Mandler, a traffic engineer with the transportation department said the DOT opposes allowing left turns from Washington Street onto Route 9 north because of safety concerns.

But McMahon, Giuliano, and especially Chamber President Larry McHugh said downtown businesses are suffering because gridlocked traffic trying to use Main Street to get onto the bridge.

Until now, two contractors have been manufacturing the steel grid decking; that number is about to be doubled, however, according to Tom Woods, the representative for The Middlesex Corp, the repair contractor.

Once that happens, “We expect to be back on schedule by Oct. 14,” Woods told participants at Friday’s meeting on the bridge project. The meetings are held at the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce’s Main Street headquarters.

In fact, Woods said, he added a second shift, a night shift this week, as the delivery of the grid deck picked up.

“When it arrives, it comes right off the truck and onto the bridge,” Woods said.

Mandler said once schools reopened in September, traffic on the bridge increased. But, Mandler said, “I think things are getting a little better, as more people flex their schedules.”

McMahon was quick to disagree, however.

If anything, it’s gotten worse, the chief said. “We’re finding a lot of people are going down Washington and going up DeKoven” and coming back out onto main street from Rappallo Avenue.

“Boots on the ground, we’re seeing it much worse, and businesses are seeing it worse,” the chief added in appealing for the DOT to consider reopening the 9 north entrance from Washington Street.

McHugh said the continuing closure of Exit 14 off Route 9 is only adding to congestion along DeKoven as drivers are forced to get off at exit 15 instead.

DOT officials said a contractor working on the exit had struck a drainage system at exit 14, creating an expanding sinkhole.

McHugh said whatever the underlying problem is, the continuing closure of exit “compounds the problems.”

“Maybe you could tell the guys doing exit 14 to get moving,” McHugh said, explaining, “They are causing piggyback problems.”

A DOT official said the contractor is studying ways to remedy the situation.

That prompted Giuliano to observe, “They can take all the time they want to ‘think about it’ – if they reopen the exit.”

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply

## Arrigoni Work is Behind Schedule and Over Budget

But DOT officials say the delay and budget increases won't affect the completion date for the work.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) September 30, 2011



This is what the Arrigoni Bridge looks like to residents of the Miller and Bridge streets area, which is closed off to through-traffic.

Photos (1)

### Photos



Credit [Cassandra Day](#)

The Arrigoni Bridge project is about two weeks behind schedule and its budget has increased by nearly \$2 million since the project started this spring, but neither of those changes in the now \$19 million repair project will delay it, state traffic officials told local business leaders and town officials this morning.

Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the state Department of Transportation engineer overseeing the project, said the \$17 million budget has been increased by nearly \$2 million to pay for unforeseen costs and changed work orders, including \$800,000 for additional police patrols on and near the bridge in Middletown and Portland, as well as \$600,000 to repair sidewalks leading up to the bridge and \$500,000 to replace rotting handrails.

Fagnoli's report came during a regular meeting Friday morning of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce committee monitoring the Arrigoni Bridge project.

And while the project is currently running 14-16 days behind schedule, Fagnoli said the delay is not expected to affect the anticipated completion date of next fall.

"We don't believe, at this time, that it's going to impact the overall timeframe of the project," Fagnoli said.

The construction delay, he added, resulted from tie-ups in the manufacturing and delivery of the replacement steel decking for the bridge.

Local officials raised several concerns about the project during the meeting.

Middletown Police Chief Patrick McMahon said significant afternoon traffic backups are occurring on Washington Street from its intersection with Main Street to High Street. He and other city officials questioned whether the DOT could allow motorists to access the northbound lanes of nearby Route 9 from lower Washington Street, which would alleviate tie-ups at the intersection of Washington and Main streets that occur because many motorists need to travel up Main Street to get access to Route 9 north.

Fagnoli said the DOT would consider that request.

Others, including Mayor Sebastian Giuliani, questioned why the DOT has closed off the southbound lanes of Exit 14 from Route 9, which motorists use to get to Main Street. He and chamber president Larry McHugh said there appears to be a large pothole at the exit, but that while the DOT has erected barriers around it, the state agency is not fixing the hole.

"Tell those guys doing (Exit) 14 to get going," McHugh said.

DOT officials said they would also look into that Route 9 issue.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield questioned how the DOT would handle inclement weather this winter and the impact it would have on the Arrigoni work.

Fagnoli said he would speak with the DOT's maintenance department and inquire about their plans to keep the bridge free of ice and snow this winter.

# EastHampton-PortlandPatch

## Arrigoni Project Progressing Well

State traffic officials said overnight work on the bridge will begin in about two weeks.

- By [Eileen McNamara](#) August 19, 2011



Craig Albert, a DOT inspector, shows photos of the Arrigoni Bridge work during a meeting Friday morning with town and state officials in Middletown.

Photos (5) Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)

### Photos



The Arrigoni Bridge project is going smoothly and according to plan, with few bumps in the road in terms of traffic snarls or congestion, state and local officials reported Friday.

“So far, so good,” said Larry McHugh, president of the Greater Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, which hosts a monthly meeting on the ongoing bridge reconstruction work.

Craig Albert, an inspector with the state’s Department of Transportation, gave a brief overview of the work that’s been done on the bridge so far. The DOT is replacing, in stages, the bridge’s metal decking for the first time since the Arrigoni was built in 1938.

Albert said workers have removed a 90-foot section of the bridge’s deck, as well as an 800-foot section of the handrail and an 1,100-foot section of the span’s sidewalk. As part of the project all the handrails and sidewalks on the bridge are also being repaired or replaced. Albert said the

construction company overseeing the work expects a new 90-foot replacement deck section to be delivered in about two weeks.

When that happens, said Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the DOT engineer overseeing the project, work on the bridge will begin during overnight hours as well as during the day.

Local police and town officials said they are impressed with the way the project is progressing and are pleased that it has so far resulted in no major traffic incidents.

Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliani said he believes media advisories and DOT signs alerting motorists to the work and possible traffic tie-ups has helped ease congestion on the Arrigoni. But he and others questioned whether that might change when school goes back into session at the end of this month.

"We'll see how things go with traffic in September, but so far there's been nothing major that I can see," Giuliani said.

"I think September is going to be a test for both sides of the bridge," added Middletown Police Chief Patrick McMahon.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said communications between the DOT, the towns and businesses has been excellent and has helped ease tensions regarding the bridge project.

"Just keep up the good work," she said.

Published: Friday, August 19, 2011

## **Bridge repairs running 'much smoother than anticipated,' mayor says**

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff



MIDDLETOWN – Repairs to the Arrigoni Bridge, which Mayor Sebastian Giuliani said are “running much more smoothly than any of us anticipated,” will take a major step forward in the next two weeks.

The first of the new steel decking for the 74-year-old bridge is scheduled to arrive next week, construction officials announced during the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce’s monthly bridge assessment meeting this morning.

When the decking arrives, crews will go from the present one shift per day to two shifts, speeding up work on the project, officials said this morning. The changeover to two shifts per days is expected to begin in earnest during the week of Aug. 29, they said.

A Massachusetts-based construction firm is replacing some 1,200 linear feet of decking on the bridge in a project that is costing approximately \$18 million and is expected to take 18 months to complete.

# THE MIDDLETOWN PRESS

Published: Friday, August 19, 2011

When the work expands from one shift per day to two, the number of workers will increase from 20 to 30, according to construction manager Tom Wood.

In the lead-up to the beginning of the project, Chamber President Larry McHugh pressed for two-a-day shifts in order to expedite construction and limit the impact on businesses and residents in Middletown and Portland.

Friday morning, McHugh said, "I am very pleased so far with the way things are going."

In response, Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the assistant district engineer for DOT and the man tasked with overseeing the repair project, said, "We're currently on schedule."

And for the first time, the state Department of Transportation official overseeing the day-to-day work had oversized color photographs Friday so attendees at the meeting could better understand the work that has reduced traffic on the cross-river bridge from four lanes to two.

In addition to existing decking and stringers – steel supports that hold up the decking, inspector Craig Albert said the several hundred feet of the south side sidewalk and handrails have also been removed.

In response to a question from Middletown's Acting Police Chief Patrick T. McMahon, Albert said conditions so far are no worse than officials had anticipated.

Meanwhile, McHugh said, "People are finding alternate ways to get across much better than we thought," in large part because of what Giuliani said is "the high profile publicity given this project."

McHugh also commended Fagnoli for the level of cooperation with the state.

"This is another good example of DOT working with the communities, a good partnership," McHugh told Fagnoli.

That assessment was seconded by Portland First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield.

"The communication has been very good," Bransfield said, adding, "Keep up the good work!"

The next major hurdle for the project will come in September, when schools reopen, traffic is expected to pick up and school buses begin using the bridge.

"September will be a test for both sides of the bridge," McMahon said.

## Police Press DOT For More Cops on Arrigoni

During a meeting Friday police and fire officials said increased an increased police presence on the bridge is key to keeping traffic moving.

By [Eileen McNamara](#)

July 15, 2011



Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh speaks to a DOT official during Friday's meeting.

Photos (2)

### Photos Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)



Local public safety officials urged the state Friday to keep an adequate police presence on and near the Arrigoni Bridge during the construction project on the span, arguing that the two police officers on the bridge this week were the main reason a minor accident there didn't become "a catastrophe."

Police and fire officials, along with state and town officials, met Friday morning with representatives of the Department of Transportation and the contractor doing the bridge work to discuss the project and its impact on local communities since the work started several weeks ago.

The Greater Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce hosted the meeting and its president, Larry McHugh said the feedback he has gotten so far indicates the project is going smoothly.

“With the exception of an accident one day it’s been going pretty good,” McHugh said. The bridge work, which includes removing the asphalt deck and installing a new one, is expected to take about 18 months and will see the bridge’s four lanes limited to one in each direction throughout much of that time.

But some public safety officials who attended the meeting said they are worried that the DOT’s plan for police coverage on the bridge won’t be enough to avoid chaos if there is a serious accident on it.

Middletown Police Chief Patrick McMahon said the state’s plans to hire two officers during the day to direct traffic on either end of the bridge is inadequate. McMahon said officers are also needed at key intersections on either side of the bridge in Middletown and Portland to avoid traffic bottlenecks. He said he decided this week to keep an officer at the St. John’s Square intersection in his town and having the officer there is what helped avoid a traffic nightmare following an accident on the bridge several days ago.

“That’s what stopped that minor incident from becoming a catastrophe,” he said. McMahon asked the DOT to reconsider its decision not to station officers at key intersections on either side of the bridge, but Kenneth E. Fagnoli, the DOT engineer who attended the meeting, rebuffed that request.

“I do believe that’s too much,” Fagnoli said.

Fagnoli said the DOT will always have at least one officer on the bridge while work is being done there, but said the state will not pay to station police on the bridge when no work is being undertaken at night, mostly between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

“We can’t afford to have officers out there when we don’t think they’re necessary,” he said.

He said the state will re-evaluate its police staffing decisions later this summer, when the vacation season draws to a close and business commuters are expected to swell traffic crossing the bridge.

Robert F. DiBella, the director of emergency management in Glastonbury, also attended the meeting and said he is concerned about the state’s decision to eliminate ferry service from his town to Rocky Hill, across the Connecticut River. That proposal is part of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy’s budget reduction plan and also calls for eliminating the Chester-Hadlyme ferry service.

DiBella said questions of the ferries’ history aside – both have been in service since before the country’s founding – they play a crucial role in getting travelers across the Connecticut River, especially if an emergency shuts the Arrigoni Bridge for an extended period.

“Those two ferry boats are going to be of significant importance,” he said.

The ferries’ employees, however, received layoff notices this week from the Malloy administration.

## **Officials: Arrigoni Construction Traffic Not Bad – For Now**

### **A Minor Crash Wednesday In The Work Zone Highlighted Continuing Safety Concerns**

July 15, 2011 | By SHAWN R. BEALS, [sbeals@courant.com](mailto:sbeals@courant.com), The Hartford Courant

Construction on the Arrigoni Bridge has yet to cause any major problems since it began three weeks ago, state and local officials said at a meeting on the project Friday morning.

"Traffic is moving through the work zone pretty good; actually it's better than we expected," said Kenneth Fagnoli, assistant district engineer for the state Department of Transportation.

The construction contractor, Middlesex Corporation, is currently replacing part of the bridge underneath the roadway to prepare for the major work of replacing the deck – the bridge's driving surface.

Once work on the deck starts, crews will start working double shifts including night work, said Middlesex project manager Tom Wood.

Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea said a minor crash on the bridge on Wednesday was a good test of the work public safety officials have done to prepare for emergency situations during construction. He said having officers stationed on the bridge at the time was a major factor in a quick response.

"We were able to clear that bridge in 15 minutes," Shea said.

Fagnoli said the DOT plans to have one police officer on both sides of the bridge during all peak hours, along with a third stationed on the bridge between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. He said the DOT does not plan to station an officer on the bridge when there is no active construction going on, and said there would be at least one officer on the bridge during night work.

If one of the two remaining travel lanes has to be closed at night, another officer would be on duty, Fagnoli said.

But Middletown Acting Police Chief Patrick McMahon said he recommends that two officers be available at all times.

"One officer on the bridge is not enough," McMahon said. "One at either end communicating with each other stopped [the Wednesday crash] from becoming a major incident."

Mayor Sebastian Giuliano said the DOT should keep a full police presence on the bridge at least until after Labor Day, then reassess the traffic and safety concerns to make sure it's still necessary.

He said traffic so far has been light.

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Lawrence McHugh said the signs the DOT has put up in other parts of the region to alert drivers about the ongoing construction has worked well.

He said once the summer vacation season is over, officials will need to watch traffic patterns closely.

## Official: Bridge construction going well

Published: Tuesday, July 05, 2011; Last Updated: Mon. Jul 4, 2011, 6:14pm

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff

PORTLAND – At the end of the first week of lane reductions on the Arrigoni Bridge, Portland’s first selectwoman pronounced herself pleased with the way the police and state officials have handled the transition.

Traffic on the bridge, which links Portland and Middletown, has been reduced from four lanes to two as the state Department of Transportation undertakes an estimated 18-month repair project.

The lane reductions began on June 28.

On Tuesday, one week after the reductions began, Bransfield said, “I think as far as traveling across the bridge, it’s been a very good transition. I think DOT and the local police departments have done a fine job of maintaining an orderly flow of traffic across the bridge.”

As part of the start-up of the project, two Middletown police officers and two Portland officers have been stationed at the respective ends of the bridge to help guide and direct traffic onto and off of the bridge.

The DOT is picking up the cost of the officers being stationed on the bridge.

“I want to thank both the DOT and the two police departments for creating an orderly transition,” Bransfield said.

“I’ve gotten a number of comments from resident commenting on the officer’s presence at the intersection of Routes 17A (Main Street) and 66 (Marlborough Street ),” she continued.

“People have said how the officer there has kept that intersection running smoothly so as to allow everyone to have their chance so there is an orderly flow of traffic over the bridge.”

There could change in how long the officers are stationed on the bridge, however.

Bransfield said she is scheduled to meet today with the DOT to discuss the project. The officers were originally supposed to remain working 24 hours a day for two weeks before that arrangement was reviewed.

“DOT may revisit that issue (today),” Bransfield said “I don’t know if that around-the-clock presence is necessary.”

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While she is pleased with the effort so far, Bransfield did acknowledge, “This is a holiday week and a holiday time. And with school out, there are far fewer children than there will be in just a couple of months...”

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply.

## Navigating the Arrigoni

Potential for traffic backups has motorists wondering which way to go.

By [Michael Bartolotta](#) | [Email the author](#) | 12:15am 062911

### Photos



Credit [Tom McCormack](#)



Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)



Credit [Eileen McNamara](#)



Credit Cassandra Day

If you figured you would cross that bridge when you came to it, then either you have or you will soon.

To cross or not to cross. That's the dilemma motorists are facing as work on the Arrigoni Bridge begins in earnest this week.

For commuters, the concern is the potential for traffic backing up during the morning and late afternoon rush hours. Avoiding the Arrigoni is an option, but one with few alternatives.

Taking Route 17 to Glastonbury and connecting with Route 2 or the Putnam Bridge is one. The East Haddam swing bridge another. Jumping on Route 2 in Marlborough also is a possibility. Whether these are viable options for residents in Portland or East Hampton depends largely on where you live and where you are going.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield suggested those who use the bridge can think about alternate plans and routes on days when traffic will be especially slow.

For some, contending with rush hour traffic on the Arrigoni, as undesirable as it might sound, could continue to be the most logical route.

Many, however, are taking the wait and see approach.

# EastHampton-PortlandPatch

“I’m going to play it by ear the first day. I’m going to try and leave a little bit earlier,” said East Hampton resident Thom Cordeiro, who works in New Britain. “I’m obviously concerned about the traffic. I’m trying to pay attention to the web sites and the DOT information.”

To try to alleviate some of the congestion and to alert motorists of delays, the state Department of Transportation has installed smart zone signs and also is offering alerts by email and Twitter that motorists can sign up to receive. Those interested can go to this DOT [web site](#).

In addition to about a dozen of the mobile smart zone signs being set up, Terri Thompson, a spokeswoman for the DOT, said sensors will be deployed to measure the flow of traffic leading to the Arrigoni on either side of the Connecticut River, as well as the bridge itself.

The sensors and signs will be linked to a DOT control center, and all the signs will be coordinated to deliver information as quickly as possible.

Dave Cutler, a supervising liaison engineer, said the idea is to allow drivers to make decisions to take an alternate route if necessary. Cutler said it might be the first effort of its kind for a state project.

The good news, at least early on, is that non-rush hour traffic on Tuesday was smooth sailing, with no traffic backups.

## No Major Delays On Arrigoni Bridge

### Traffic Moving Smoothly So Far Despite Lane Reductions For Construction Project

By KAT J. MCALPINE, [kmcalpine@courant.com](mailto:kmcalpine@courant.com)

The Hartford Courant

8:10 PM EDT, June 28, 2011

**MIDDLETOWN** — Despite concerns about congestion on the Arrigoni Bridge as a two-year construction project begins, Tuesday morning's rush hour traffic proceeded across the bridge with only minor delays.

Travel in each direction on the bridge has been reduced to a single lane during construction to repair the bridge decking. The project, estimated to cost \$15 million to \$20 million, is expected to be finished in the fall of 2012.

Traffic on Tuesday morning, the first day of the construction project, turned out to be much smoother than expected.

"I'm not really sure why we are here," said Middletown police Officer Robert Sevigny, who was stationed at the mouth of the bridge in St. John Square on Tuesday morning. He said the morning commute went smoothly aside from "a few honks" here and there.

On the other side of the river, a motorist traveling from Portland said, "It probably took me an extra seven minutes to get over the bridge. There was a brief slowdown as traffic narrowed into one lane, but the traffic coming down Route 66 West toward the bridge was considerably less than normal."

An unrelated streetscape beautification project on Main Street might have contributed to the delay on the Portland side Tuesday morning.

Rosanne Lambardi, a secretary in Portland's police department, said she experienced a few minutes of congestion on her commute and "had to wonder if the traffic was being caused by the town project, not the Arrigoni."

State Department of Transportation spokesman Kevin Nursick said he was keeping an eye on the Portland project Tuesday morning.

"We didn't really see any traffic implications from the streetscape project," Nursick stated. "That being said, it's probably not ideal."

Nursick also said it's "certainly possible" that there's less traffic on the bridge this week because many commuters could be on vacation leading up to the July Fourth holiday.

"That would have an impact on the traffic across the bridge; we will definitely find out if this is the case over the next couple of weeks," he said.



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Editor [Michael Bartolotta](#): Heard some news you want us to check out? Let me know:  
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## News

### Local Concerns About Arrigoni Work Persist

Some questions are getting answered, but some remain as the bridge work kicks off today.

By [Michael Bartolotta](#) | [Email the author](#) | 12:36am [Print](#)

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Lane closures on the Arrigoni Bridge are expected to cause delays for an untold number of motorists in the region starting today. Most affected will be morning and late afternoon commuters.

Locally, officials appear satisfied with the plans that have been worked out for police coverage and other safety concerns.

"We are very pleased to have our fire fighters and our police department working with the city of Middletown, with their fire department as well as their police department, to ensure the best public safety for people as this project progresses," Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said Monday.

Portland police officer David Bond said police would staff the bridge 24 hours a day for at least the first two weeks.

"At that point, state DOT is going to reevaluate things and see how we're doing and we'll adjust it from there," Bond said.

Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea, chairman of the sub-committee on safety matters, said they "are working closely" with the DOT and Middlesex Corp. He says this is a joint effort between all the agencies to "make sure it's safe and accommodating" to the traveling public as much as possible.

Back in May, Shea was concerned over the lack of answers he was getting.

"I'm doing everything I can to protect our community, but I'm just not getting the answers that I want from the state," he said. "We just need coverage. I need an ambulance, I need medics, they all come from the other side of the river. So, we need to make sure we're covered on this side."

According to Shea, the plan for now is for paramedics from Middlesex Hospital to be working much of the time with Portland EMTs and both units will be based at Fire Station No. 2 on Main Street.

Hunters Ambulance is expected to be stationing a crew on the Portland side and two Life Star landing

zones have been designated.

Bransfield said police will be able to give drivers proper directions if needed on how to proceed. She has also said if there is an emergency, the police will be able to stop traffic and get any necessary emergency vehicles across the span.

School buses also present a unique problem.

Portland School Superintendent Sally Doyen has urged the DOT to call local officials directly about special problems. Doyen had said at a meeting in May that a bus must go across the bridge each morning to get students to Vinal Technical High School. Doyen says "that bus has to make it back on time" because that's one of the buses for the school run within Portland. She says any delays generally "will impact schools" and their scheduled openings and class times.

It also is possible school bus routes within Portland might have to be adjusted to avoid areas where traffic might be backed up.

Shea expects the backup during rush hour to be as far as Prehistoric Gold on Route 66 or 18 to 25 minutes to get over the bridge once you hit the traffic.

"The impact is going to be big, but it has to get done."

One other area in Portland where traffic will be altered is Silver Street, between Brownstone Avenue and Main Street. Silver Street will be restricted to one way traffic. Only traffic entering Silver Street from Main Street will have access and this will be enforced. The one-way condition will be in place for the duration of the project or when Portland feels it's appropriate to remove the restriction.

As for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, access will be maintained on either side of the bridge dependent on what stage of construction the project is in.

In addition to smart signs stationed on either side of the bridge, the DOT has other ways it plans on keeping the public informed. It has a [web site](#) dedicated to the Arrigoni project that it plans on updating daily. Also available are electronic traffic alerts by email. Those interested can go to this DOT [web site](#).

Meantime, officials have stressed they will do all they can to ensure the project goes smoothly.

State Sen. Eileen Daily, D-Westbrook, said there will probably be bi-weekly meetings with the state DOT.

"We want to be sure everything they say they are going to do is done," Daily said. "We want to be sure that every need that every person and every business demonstrates to us is taken care of."

The repairs or rehabilitation as the state Department of Transportation calls it, includes replacement of the concrete filled steel grid deck and sidewalks on the main spans. All work will be completed from the bridge and from a temporary work platform suspended below the bridge. Other work includes replacement of elastomeric bearings, pedestal repairs on the Portland side, new bituminous overlay on the main spans and new expansion joints. The cost is \$17 million.

Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, Mass., has been contracted to do the work, which is expected to be completed by Nov. 14, 2012.

Delays encountered by motorists is just one problem repairs to the bridge will cause. During the lead-up to construction there were many questions and concerns. Others included safety, emergency vehicle access, school bus delays, impact on businesses and police coverage.

Many of these issues have been addressed. For others, such as the impact on business, it is too soon to tell.

One thing that you can expect is, that despite all the planning, there will be issues early on that were either not anticipated or the impact greater than first thought.

DOT engineer Patrick O'Mara said it's been the experience of the DOT that it takes several weeks for a project to have commuting problems ironed out.

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## Fire Chief ‘Gearing up for Worst’ as Arrigoni Construction Begins

Delayed EMS reaction times and significant traffic backups are the city's chief fears

By [Cassandra Day](#) | [Email the author](#) | 4:55am 062811



Arrigoni Bridge traffic was reduced to one lane on each side Tuesday.

Photos (11)

Slow emergency response and downtown gridlock resulting from the 18-month Arrigoni Bridge repair project are the Middletown fire chief's major concerns as construction begins Tuesday.

Chief Gary Ouellette is Sub-Committee Chairman of the [Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce](#) Arrigoni Bridge Committee, which has met monthly since January to flesh out police and emergency medical services response on both sides of the Connecticut River.

He says the project has its upsides and downsides.

“It's positive in the fact that we get to improve the bridge,” Ouellette says. “It definitely has some serious deficiencies, but there are definitely negative impacts because traffic will be backed up and people will avoid the area downtown.”

Which, he says, will have a negative economic impact on Main Street's businesses.

Even more important, Ouellette points out, is the effect on his crew's 911 emergency reaction.

“There will definitely be a delay in response times in terms of getting somewhere. Say if there's a call

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on North Main and Stack Street, what would [ordinarily] take two minutes could take a three-, four-, five-minute response.”

A recent police review discovered that on the Arrigoni “there were 300 and something incidents in a year’s time, whether it was running out of gas or accidents,” Ouellette says.

With repairs slated to last more than a year and half, and lanes reduced to one on each side, complications could ensue.

“If a car breaks down, normally it doesn’t impact traffic,” Ouellette says. “The cops will have lanes cleared in 15 to 20 minutes, but now it’ll back up all the way down Main Street, down Route 66, into Portland. It could affect Washington Street traffic on Route 9 or even up to Grand Street, High Street.”

However, “by not being two lanes [going each way], people won’t be traveling at a high rate of speed, so there won’t be accidents like in the past — people out of gas or having breakdowns.”

For the first two weeks of construction, Middletown and Portland police will have a presence on the bridge as onsite first responders.

Monitoring the situation is at the top of Middletown Fire’s priorities, Ouellette says. “Our headquarters is right on Main Street, so we’ll be able to tell right away where the backups are.”

Considering every angle well ahead of time as part of the sub-committee has prepared officials as repair work begins.

“We’re trying to gear up for the worst,” Ouellette says. “We’re working on a game plan, but we can’t put it into place until we see.”

“Next weekend is the Fourth of July, so July 2<sup>nd</sup> should be the test,” he says, as holiday and summer traffic pick up.

“One good thing is, school is out, so we can gauge how it’s going over the summer, so we can get ready for the fall” and traffic from the Portland side, with “busses going over the bridge to Mercy, Vinal and Xavier” high schools has abated.

As construction continues, the bridge committees and city officials will be monitoring the situation and possibly making unprecedented adjustments if necessary.

“There’s some talk about, with the delay, alternating the start times of schools and there’s talk of some businesses, larger employers like Middlesex Hospital, Midfield Corporation, staggering their start times,” Ouellette reports. “We’re not sure exactly how it’s going to go.”

Peg Arico, director of public relations and communication at Middlesex Hospital, says, "the hospital is watching the construction process very closely and will do what it can to adjust, if necessary, once it has a sense of the real impact it will have on employees."

## Businesses Brace For Arrigoni Construction

Officials confident that bridge reconstruction won't stifle spending at local establishments.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 30, 2011



The Connecticut Department of Transportation has taken great pains to erect signs to let shoppers know that businesses near the Arrigoni Bridge are still open during construction. Credit Eileen McNamara

**Editor's Note:** This is the third installment of a three-day series detailing the Arrigoni Bridge construction project and the impact it will have on the lives of Middlesex County residents, commuters and businesses. Patch will continue to cover the project as it moves along its 18-month timeline toward an expected completion date in November of 2012.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield sees a potential business upside to the Arrigoni Bridge reconstruction work that kicked off this week.

Perhaps, she mused, commuters on the east side of the bridge will seek to avoid anticipated traffic delays on the Arrigoni and they'll opt to frequent businesses on Portland's side of the river.

"It may actually help some of our businesses," Bransfield said. "If residents don't use the bridge they can go to local businesses, such as Rite Aid or Tri Town (Foods). So in that respect, it could be helpful."

That's not exactly the kind of outcome Middletown business leaders are looking for during the bridge work.

At the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, officials have sought to allay concerns among local business owners that the 18-month bridge work -- and its anticipated traffic gridlock -- will hurt local businesses.

One of the main ways the chamber has sought to do that is by communicating directly and frequently with local business owners about the bridge work and with state officials, said Johanna Bond, events director for the chamber.

The chamber even created an Arrigoni Bridge subcommittee to act as a liaison with local businesses and the state's Department of Transportation, which is overseeing the project.

"The primary goal of this group is to create a communication link between the DOT, the contractor and member businesses," she said. "One of the biggest things we've been projecting is that it's coming and there's nothing we can do about it. But we'd rather have the bridge fixed than not fixed."

Still, Bond said, there's only so much the chamber can do about what are expected to be significant traffic snarls in the city's North End during peak commuter times. Local business owners on both sides of the river are worried that those traffic delays will mean potential customers could avoid the area altogether.

"It's going to impact businesses, but it's got to be done," Bond said. "In terms of mitigating the impact, there's not much we can do with that. There's going to be gridlock, but we're going to do the best we can. We're 100 percent supporting the businesses, but there's only so many places these cars can go. It's going to be a wait-and-see situation. It's going to be a work in progress."

Eric Smith, interim director of Middletown's Downtown Business District, said his agency also is keeping in close contact with business owners to help them through the project. But like Bond, he said there's not a lot his agency can do about traffic gridlock.

"I think more toward the North End it will be a greater impact because of the intersection there," Smith said. "At least at the southern end you have greater access from Route 9. But still, it's going to impact all the businesses."

The key to making the situation bearable, Bond said, is to keep in constant contact with local businesses and those overseeing the roadwork.

Toward that end, local lawmakers have vowed to meet regularly with the DOT and with local business and community leaders. On Monday, state Sen. Eileen M. Daily, D-Westbrook, and Rep. Christie Carpino, R-Cromwell, held a press conference about the project and assured local business owners that they will do all they can, including meeting biweekly with the DOT, to make sure that all that can be done to mitigate traffic problems will be done.

“We want to make sure that every need and every business is taken care of,” Daily said.

Attending the press conference was Brian O’Connor, director of the Middlesex chamber. The impacts from the project represent a delicate balancing act for local businesses, he said. On the one hand, they don’t want to see too many commuters clogging downtown streets. But on the other hand, they don’t want to scare away potential customers with traffic-gridlock horror stories.

“We have to let people know businesses are open downtown. I think that’s the most important thing,” he said.

The message his group wants to send to those who might seek to avoid the area during the project is to perhaps find alternative routes over the Connecticut River during peak traffic times, “but come here off-peak and on the weekends.”

On her side of the river, Bransfield said officials will have two traffic officers working near the Arrigoni each day to try to ease the gridlock.

In addition, the state has installed “Business Open” signs in front of businesses near the bridge. Those businesses, such as Dunkin’ Donuts, are also impacted by a sidewalk-replacement project that the state has undertaken along the highway as it approaches the Arrigoni.

“We’re managing traffic best we can and putting signs up letting people know that businesses are open,” Bransfield said. “We’re hoping everyone will be cooperative and know that for their travel safety, this bridge project must be completed.”

## Commuters Brace for Bump and Grind on Arrigoni

Construction project expected to cause traffic tie-ups for commuters who use the bridge.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:00am



Arrigoni Bridge traffic was reduced to one lane on each side Tuesday.

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If you've ever commuted over the Arrigoni Bridge on a weekday morning or afternoon, you know how congested the confluence of Route 9, downtown Middletown and the Arrigoni can get.

Now imagine it with only two of the Arrigoni's four lanes open and work crews on the bridge.

That's the scenario state and town leaders have grappled with for months as the impending \$17 million rebuilding of the bridge's deck and other sections has loomed.

The long-planned project, for which preliminary work has already started, is about to kick off in earnest. As of Tuesday, the state will install barriers on the bridge to block access to portions of it where reconstruction work will be under way.

With more than 33,000 vehicles using the Arrigoni Bridge daily, limiting access to one lane in each direction has many in the region on edge.

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Business and town leaders, particularly in Middletown, fear the possibility of gridlock in their communities. Emergency management officials are worried about getting fire trucks and ambulances over the bridge quickly and education leaders are concerned students who go to regional schools and whose buses traverse the Arrigoni won't get to school on time during morning commutes.

Some have criticized the state's Department of Transportation, which is in charge of the project, saying the agency hasn't done enough to determine and mitigate potential traffic impacts.

Kevin Nursick, a spokesman for DOT, said the agency has "pulled out all the stops" to communicate with residents and local officials in Portland, Middletown and beyond to address the traffic issues. The DOT, he said, also has developed numerous safeguards to help ease traffic congestion. The agency has created a traffic management plan that includes a "smart work zone management system," that employs traffic cameras and changeable electronic road signs to alert motorists of real-time conditions on and around the bridge and of potential delays.

Those electronic road signs have been in use for several weeks now, not only on the approaches to the Arrigoni from nearby Route 9 and Interstate 91, but also on other highways in the region.

To the east, the portable signs will alert motorists on Routes 2 and 66 in Marlborough and Route 17 in Glastonbury of any potential delays, as well as on Routes 16 and 66 in East Hampton and Routes 17 and 17A in Portland.

To the west, the signs will be employed along Routes 17 and 66 in Middletown, as well as at the junction of Routes 691 and 66 in Meriden and Routes 17 and 79 in Durham.

The signs "could also be located at northbound Route 17 at South Main Street and eastbound Route 66 between Route 3 and Main Street to inform local motorists, closer to the bridge, about travel times," a DOT traffic-management plan states.

The management plan also identifies several alternative routes in the region that motorists can use to avoid the Arrigoni and get across the Connecticut River.

About 10 miles to the north is the Route 3 Putnam Bridge, which spans the Connecticut River between Wethersfield and Glastonbury. Also to the north in the Hartford area are the Charter Oak, Route 2 Founders and Bulkeley bridges.

Access across the river south of the Arrigoni would be the Route 82 Bridge, a swing-span bridge that fords the Connecticut River between Haddam and East Haddam. That bridge is located about 13

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miles south of the Arrigoni. Even farther south is the Baldwin Bridge, which carries some eight lanes of traffic on Interstate 95 between Old Lyme and Old Saybrook and over the Connecticut River.

There are ferries in the region that cross the river as well, but they are limited to the Rocky Hill-Glastonbury Ferry to the north and the Hadlyme-Chester Ferry south of the Route 82 swing bridge. Neither can hold many vehicles and the DOT does not view them as significant means of reducing traffic on the Arrigoni.

The biggest traffic concern for the Arrigoni and nearby roadways, state traffic officials say, is during peak travel periods in the mornings and afternoons.

Traffic is heavier in the westbound lanes of the bridge in the morning (with commuters traveling from Portland to the Middletown side of the bridge) and in the afternoons it escalates in the eastbound lanes as commuters return home to the suburbs on the eastern side of the bridge.

According to DOT traffic figures, traffic in the eastbound lanes of the Arrigoni peaks at an average of 2,079 vehicles at 4 p.m. In the westbound lanes, the traffic peaks at 7 a.m. each day with some 2,156 vehicles crossing the bridge, on average. A DOT traffic study indicates that cars will begin queuing in the westbound lane of the bridge between about 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., and will queue on the eastbound lane between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The traffic tie-ups from the project are an inevitable burden the region will have to bear to make the Arrigoni Bridge safe and sustainable, Nursick added.

“If we want this bridge to last decades to come this is a bitter pill we have to swallow,” he said.

“We’ve put this day of reckoning off for as long as possible. The other option, which is to do nothing, is not digestible.”

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## Officials Vow To Help Ease Arrigoni Headaches

State Sen. Eileen Daily and others gathered near the bridge Monday afternoon to discuss the road work.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 27, 2011



new

State Sen. Eileen M. Daily speaks with reporters Monday about the Arrigoni Bridge project, which begins tonight.

Photos (7)

### Photos



Credit [Tom McCormack](#)



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State lawmakers, local officials and business leaders gathered Monday afternoon near the Arrigoni Bridge and pledged that they would do all they can to make the long-planned \$17 million bridge reconstruction project, set to begin tomorrow, as painless as possible.

State Sen. Eileen Daily, D-Westbrook, told the gathering that she and fellow lawmakers from the region, including House Republican Christie Carpino, who represents Portland and Middletown, will do all they can to make sure the state assists the local communities during the 18-month long project.

Daily and Carpino were among about a half dozen officials who held a press conference near the bridge on Monday to discuss the Arrigoni project. Work on the bridge, which will begin tonight, is expected to cause major traffic delays during peak commuter periods in the mornings and afternoons.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Brian O'Connor, director of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, joined the two lawmakers.

Shouting over the roar of traffic on nearby Route 66, Daily and Carpino said they intend to speak with officials at the state's Department of Transportation biweekly to ensure that the bridge work runs smoothly.

"We're going to make sure that everything that can be done is being done," Daily said. "We're hopeful that when this project starts everything will go as smoothly as possible."

"This is an important project for the entire region," Carpino added. "Rest assured that we will be working as quickly as possible to get this project done."

The bridge work will include replacing the entire roadway deck of the bridge. Starting overnight tonight, two of the bridge's four lanes will be closed, limiting traffic to one lane in each direction.

# Officials: Everything being done to ensure safety of residents, motorists on Arrigoni Bridge

Published: Monday, June 27, 2011; Last Updated: Mon. Jun 27, 2011, 11:27pm

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff



PORTLAND – As drivers begin grappling with reduced lanes on the Arrigoni Bridge Tuesday morning, state and local officials promised Monday that everything is being done to sure the safety of both residents and motorists.

Standing in the shadow of the bridge Monday afternoon, state Sen. Eileen Daily, state Rep. Christie Carpino and Portland First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield said every step has been taken to ensure the safety of residents and of the motorists transiting the bridge.

No Middletown officials attended the 2 p.m. press conference.

Starting Tuesday, the usual four lanes on the bridge linking Middletown and Portland are being reduced to two, as the state embarks on an estimated 18-month long repair project.

Daily said two Portland Police officers will be stationed at the eastern end of the bridge and two Middletown officers at the western end of the bridge to try and control the congestion that is expected to develop as drivers negotiate the new lane alignment.

“Rest assured that we know community safety is the number-one priority” as the project goes forward, Carpino said.

The project involves replacing the center span of the nearly 75-year-old bridge. The two

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southern-most lanes will remain closed while the work begins, while traffic will continue with one lane in each direction on the two northern-most lanes.

“For the first two weeks, I imagine there will be a lot of confusion,” Daily acknowledged as truck and car traffic rumbled by the Monday afternoon press conference.

However, Portland Police Officer David Bond said, “We are pretty confident that the plans we have in place should be sufficient.”

Bond explained that police officers will staff the project 24 hours a day for the first two weeks to try ensure a smooth flow of traffic across the aging structure. After those first two weeks, the state Department of Transportation “will evaluate the situation and then we will adjust it from there,” Bond said.

Bransfield said the state would absorb the added cost of the local police presence on the bridge. She said one officer would be stationed at the entrance to the bridge, while the other officer at the intersection of Main and Marlborough streets/Route 66.

“If we don’t have adequate police coverage, we won’t be able to control the traffic,” Bransfield added.

Despite the planning, “There are still some loose ends that have to be tied up,” Daily agreed.

But, she added, “We’ll be meeting with the DOT on a bi-weekly basis” in an effort to stay on top of developing situation.

Brian O’Connor who heads the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce’s transportation committee, said businesses in both and especially Middletown will remain open throughout the construction. However, O’Connor said it might be advisable for shoppers to adjust their schedules.

“During peak times, it might be better to avoid the area,” he said and then, once rush hour is over, would-be shoppers could more easily come into the downtown business districts, O’Connor said.

# Fire Chief: Officials ‘Gearing up for the Worst’ as Arrigoni Bridge Construction Begins

Delayed EMS reaction times and significant traffic backups are the city’s chief fears

By [Cassandra Day](#) | [Email the author](#) | 10:00am 062711

Slow emergency response and downtown gridlock resulting from the 18-month Arrigoni Bridge repair project are the Middletown fire chief’s major concerns as construction begins Tuesday.

Chief Gary Ouellette is Sub-Committee Chairman of the [Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce](#) Arrigoni Bridge Committee, which has met monthly since January to flesh out police and emergency medical services response on both sides of the Connecticut River.

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Which, he says, will have a negative economic impact on Main Street’s businesses.

Even more important, Ouellette points out, is the effect on his crew’s 911 emergency reaction.

“There will definitely be a delay in response times in terms of getting somewhere. Say if there’s a call on North Main and Stack Street, what would [ordinarily] take two minutes could take a three-, four-, five-minute response.”

A recent police review discovered that on the Arrigoni “there were 300 and something incidents in a year’s time, whether it was running out of gas or accidents,” Ouellette says.

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News

## Officials: Expect lane closures in Portland

Thursday, June 23, 2011 10:32 PM EDT

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff

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PORTLAND – Silver Street will become one-way headed west on Tuesday, when the reconstruction of the Arrigoni Bridge begins.

Lt. Ron Milardo announced Thursday that Silver Street, which is currently two-way, is being converted to a one-way street in an effort to help reduce congestion on the street.

In addition, Milardo said police hope to prevent motorists from using Silver to try and jump the long lines that are expected when the state Department of Transportation begins an estimated 18-month project to replace the center span of the signature bridge. The present four-lane traffic on the bridge will be reduced to two lanes beginning Tuesday morning, when work begins in earnest.

Milardo said traffic will be able to turn right onto Silver from Main Street and continue on down the hill to the Brownstone Discovery and Exploration Park and the industrial complex on Brownstone Avenue. But for the duration of the project, traffic will no longer be able to come up Silver to turn onto Main Street.

“Silver’s a residential street, and we want to stop any added traffic on that street, especially during the morning rush hour so that residents who live there can’t get out and use the street,” Milardo said.

DOT officials told a meeting of civic and police officials at the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce last week that traffic on the bridge will be restricted to one lane in each direction. The lanes will run side by side on the north or upriver portion of the bridge.

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply.

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[courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-middletown-arrigoni-construction-b20110617,0,3636738.story](http://courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-middletown-arrigoni-construction-b20110617,0,3636738.story)

# Courant.com

## Arrigoni Bridge Construction To Begin June 28

### Motorists Will Be Confined To One Lane In Each Direction

By KAT J. MCALPINE, [kmcalpine@courant.com](mailto:kmcalpine@courant.com)

The Hartford Courant

4:35 PM EDT, June 17, 2011

**MIDDLETOWN** — The 33,000 daily travelers across the Arrigoni Bridge might want to pencil in some extra time for their commutes.

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The state Department of Transportation announced Friday that the bridge's four travel lanes will be reduced to two beginning on June 28 to make way for a complete overhaul of the bridge deck.

On the Portland side of the bridge, Silver Street will become one-way during the construction project and won't provide access to Main Street.

DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick warned that "congestion will be unavoidable." He also said the DOT is doing everything it can to advise people to budget their time accordingly. "We're putting up data signs along the roadways to advise of travel conditions," Nursick said.

Cameras will stream live feed of traffic conditions at the intersections of routes 66 and 17 in Portland, and Route 66 and St. John Square in Middletown. Travelers can access the video feed at <http://www.arrigonibridge.com>.

Construction crews will work from beneath the four-lane bridge on a temporary suspended platform. Traffic will be restricted to one side of the bridge while the other two lanes are ripped out and rebuilt. Concrete barriers, to be installed June 27, will protect motorists from gaping views of the Connecticut River until the project's completion, expected in November 2012.

Over the past few months, the DOT sought public input to address anticipated traffic delays. "People made all kinds of suggestions, such as moving the Glastonbury-Rocky Hill ferry to Middletown and building a roadway across the abandoned train trestle bridge," Nursick said.

Although neither of those ideas was plausible, the DOT did put some of the public's suggestions to use. Police officers will help to direct traffic through the work zone. A tow truck will also be stationed on the bridge. "If a car is disabled, it will be moved off the bridge immediately to avoid further delays," Nursick stated.

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News

# Expect lane closures on Arrigoni Bridge starting June 28

Friday, June 17, 2011 5:35 PM EDT

By JEFF MILL  
Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Tuesday June 28 will be D-Day for the repairs to the Arrigoni Bridge.

State transportation officials announced Friday that beginning on the morning of the 28th, traffic across the bridge will be restricted to two lanes, as an estimated 18-month-long bridge repair project gets under way.

Traffic will be restricted to the two northern most lanes of the bridge beginning on the 28th, Assistant District Engineer Kenneth E. Farnogli explained during a morning meeting at the Main Street offices of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.

That will mean traffic to and from Portland will pass by one another in side by side lanes. Farnogli said there will be no cones separating the two lanes of traffic.

Once the traffic is cordoned off in the two northern most (or upriver) lanes, crews from the company handling the repair project will begin installing "Jersey barriers" to block off the two southern most (or downriver) lanes where the construction will begin.

Crews from the Middlesex Corporation will then embark on the project to replace 600-linear feet of the steel underpinning the center deck of the nearly 75-year-old bridge.

"We are working out there; everything's up and operating, and we're ready to go," Farnogli told an audience that was made up, among others, of state legislators, municipal leaders from Middletown, Portland and East Haddam, and a bevy of police and fire officials from Cromwell, Middletown and Portland.

The work is expected to create intense traffic congestion and tie-ups on both sides of the river, at least during the early stages of the project.

Tow trucks will be stationed on the bridge during peak commuter hours from 6-9 a.m. and 3-7 p.m., officials said. Cars that break down during those peak travel periods will be towed off the road to lots in both Portland and Middletown.

Middlesex Corp. has contracted with a New Haven towing company for those peak periods, Farnogli said, adding that the cars will be towed for free.

However, during the off-peak hours there will be no wreckers on station. Motorists who become stranded will have to make their own arrangements, officials said, acknowledging that could lead to tie-ups.

Since the state announced in November its intention to repair the bridge, Chamber President Larry McHugh has spearheaded the local effort to prepare the cross-river communities and the region at large for the project.

While not downplaying the possible impact on traffic – "It's going to be a rocky 18 months or so," McHugh said of the project, "It has to be

done.”

Portland Fire Chief Robert A. Shea reported on the efforts of an emergency services sub-committee which has been meeting to plan where and how to station ambulances and fire apparatus during the construction project.

“We have worked a number of different scenarios, and we are prepared for the worse,” Shea said. “Unfortunately, we are going to have to wait and see and make changes as we go forward.”

His Middletown counterpart, Fire Chief Gary Ouellette, said, “We’re not sure how it’s going to be until things get started.”

Shea also said Portland fire officials have identified two new landing zones in their town for the LifeStar medical evacuation helicopter.

One site is in the Portland Industrial Park, which sits just under the eastern end of the bridge. The other is at the Rose Hill ball field, Shea said.

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply.

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# Arrigoni Traffic Will Drop to Two Lanes Starting June 28

"The nightmare begins" one person said during a meeting Friday on the bridge project.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | 12:45pm

## Photos Credit Cassandra Day



Traffic on the Arrigoni Bridge will be reduced to one lane in each direction by the rush hour morning commute on Tuesday, June 28, state traffic officials told a gathering of local business leaders, emergency personnel and town officials Friday morning.

Contractors will work overnight on Monday, June 27, to get the bridge ready, painting new traffic lines on the road and installing barriers to close off two of the bridge's four lanes, Kenneth E. Fagnoli, an engineer for the state's Department of Transportation, told about 40 people who attended the meeting in Middletown. The meeting was called to update local officials and business leaders on the long-anticipated Arrigoni Bridge work.

The barriers will be in place by the morning commute on June 28 and the region that morning will get its first real feel for what the bridge reconstruction work will do to traffic in the communities on either side of the Arrigoni, which spans the Connecticut River between Portland and Middletown.

"The nightmare begins," one person from the audience called out when Fagnoli announced the date of the lane closures.

Business leaders, town officials and residents are anxiously awaiting the start of the project to determine how traffic will be impacted and what that will mean to their communities.

"It's going to be tough, but we've got to work our way through it," said Larry McHugh, executive director of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, which hosted the meeting.

Fagnoli said DOT officials held a "major meeting" recently with stakeholders in the project, including emergency services officials, the contractor of the bridge restoration work and local leaders, to discuss plans for getting emergency services vehicles through the area during the construction. He said local officials have developed detailed contingency plans for emergency vehicles

"I'm encouraged that things will go smoothly," he said.

He also said the state's "smart work zone" management plan is in place and ready for when the bridge traffic is reduced to two lanes. That management plan will include the use of automated electronic message boards along highways in the region to alert motorists of traffic delays on and near the bridge.

The message boards will be updated automatically based on information from sensors in the area around the bridge. Some officials in the audience questioned whether the DOT or the contractor can manually update the signs in the event the bridge closes altogether as a result of an accident.

DOT officials said the signs can be accessed at anytime to change their message and that workers will be on the bridge 20 hours per day.

For the first two weeks or so of construction, Fagnoli said, the crews for the contractor will be working under the bridge.

"You may not see activity on top of the bridge right away but that doesn't mean he isn't working."

Susan Bransfield, first selectman of Portland, said the 18-month bridge reconstruction project will be difficult for her community and others, but is necessary.

"It's a major project and it's long overdue," she said. "Honestly, it's a little bit overwhelming."

Mark Walter, the first selectman of East Haddam, said he's concerned about how the bridge work will impact his community. The DOT has identified the iconic swing bridge that spans the Connecticut River between East Haddam and Haddam as a significant detour for southern-bound motorists seeking to avoid the Arrigoni. Walter said his town is already seeing an uptick in traffic on the swing bridge because some motorists already are trying to avoid the Arrigoni.

## MIDDLETOWN PATCH\_061711\_MCNAMARA

Add to that the bridge openings to accommodate boat traffic, openings that occur daily, and traffic in his community can back up quickly on the narrow, rural roads near the swing bridge.

Walter said he intends to contact the U.S. Coast Guard, which controls the bridge, to discuss the issue. He said he recently obtained a year's worth of data about the bridge openings and that information indicates there is no set times for when the bridge opens. Instead, it indicates it does so whenever big boats need to get through the area.

Walter said there should be a schedule for when the bridge opens to boat traffic and closes to vehicles so that motorists will know when to expect delays.

Walter also said the DOT needs to make sure that larger dump trucks, especially short ones with large loads, are not allowed over the bridge. Those kinds of trucks, Walter said, would put too much stress on the 100-year-old metal bridge.

Will you be avoiding the Arrigoni during the reconstruction work? [Tell us in the comments](#)

## WFSB.com

### Arrigoni Bridge Repairs Under Way

#### Drivers Can Expect Lane Closures, Delays

POSTED: 12:16 pm EDT June 6, 2011

UPDATED: 2:06 pm EDT June 6, 2011

**PORTLAND, Conn.** -- Drivers can expect lane closures on the Arrigoni Bridge as the preparation phase to reconstruct the bridge gets under way.

Right now, work will happen during off-peak hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in preparation for more significant shut downs in the next few weeks.

"Well it needs to be fixed, that's for sure, but it's a pain in the neck when you go over there anyway," said Margaret Milardo of Portland.

Milardo is one of an estimated 33,000 drivers who use the bridge linking Portland and Middletown every day.

Many drivers are dreading the next 18 months worth of construction, which is in the preparation stage as crews put out cones to begin surveying, staging equipment and setting up for full construction mode.

"I think it's going to be disastrous," said Jarvis Barton, who owns Portland Boat Works.

He sees traffic come down to the marina from across the bridge, especially on weekends.

"To go to Middletown to get something, it'll take an hour and a half to get over and back, just not worth while going," said Jarvis.

But state Department of Transportation officials said they just couldn't put off the inevitable.

With the original bridge deck built in 1938, they said the span is beyond repair.

"I think it's a good thing. I think it's about time we took care of businesses, it's been in bad repair, and it can be scary sometimes going over," said Karen Faraci of Portland.

Once construction begins, the bridge will be down to one lane in each direction permanently for the next year.

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[Government](#)

## Contractor Ready to Begin Preliminary Work on Arrigoni on Monday

Questions remain about when actual repairs begin along with the tough commute, but public safety issues might be settled.

By [Tom McCormack](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 6, 2011



As repair preparations on the 73-year-old Arrigoni Bridge start this week, what is not clear is just when actual construction to replace the aging deck of the span will begin. The heavy work will follow installation of long-term barriers that will restrict travel on the bridge to just two lanes directly opposed. The reduction in lanes are expected to cause delays for thousands of commuters.

Things will begin slowly on Monday with engineers getting an up close and careful look. Engineers from the state Department of Transportation and the contractor, Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, Mass., will take several weeks conducting examinations, taking measurements and finalizing plans for the task ahead. It will necessitate occasional lane closures during non-peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. There will be similar work between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

As for the start of heavy repairs, Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield says state officials put it at June 20 at the earliest. She feels there's even a chance it may slip until the start of July. Bransfield hopes it gets underway well before the summer vacation ends and school buses and parents driving children add to the congestion of the morning commute. She also hopes it comes soon so commuters can get adjusted.

The DOT said it first wants the best communications possible with motorists. A spokeswoman working with the DOT's Arrigoni team, Terri Thompson, said their next priority is getting what's called a Smart Zone in place and working properly. Thompson said they want it up and running "to keep motorists fully informed of conditions and delays."

Thompson says the DOT will be deploying sensors to measure the flow of traffic on many routes leading to the Arrigoni on both sides of the Connecticut River, as well as the bridge itself. She said they will also position about a dozen mobile signs that have electronic screens that flash brief messages. They are being placed on many roads where traffic approaches the Arrigoni. There are two samples already operating on both sides of the bridge, alerting motorists about upcoming temporary lane closures during non-peak hours.

When the sensors and signs are in place, they'll all be linked to a DOT control center, and all the signs will be coordinated to deliver information as quickly as possible. It's the first operation of its kind for the DOT.

Asked about June 20 being the target date for construction, Thompson says they are not willing to say just yet. When they do make a decision, they want to give commuters and officials two weeks notice.

Much, if not all the work, will take place on the road deck between the two 600 foot arches of the Arrigoni. The asphalt and road material will be pulled up as the steel grating will be dismantled beneath the surface. Officials say the contractor will build a special platform that will be suspended just beneath the bridge giving workers access to steel parts that have to be removed, and then provide support as new structures and grating will be going back up. That platform will be moved along as sections of the work are completed.

Bransfield said the first area to be worked on will be the south side of the span, the part of the bridge on the down stream side of the river.

Middlesex Corp. is already gathering some equipment into a staging area just underneath the Portland side of the bridge. The ground has been cleared for a lot more gear to follow. Several cargo containers are on the site, along with a supply of orange traffic barrels and cones.

Public safety officials now seem pleased that plans have been worked out for police coverage.

Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea, chairman of the sub-committee on safety matters, said they "are working closely" with the DOT and Middlesex Corp. He says this is a joint effort between all the agencies to "make sure it's safe and accomodating" to the traveling public as much as possible.

Details on police coverage on both sides of the bridge have been worked out. Shea said paramedics from Middlesex Hospital will be working much of the time with Portland EMTs and both units will be based at Fire Station No. 2 on Main Street.

Hunters Ambulance is expected to get necessary permits to station a crew to be operating on the Portland side.

The role of police to maintain a safe flow of traffic was also noted by Bransfield. In one example, she says police will direct traffic at the entrance to the bridge on Main Street, stopping oncoming vehicles for trucks coming up from the industrial park. There's a curved road that comes out just before the entrance to the Arrigoni. There is also a newly installed island with signage to make that merge easier to see.

The DOT already has a [webpage](#) dedicated to the Arrigoni project. Thompson and other DOT officials say they plan to be updating the site daily as work progresses.

Also available are electronic traffic alerts by email. Those interested can go to the DOT [web site](#), and choose region one. The Arrigoni, Route 9 and Route 2 are in that zone. The alerts can be customized by type, time of day and week, and frequency. Alerts about accidents or emergency road work are posted within a few minutes of their occurrence. It may take some adjustment at first, as the DOT sends out many posts for each region each day.

News

## Prep work for bridge construction begins Tuesday

Sunday, May 29, 2011 2:58 AM EDT

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*From the Middletown Police Department:*

Construction Preparation to Begin Tuesday May 31, 2011, on the Arrigoni Bridge Carrying Route 66 Over the Connecticut River in The Towns of Middletown and Portland.

The work involves preparatory work prior to the first stage of construction. This includes putting up directional signs for traffic and setting up the staging material. No temporary barriers will be installed at this time. Daily lane closures will be limited to off peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The Middletown Police Department is reminding motorists not to block the intersections. Motorists should not enter the intersection unless they can drive completely through the intersection and not obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.

The Middletown Fire Department is also reminding motorists not to block the driveway to the Fire Department on Main St.

The Town of Portland has an Emergency Response Plan in effect for the expect bridge closures.

The project involves the rehabilitation of Bridge No. 00524 (Arrigoni Bridge) carrying Route 66 over Route 9, Connecticut River, P&W Railroad, and local roads. The rehabilitation includes replacement of the concrete filled steel grid deck and sidewalks on the main spans. All work will be completed from the bridge and from a temporary work platform suspended below the bridge. Other work includes replacement of elastomeric bearings, pedestal repairs on the Portland side, new bituminous overlay on the main spans, and new expansion joints.

The bridge work will be completed in three stages with the first stage scheduled to begin in the latter part of June and the last stage to be completed by November 2012. During stage construction, there will be one lane of traffic available in each direction. Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained on either side of the bridge dependent on what stage of construction the project is in.

A portable smart work zone system will be installed to detect the presence and speed of vehicles and send that information to message boards to provide information on current traffic conditions to motorists. More information on the system and locations of devices is available at the project website. Once the system is on line a web link will be included on the website for public access.

A separate web page for the Arrigoni Bridge Project that includes information on the project is now available at the Department's website [www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni](http://www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni) . Any questions or comments related to the Arrigoni Bridge should be sent to [DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov](mailto:DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov)

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## Government

### Preparations on Arrigoni Bridge Have Begun

DOT workers are on the bridge today getting it ready for the more than year-long reconstruction project.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 31, 2011 Are you making plans to alter your commute when the Arrigoni work begins? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

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State workers today are beginning preparations for the reconstruction of the Arrigoni Bridge. The prep work includes putting up directional signs for traffic and setting up the staging material for the first phase of the construction project. No temporary barriers will be installed at this time and daily lane closures will be limited to off peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The staging work precedes the first stage of reconstruction of the bridge, which calls for replacing the steel grid deck on the bridge and the sidewalks on the main spans. The project, which is being overseen by the state's Department of Transportation, also calls for completing the work from the bridge and from a temporary work platform that will be suspended below it. Other reconstruction work includes replacing elastomeric bearings and pedestal repairs on the Portland side, putting down a new bituminous overlay on the main span of the bridge and installing new expansion joints.

The bridge work will be completed in three stages with the first stage scheduled to begin in late June and the last stage completed by November of 2012. Preconstruction is slated to begin June 6.

During the staged construction process traffic on the four-lane bridge, which spans the Connecticut River and runs from Middletown to Portland, will be limited to two lanes, one lane in each direction. Pedestrian and bicycle lanes will be open depending on which stage of the project is underway.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Middletown Police Department reminded motorists not to block the intersections when traffic from the bridge becomes backed up onto local streets. Motorists, police officials said, should not enter an intersection unless they can drive completely through the intersection and not obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.

The Middletown Fire Department also is reminding motorists not to block the driveway to the firehouse on Main Street.

Portland's Emergency Response Plan is in effect for the expected bridge closures during the project.

The bridge work is estimated to cost \$17 million.

Interested in a follow-up to this article?  [Keep me posted!](#)

News

## Arrigoni Bridge repairs to begin June 6

Wednesday, May 25, 2011 1:58 AM EDT

By JEFF MILL, Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Preliminary work on the Arrigoni Bridge repairs will begin on June 6, state officials announced Tuesday.

The work, scheduled to start a few weeks earlier than originally announced, will involve temporary lane closures, according to state department of transportation officials. Those closures will occur between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., the DOT said in a statement Tuesday.

The work involves preparatory prior to the beginning of the reconstruction.

Construction on the repair of the bridge's main span is expected to begin in the latter part of June, according to the DOT statement and continue through to November 2012.

Once the actual construction begins, concrete barriers will be installed closing off two of the four lanes on the bridge. Extensive delays are expected as a result of the work.

The Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, Mass., has been awarded the contract for the reconstruction of the bridge, which is almost three-quarters of a century old.

The contract totals \$16.946 million.

Apprised of the new schedule on Tuesday, First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield was positive about the first steps in the 14-month project.

"I think the sooner we get going the better," she said. "We need to get that bridge fixed so we can insure safe travel for our residents and the public at large."

Plus, Bransfield said, "The sooner we get started, the sooner we will get the project finished."

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply.

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## News

# Bransfield Calls Earlier Start Date on Bridge 'Welcome News'

Police presence and emergency vehicle concerns starting to be addressed.

By [Tom McCormack](#) | [Email the author](#) | 2:08am

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Portland First Selectman Susan Bransfield says word the preliminary work to repair the Arrigoni Bridge is starting June 6th is welcome news.

The state Department of Transportation was expected to start the project the beginning of August but announced earlier this month repairs would begin the end of June. This week came word that preliminary work would begin June 6.

Bransfield said it's encouraging the DOT and its contractor are "eager and willing" and showing they are going to get this job started as soon as possible. Given the condition of the bridge, a 3 out of 10, Bransfield says "If they can get going sooner than expected, it's for the better."

Bransfield also disclosed there will be "enhanced police coverage at both sides on the bridge." That was the outcome of a meeting of three area state senators - Eileen Daily, Paul Doyle and Len Suzio - with DOT officials. Daily represents Portland, while Doyle and Suzio represent parts of Middletown.

Bransfield said the police will be able to give drivers proper directions if needed on how to proceed. She says if there is an emergency, the police will be able to stop traffic and get any necessary emergency vehicles across the span.

In addition, Middlesex Hospital is promising EMTs will be stationed in Portland for medical emergencies.

Hunter Ambulance is still waiting for a permit from the State Department of Public Health. Bransfield said that is "going slower than the way we want it."

The police presence and emergency medical coverage were two concerns being pushed for by the public safety sub-committee, which is chaired by Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea. Bransfield expects the panel to meet again in the very near future, perhaps Friday.

Bransfield said one plan the DOT expressed in the past was to get local residents and commuters adjusted to the bridge project. Officials want to show "this is not being talked about, it's really happening." She said it might be another reason they are "pushing the calendar."

Prep for Arrigoni Bridge repairs to begin this week

by: [Brenda Sullivan | HTNP.com Editor](#) Sunday, May 29th, 2011



The Arrigoni Bridge spans the Connecticut River, connecting Middletown to Portland. Close to 38,000 vehicles cross the bridge on a typical weekday. A \$16.9 million repair and restoration project is now expected to be completed in November 2012. Photo source: DOT Testing and Inspection report.

While nothing dramatic is expected to happen this week, crews will be at the Arrigoni Bridge to begin preparations for a \$16.95 million repair and rehabilitation project.

What commuters will see is the beginnings of construction of a staging area for the materials and equipment for the project.

However, there also may be one or more lanes closed between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The DOT awarded the project contract to [The Middlesex Corporation](#) on April 26, 2011.

Once the staging area is ready, there will be a noticeable impact on traffic using this heavily traveled bridge over the Connecticut River.

The DOT has designed the project to be completed in three stages. The project is now projected to be done by November 2012.

According to DOT Assistant District Engineer Kenneth E. Fagnoli, who is overseeing this project, a temporary concrete barrier will shuttle traffic into one lane in each direction.

In the second and third phases of the project, work will shift to the center lanes, and then the other side of the bridge.

Pedestrian and bicycle access may be limited or not allowed as the project progresses, since the sidewalks along either side of the bridge are being replaced.

The DOT, at public meetings, has also said a net will be installed to catch debris so the river can still be used by boaters while repairs are underway.

The DOT will have technology at the site to monitor traffic, and conditions will be updated on the DOT's Arrogoni Bridge Project Web site.

You can follow the progress of the project (DOT PROJECT NO. 0082-0299 ) online [by clicking here](#) (see links to traffic cameras that are to be installed, etc.)

One of the main components of this project is replacing the crumbling bridge deck which is riddled with cracks.

The DOT has said that while the bridge is in dire need of repairs, it currently does not pose a danger to motorists.



An example of the deterioration of the deck of the Arrigoni Bridge. Photo source: CT Department of Transportation

According to the DOT, the deck has been rated 3 in terms of its condition; a rating of 4 is considered "poor" and 5 is "fair." A rating of 1 means it's about to collapse.

The rehab and repairs is meant to keep the bridge from deteriorating to that point. In fact, The project is expected to get at least another 20 years of use out of this historic bridge.

Besides the deck and walkways, repairs also will be made to the bridge's steel supports, expansion joints and the concrete viaduct on the Portland side.

According to the DOT's Web site, the entire bridge's drainage system will also be cleaned and restored.

Built in 1936, the Arrigoni Bridge carries Route 66 and Route 17 over Route 9 and across the Connecticut River, connecting Middletown to Portland, CT.

It is a 30-span bridge (known as Bridge No. 00524).

According to Wikipedia, the bridge – with two 600-foot arches – has average daily traffic of 33,600 vehicles, but more recent reports state it is 33,800.

Of the \$16.95 million cost, 80 percent is expected to be reimbursed with federal funds, and the remainder of the bill footed by the state.

Major repairs were made to the 75-year-old bridge in 1994 but at that time, there wasn't enough funding to replace the deck of the 3,428-foot long structure.

The public can inspect plans for the project at the CT DOT's Office of Engineering, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), after calling (860) 594-3206 to make an appointment.

*Posted May 29, 2011*

**Related links:** Arrigoni Bridge Testing and Inspection report (in PDF format)

<http://www.aiengineers.com/media/Arrigoni%20Bridge%20Inspection%20&%20Testing%20Program.pdf>

The building of the Arrigoni Bridge <http://www.portlandct.org/buildingbridge.htm>

Cool aerial view of Arrigoni Bridge by Wikimapia

<http://www.wikimapia.org/103790/Arrigoni-Bridge>

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## Government

# Preparations on Arrigoni Bridge Have Begun

DOT workers are on the bridge today getting it ready for the more than year-long reconstruction project.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 31, 2011 Are you making plans to alter your commute when the Arrigoni work begins? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

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State workers today are beginning preparations for the reconstruction of the Arrigoni Bridge. The prep work includes putting up directional signs for traffic and setting up the staging material for the first phase of the construction project. No temporary barriers will be installed at this time and daily lane closures will be limited to off peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The staging work precedes the first stage of reconstruction of the bridge, which calls for replacing the steel grid deck on the bridge and the sidewalks on the main spans. The project, which is being overseen by the state's Department of Transportation, also calls for completing the work from the bridge and from a temporary work platform that will be suspended below it. Other reconstruction work includes replacing elastomeric bearings and pedestal repairs on the Portland side, putting down a new bituminous overlay on the main span of the bridge and installing new expansion joints.

The bridge work will be completed in three stages with the first stage scheduled to begin in late June and the last stage completed by November of 2012. Preconstruction is slated to begin June 6.

During the staged construction process traffic on the four-lane bridge, which spans the Connecticut River and runs from Middletown to Portland, will be limited to two lanes, one lane in each direction. Pedestrian and bicycle lanes will be open depending on which stage of the project is underway.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Middletown Police Department reminded motorists not to block the intersections when traffic from the bridge becomes backed up onto local streets. Motorists, police officials said, should not enter an intersection unless they can drive completely through the intersection and not obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.

The Middletown Fire Department also is reminding motorists not to block the driveway to the firehouse on Main Street.

Portland's Emergency Response Plan is in effect for the expected bridge closures during the project.

The bridge work is estimated to cost \$17 million.

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Bransfield suggested all of us who use the bridge can think about alternate plans and routes on days when traffic will be especially slow.

Recently, when alerted about tie-ups on the bridge, Bransfield said she used the East Haddam and Putnam bridges to get back to town hall.

Bransfield agreed the 14-month project to rebuild the deck of the Arrigoni will impact local business. She pointed out, however, that some Portland businesses might benefit by work contracted by companies on the Middletown side that must be completed on this side. Portland companies could be hired to do some of that.

Retail business might also be impacted, but Bransfield said it will be closely monitored by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce.

As for other business in Portland, such as doctors, attorneys and accountants, Bransfield said appointments can be configured to times when congestion is less.

"Most of us are adults. This is a project that needs to get done," said Bransfield, adding that most all of us depend on the Arrigoni to get us to the other side of the Connecticut River. "If we all cooperate and work together it should be OK."

News

# Key issues remain unresolved regarding Arrigoni Bridge repairs

Saturday, May 14, 2011 12:29 AM EDT

By JEFF MILL, Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Crews could begin installing concrete barriers on the Arrigoni Bridge in as little as one month.

Work on the replacement of the center span of the bridge is expected to begin on or about July 1, state Department of Transportation engineers told local officials this morning. But even as the contractor, Middletown Construction, begins the estimated 15-month-long project, a number of key issues remain unresolved.

Middletown Fire Chief Gary Oullette said the state has yet to make a decision about stationing an ambulance on the Portland side of the bridge or whether to have police presence on the bridge throughout the construction day or just during peak hours.

Emergency responders – police, fire and ambulance personnel – have been working feverishly to have adequate coverage in place once the work starts. But, Oullette suggested, those efforts are being stymied by the state's continuing inaction.

Meanwhile, the newly installed DOT official heading the emergency repair project said crews will be working on the bridge in two shifts for between 18-20 hours a day five days a week. Two lanes on the four-lane bridge will be closed while the work goes forward, DOT Assistant District Engineer Kenneth E. Fagnoli said during a regular monthly meeting on the project. The meeting was held at the Main Street offices of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.

But the exact start date remains in doubt, Fagnoli added. The state has not yet secured the necessary Coast Guard permit needed to begin the project. And it's not just the Coast Guard.

Fagnoli said the DOT had looked at but rejected a number of suggestions raised at earlier meetings, including one that would reopen the northbound entrance onto Route 9 from Washington Street.

The project is almost certain to cause lengthy traffic backups on both the Portland and Middletown sides of the iconic but aging structure. Since the project was first proposed this past November, a number of residents have come forward with one or another idea to reduce traffic on the bridge during the construction.

But Fagnoli, who was named last month to replace John F. Carey as the lead DOT official on the project, said the DOT has rejected some of those proposals. Others have not yet been acted on, including a request to limit the openings on the downstream East Haddam swing bridge from two an hour to one.

Fagnoli said the transportation agency has rejected a proposal to establish a commuter parking lot on the Portland side of the bridge in an effort to reduce the number of single vehicles using the bridge daily. He said no decision has been made about working with major employers in the region to stagger their start and stop times for employees in an additional effort to reduce congestion on the bridge.

Jennifer Alexander, the director of the KidCity Children's Museum on Washington Street, complained she and other residents and businesspeople had brought forward "a lot of ideas so we can stay in business," but the state had summarily rejected them.

Alexander said the state must do more to reduce the congestion at the intersection of Main and Washington streets going north. Otherwise, the repair project will have “an unsustainable impact” on the revitalization of the North End as well as on businesses clustered in and around that intersection.

Fargnoli did say he was open to adjusting the length of the traffic signal at the intersection of Hartford Avenue and Route 9. The light stays green for 30 seconds, but then is red for the next 2 minutes 30 seconds.

Even as the start date for the \$17 million project draws ever closer, school officials from Portland and local residents raised new questions – and concerns – about the project. The state will use social media such as Twitter and Facebook to keep residents – and officials - informed of any dramatic changes in the traffic flow over the bridge.

In the meantime, two residents at Friday morning’s meeting offered radically different solutions to the looming problem. One, a Portland resident, suggested officials conduct a dry-run dress rehearsal, including blocking off two lanes, to gauge the probable impact on traffic. That proposal attracted considerable support from local officials.

The same resident renewed his call to only close one lane instead of two during the reconstruction. However, Chamber President Larry McHugh said doing so would add another year to the project.

“If we go another year, some our businesses will go under,” McHugh predicted. “The key to this is to get this done and over and get it out of our hair.”

The second suggestion, which came from a Middletown resident, was to scrap the repair project and build a new bridge instead. State officials said that was impractical, given budget constraints in both Hartford and Washington.

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com).

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**Arrigoni Bridge Construction Leaves Many Concerned**

Related To Story

**Lane Closures Expected Next Month**

POSTED: 12:28 pm EDT May 13, 2011

UPDATED: 5:13 pm EDT May 13, 2011



**MIDDLETOWN, Conn.** -- As the date of construction on the Arrigoni Bridge, which spans Middletown to Portland, gets closer, residents still have a number of questions regarding the project.

It's not just getting children to and from school on time that worries many. It's worries over emergency calls, like making sure ambulances can get over the bridge, especially when there are only two lanes of traffic, each way.

It was standing room-only inside the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce as its Arrigoni Bridge Committee met on Friday to get the latest update from the state Department Of Transportation and the construction company, which will work on the \$17 million project to replace the aging bridge's decking, sidewalk and fencing. The project is expected to last into the fall of 2012.

One of the suggestions coming out of the meeting was that before the work begins, the DOT should shut down the bridge lanes, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, to test how it will affect motorists and residents.

"The main thing will be gridlock on both sides of the river. Portland side will be backed up, could go to Glastonbury, East Haddam area. Of course on the Middletown side, downtown could be really, really bad," said Larry McHugh with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce.

Jennifer Alexander, who lives in Middletown and is the director of the Kid City Museum downtown, said the bridge needs to be fixed, but she's has plenty of concerns.

"What I'm worried about is we that have a convenience culture. People want convenience when they go shopping, out to eat with their families and if Main Street is blocked up with cars, we could lose beautiful historic Main Street," said Alexander.

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## Hometown Today News Publications (HTNP.com)

# Arrigoni Bridge Committee to meet Friday morning, May 13

by: Brenda Sullivan | HTNP.com Editor Friday, May 13th, 2011



The Arrigoni Bridge spans the Connecticut River, connecting Middletown to Portland. Close to 4,000 vehicles cross the bridge on a typical weekday. A \$15 million repair and restoration project is expected to begin this spring and be completed in October 2012.

Photo source: DOT Testing and Inspection report.

Teresa Opalacz, chair of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, announced Thursday afternoon that the Chamber's Arrigoni Bridge Committee will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, May 13 in the Chamber Board Room, 393 Main St., Middletown.

The meeting will include a report from the Emergency Management Sub-Committee, an update from Connecticut Department of Transportation officials (DOT) and the introduction of new business items.

The Emergency Management Sub-Committee of the Arrigoni Bridge Committee will also meet on Friday, May 13 at the Chamber at 10:30 a.m.

Built in 1936, the Arrigoni Bridge carries Route 66 and Route 17 over Route 9 and across the Connecticut River, connecting Middletown to Portland, CT. It was named after the State Senator from Durham who promoted the project, Charles J. Arrigoni.

According to Wikipedia, the bridge – with two 600-foot arches – has average daily traffic of 33,600 vehicles, but more recent reports state it is 33,800.



An example of the deterioration of the deck of the Arrigoni Bridge. Photo source: CT Department of Transportation

The Connecticut Department of Transportation plans to make repairs to the 30-span bridge (known as Bridge No. 00524) that include the deck and the two 4.8-foot walkways on either side of the bridge, steel supports, expansion joints and the concrete viaduct on the Portland side.

According to the DOT's Web site, the entire bridge's drainage system will also be cleaned and restored.

The “rehabilitation” project is estimated to cost \$15 million, of which 80 percent is expected to be reimbursed with federal funds, and the remainder of the bill footed by the state.

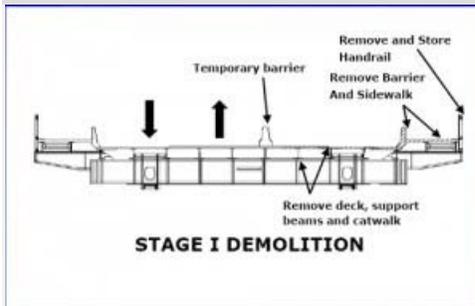
Major repairs were made to the 75-year-old bridge in 1994 but at that time, there wasn’t enough funding to replace the deck of the 3,428-foot long structure.

According to the DOT, the deck has been rated 3 in terms of its condition; a rating of 4 is considered “poor” and 5 is “fair.” A rating of 1 means it’s about to collapse.

The DOT has said the bridge is not currently a safety hazard, but the time to make these repairs is now.

Local residents have been following the progress of [the project](#) (DOT PROJECT NO. 0082-0299 ) because it is expected to take about a year to complete (October 2012), and could have a significant impact on traffic.

According to the DOT Web site, the Middlesex Corporation was awarded the project contract on April 26, 2011 and a preconstruction meeting to review the contractor’s schedule was to be held on May 10, 2011.



An illustration from a presentation about the Arrigoni Bridge project made in December 2010 show a temporary barrier that will contain traffic to one lane in each direction, allowing crews to work on the other two lanes.

The DOT has said the work will be done in three stages.

A temporary concrete barrier will shuttle traffic into one lane in each direction, so that work can be done on one side of the bridge in phase one and a staging area will be set up on the Portland side.

The next two phases will shift work to the center lanes, and then the other side of the bridge, according to DOT Supervising Engineer David Cutler.

The DOT, at public meetings, has also said a net will be installed to catch debris so the river can still be used by boaters while repairs are underway.

The project is expected to get at least another 20 years of use out of this historic bridge.

The public can inspect plans for the project at the CT DOT’s Office of Engineering, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), after calling (860) 594-3206 to make an appointment.

The project’s manager, DOT Supervising Engineer David Cutler can be reached at (860) 594-3210.

*Posted May 13, 2011*

**Related links:** Arrigoni Bridge Testing and Inspection report (in PDF format)

<http://www.aiengineers.com/media/Arrigoni%20Bridge%20Inspection%20&%20Testing%20Program.pdf>

The Middletown Eye blog <http://middletowneyenews.blogspot.com/2011/03/arrigoni-bridge-emergency-committee.html>

The building of the Arrigoni Bridge <http://www.portlandct.org/buildingbridge.htm>

Cool aerial view of Arrigoni Bridge by Wikimapia <http://www.wikimapia.org/103790/Arrigoni-Bridge>

Google Street View map <http://bridgehunter.com/ct/middlesex/524/>

A (undated) proposal for lighting the Arrigoni Bridge <http://www.lrc.rpi.edu/programs/futures/projects/arrigoni.asp>

# Arrigoni Construction to Begin in June

Announcement comes at a meeting of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce in Middletown.

East Hampton-Portland Patch

By [Tom McCormack](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 13, 2011

**Photos** Credit [Tom McCormack](#)



State Department of Transportation officials say the \$17 million dollar project to rebuild the Arrigoni bridge will begin as early as the last week in June. This is more than a month earlier than the start time previously announced for August.

State DOT officials on hand included Kenneth Fagnoli, assistant district engineer, who was chief spokesman at the meeting for the DOT. Fagnoli said a contractor has been hired and is now gearing up to begin the project. The contractor that won the bidding is the Middlesex Corporation of Middleton, Mass.

DOT officials said traffic will be very difficult in the early days of the construction, and conceded there will be gridlock, especially if accidents occur. Traffic will be limited to one in each direction and would be slow, so even a slight problem would cause longer delays.

Fagnoli says they would adjust timing and do whatever is possible to get the traffic through. Fagnoli said "after a couple of months of gridlock" people who have a choice and live further away will find alternate routes around the Arrigoni. He said given time, "it will relax."

As for the pace of work now planned, there will be two shifts 9 to 10 hours long, five days a week. Fagnoli said the the work will start at 6 a.m. and there will be a 2-3 hour break when supplies will be brought in, and then the second shift will begin.

The project engineer for the company, Tom Wood, said signs might start going up later this month. Some barriers will be put in place on the bridge in June prior to the actual start of construction.

Many on hand for the meeting expressed alarm and concern about wide spread traffic congestion during the work week and said alerts would be needed as quickly as possible each day. Jennifer Alexander, the director of Kidcity Children's Museum on Washington Street in Middletown, urged the

DOT to use the latest technology to get accurate reports to drivers about delays, such as using Twitter or text alerts.

A DOT spokeswoman at the meeting announced a website is already up and running devoted to the Arrigoni project. The link is [www.ct.gov/dot/arrigoni](http://www.ct.gov/dot/arrigoni). The state will also deploy mobile electronic "smart" signs on major highways leading to the bridge.

Others, such as Portland School Superintendent Sally Doyen, urged the DOT to call local officials directly with word about special problems. Doyen says a bus must go across the bridge each morning to get students to Vinal Technical High School. Doyen says "that bus has to make it back on time" because she says that's one of the buses for our school run within Portland. She says any delays generally "will impact schools" and their scheduled openings and class times. Doyen said unlike businesses which can stagger the start time of employees, the school system has no such option. Doyen is also concerned about getting children across the bridge to Middlesex Hospital if any student has an illness or is injured.

Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh, who presided over the meeting, said it would be a good idea to have the DOT to conduct tests for alerting the public and local officials. McHugh also said if there is complete gridlock every day, he'd advocate an emergency plan such as "24 hour construction." He said if the project extended beyond the 18-month time line, it "would be a dangerous thing" for businesses downtown who might lose customers who might avoid the area for too long of a period of time.

The new start date in late June also caught police and fire officials by surprise as well, and they expressed frustration over what they called a break down in communications with the state. They are members of a Public Safety Sub-committee developing plans for emergency services during the construction.

Middletown Fire Chief Gary Ouellette, along with Middletown Deputy Police Chief William McKenna, both say they still don't have necessary clearance for ambulance service to be standing by on the Portland side. McKenna also says they haven't been promised the money for 24-7 police coverage on both sides of the Arrigoni.

Both items are strong recommendations from the safety panel, which is chaired by Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea. The committee is made up of police and fire officials from Portland and Middletown. Shea could not attend Friday's because of other duties.

McKenna says "they've been trying to explain public safety issues" to the DOT. These include getting EMS vehicles across the bridge for medical emergencies and dialysis patients. He also said in the last year, there were about 300 accidents on the bridge requiring assistance, and the average time to clear those was 40 minutes.

"That was with four lanes of traffic," he said.

McKenna also explained the state earmarked \$250,000 for police assistance on the project, while public safety officials estimate the cost to be \$1.2 million.

Middletown Deputy Fire Chief Robert Kronenberger says the authorities on the state level don't seem to understand the requirements for mutual aid during fires. He says in this case, it involves getting large fire trucks back and forth across the Arrigoni. With two lanes, he says it will require coordination with traffic control using police on both sides of the bridge. He said mutual aid is frequently used between Middletown and Portland.

Members of the public safety committee will take up the issues again next week.

The next Chamber of Commerce meeting focusing on the Arrigoni Bridge will be June 17.

## The Great Arrigoni: Viewfinder

Do we take the 70-year-old bridge that links Middletown and Portland for granted? As August's center deck repair work approaches, we honor its majesty.

By [Cassandra Day](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 21, 2011



The Providence and Worcester Railroad Bridge was featured in Billy Joel's 1993 music video, "The River of Dreams." Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



This is what the Arrigoni Bridge looks like to residents of the Miller and Bridge streets area, which is closed off to through-traffic. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



When built, the Charles J. Arrigoni was the largest and costliest bridge in Connecticut at \$3.5 million. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



The Arrigoni (or Portland) Bridge carries Route 66 and Route 17 over Route 9 and across the Connecticut River. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



The double arch bridge over the Connecticut River was built from 1936-1938. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



With two 600-foot steel arches and painted robin's-egg blue, the bridge is still the longest in the state. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



Wharfside Commons apartments, right, Middlesex Corporate Center, center, and Sbona Towers, left, can be seen from the Arrigoni. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



River's Edge condominiums, center left, and Middletown Superior Court, center right. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



The Providence and Worcester Railroad Bridge looks inactive because it is usually left open. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



The passenger walkway over the Connecticut River is two-thirds of a mile long. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



Claustrophobics, beware. A panoramic view from the Portland side of the Arrigoni Bridge. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)



The great Arrigoni from the Portland side Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)

Named after the Durham state representative and later senator who championed its construction, the [Charles J. Arrigoni Bridge](#) is slated for much-needed repair work beginning Aug. 1.

Word from representatives of the state Department of Transportation that the project will be completed Oct. 1, 2012, and that two of the cross-river bridge's lanes will close for 15 months has the business community, members of the [Chamber of Commerce](#), local officials, commuters and residents understandably up in arms.

To salve the cacophony of repair-work critics, we offer this sweeping pictorial — views of and from the bridge.

[News](#)

## DOT Addresses Arrigoni Construction Concerns

Bridge work expected to begin around Aug. 1.

By [Tom McCormack](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 7, 2011



It was the first formal meeting about the Arrigoni Bridge project to be held in Portland and engineers from the Connecticut Department of Transportation fielded sharp questions from business officials and citizens. The focus was on anticipated traffic jams and safety issues during the 14-month project.

Dave Cutler, a supervising liaison engineer, said they are focusing on outreach using mobile signage and the internet to inform motorists each morning about the expected length of delays. The idea is to allow drivers to make decisions to take an alternate route if necessary. It's dubbed a Smart Zone and Cutler says it may be the first effort of its kind for a state project. It would use mobile display signs, as well as alerts by email and Twitter.

Cutler also said a company from Massachusetts, the Middlesex Corp., is the apparent low bidder on the project. He said the bid will be reviewed during the next several weeks before a final decision is made. The bid was just under \$17 million.

Transportation officials also said there will be police posted on both sides of the Arrigoni during most of the day, but couldn't say what the hours will be.

An ambulance also will be stationed on the Portland side. He said wreckers or tow trucks will also be on standby at both ends of the span.

Officials still expressed concern.

During the first phase, Cutler said, the bridge would have two 12-foot-wide lanes directly opposing each other. There was immediate reaction from those present. One man said, "That means for tractor trailers, it will be mirror-to-mirror," and Cutler acknowledged "it will be close." He also noted there would be no barrier separating the lanes.

Cutler went on to say it could be difficult and slow at times. He said there could only be two lanes because of semipermanent barriers that will be set up to protect construction workers.

When Cutler said oversized trucks were already barred from the bridge, it brought a few laughs, but he quickly noted that with police on both sides of the span, there would be more supervision, and felt that very oversized vehicles could be stopped before they got on the bridge.

Portland School Superintendent Sally Doyen and an official of the Nichols Bus Co. were both vocal about tie-ups causing delays for school buses.

The Nichols official recounted past delays during construction and when accidents occurred on the span. She said children were more than an hour late some days because congestion spread to side roads as well as Route 66 and Main Street.

When DOT engineer Patrick O'Mara was asked where the first mobile traffic sign would be set up on Route 66 for commuters, he said it would be between the Nichols Bus depot and the Dairy Queen.

A man said, "That wouldn't give East Hampton drivers time enough to make a decision." O'Mara answered that the signs could be easily moved and adjusted quickly. He said it's been the experience of the DOT that it takes several weeks for a project to have commuting problems ironed out. He

expressed confidence that the combination of electronic signs, additional DOT cameras and alerts by email and Twitter will help alleviate the worst tie-ups.

Others on hand asked officials about alternate routes to the west side of the river being compromised with construction projects. One man mentioned the long-running project on the Putnam Bridge and Route 3 in Glastonbury, and another just before Route 2, also in Glastonbury. He also mentioned work scheduled for the swing bridge in East Haddam.

Cutler responded that work would be expedited for completion hopefully before the start of construction on the Arrigoni.

The construction on the Arrigoni is scheduled to begin about Aug. 1, with a projected completion in mid-October 2012.

The Wednesday morning meeting was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of East Hampton and Portland. It was held in the meeting room of the Riverdale Motel on Cobalt Road.

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News

# CITY OFFICIALS: Arrigoni Bridge repairs slated to start Aug. 1

Friday, March 18, 2011 12:40 PM EDT

By JEFF MILL, Press staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Repairs to the Arrigoni Bridge will not start until Aug. 1, state officials announced Friday.

State Department of Transportation officials had initially thought the work to repair the center deck of the 70-plus year-old bridge might start as soon as June 1.

But during the regular meeting on the bridge project Friday at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, officials said the start date has been pushed back by some two months.

Dave Cutler, the supervising engineer and consultant design-bridge for DOT, said the DOT still expects to award the contract to repair the bridge in late April.

However, Cutler explained, it usually takes 12 weeks to assemble the material and stage the equipment needed to begin a repair project. That would take the start date to the end of July, he said.

But, Cutler said, that revised start date should not impact the end date of the project.

“We’re still looking to complete that project by Oct. 1, 2012,” Cutler said.

The DOT expects to close two of the four lanes on the cross-river bridge as the work goes forward.

A consultant for the project said Friday that once the work begins, he expects traffic on the Portland side to back up as far as the Dinosaur Mini Golf, which is located at 680 Portland/Cobalt Road.

The consultant, Steven P. Scalici, of STV Inc., of New York, said his calculations indicate that it will only take 15 minutes to move from the mini-golf range to the bridge.

Lt. Ron Milardo, the senior uniformed officer on the Portland Police Department, disputed that claim.

“No, it’s not going to take any 15 minutes,” Milardo said.

Meanwhile, officials say shutting the bridge entirely would only save four to six months of the total 18-month anticipated construction schedule.

James Ruitto, the project engineer for DOT’s District 1 Construction, said the work is constrained by the length of each section that will be replaced.

“We can’t do any more than 90-feet safely at a time,” Ruitto said. Some participants in the bridge meetings have suggested shutting down the bridge and getting the work done as quickly as possible. But, Ruitto said, that was not feasible.

# Officials Ask State To Allow Night-Time Work On Arrigoni Bridge

## Middletown Council Hopes To Ease Traffic And Safety Concerns

March 08, 2011|By SHAWN R. BEALS, sbeals@courant.com, The Hartford Courant

The common council has asked the state Department of Transportation to do some of the reconstruction of the Arrigoni Bridge at night.

The city and the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce have asked the state to include night work in the project to ease concerns about traffic congestion and safety during rush hour.

"For at least two construction seasons this bridge project is going to be a nightmare," said council Majority Leader Thomas Serra.

DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick said Tuesday that the agency is considering some night work, but that construction would not be on a 24-hour cycle. He said work would most likely occur in the morning, afternoon and evening, but not during the overnight hours.

The construction, estimated to cost \$15 million to \$20 million, is expected to start in July, and could last into October or November 2012.

Bidding for construction is expected to start this week, Nursick said. The project will completely replace the deck of the bridge, the portion that carries cars and people over the Connecticut River between Middletown and Portland.

"The original deck is still in place on this bridge from 1938," Nursick said. "There's no more rehabilitating it or repairing it. One-third of the bridge will be new."

Plans call for closing two of the four lanes on the bridge at a time during the construction. Officials have asked for that to be limited to one lane closure at a time, but Nursick said that is impossible because there wouldn't be enough room for crews to work on the narrow bridge.

"It's a bitter pill to swallow but it's what we need to do to keep our infrastructure safe," he said. "If there was a way we could do it we'd do it, but we also have to get the work done and get the work done safely."

The chamber has formed the Arrigoni Bridge Emergency Management Subcommittee, and named Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea chairman. It will review the DOT's plans and make its own preparations for getting fire, police and ambulance services across the bridge during construction.

The committee is made up of emergency personnel from Colchester, Cromwell, East Haddam, East Hampton, Glastonbury, Marlborough, Portland and Middletown.

The common council also asked for an architectural energy-efficient lighting component to be added to the bridge structure to improve aesthetics. Nursick said the DOT has not yet discussed that.

Thursday, March 3, 2011

## Arrigoni Bridge Emergency Committee Formed

Posted by Middletown Eye (Ed McKeon) at 1:28 PM

*From the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce*

the Chamber's Arrigoni Bridge Emergency Management Sub-Committee named Portland Fire Department Chief and Director of Emergency Management Robert Shea as its co-chairman.

The committee was formed in February to manage the concerns of the fire, police and emergency personnel of the following towns: Colchester, Cromwell, East Haddam, East Hampton, Glastonbury, Marlborough, Middletown, and Portland, along with Hunter's Ambulance. Each of these stakeholders will be impacted in some way during the state's upcoming repairs to the Arrigoni Bridge.

Chief Shea will direct the committee as it begins the communication of public safety issues that the State will need to address and make necessary changes to the repair plan of the bridge based on the committee's decisions.

Topics of concern to the Sub-Committee are the review of the current bridge diversion plan in Portland and Middletown and the effects of additional traffic, the set-up of an alternate Life Star landing zone east of the bridge, the review of Hunter's and Middlesex Hospital medical response to towns east of the bridge and the need for standby coverage, the establishment of primary and secondary transportation locations, the review of mutual aid alarm procedures, radio communication between construction supervisors, Middletown Car 3 and Portland Command at all times, and river hazards for boating traffic during construction and effects on the channel.

The next meeting of the Arrigoni Bridge Committee will be on Friday, March 18, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, 393 Main St. Middletown.

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### 1 comments:



**John Hall** said...

At this morning's meeting of the Chamber's Central Business Bureau, we heard that the bridge work will begin in July. Traffic will be reduced to 2 lanes, not 3 as many hoped, so we can expect traffic back-up. One sidewalk will remain open; perhaps there will be more people who leave their car in Portland and bike to Middletown. The Mayor and the Chamber have been active addressing the regional implications of this work, which effects communities such as Colchester and Glastonbury. Mayor Giuliano also referred to concerns about the bridge below the water level, which apparently are not being addressed in this project according to current plans, as well as a less than adequate state budget to reduce emergencies and accidents which will surely happen.

With construction taking place on Main Street in Middletown just this side of the bridge, at the new Community Health Center and the rebuilding on the site of the collapsed building next to the Salvation Army, we should have an interesting year ahead. Think of it as a time to grow in patience.

March 3, 2011 6:00 PM

[Post a Comment](#)

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News

## **DOT: Arrigoni decaying fast**

### **State officials voice need to get job done quickly despite traffic concerns**

Thursday, February 17, 2011 11:38 PM EST

By JEFF MILL, Press staff

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MIDDLETOWN – State transportation officials Thursday sought to reassure community leaders from both sides of the Connecticut River as the start date for major repairs on the Arrigoni Bridge draws nearer.

The steel deck that carries the roadway across the center span of the landmark bridge is decaying at a faster-than-anticipated rate, necessitating a complete replacement, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has said. The DOT proposes beginning work this summer and continuing it through next fall.

Faced with the threat of massive on-going congestion, local officials and businesspeople are pressing for work to continue into the night in order to speed completion of the project.

Addressing a meeting at the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Thursday morning, DOT officials said they have compressed the time frame for the expected two-year construction project in an effort to force the yet-unnamed contractor to speed up the work.

However, DOT officials would not yield on their proposal to close off two of the four lanes on the aging structure, which links Portland and points north and east to Middletown.

Joe Balskus, an engineer and Portland resident, has pressed the DOT to keep three lanes open. The two-lane alternative will only ensure “gridlock,” Balskus warned.

John F. Carey, the manger of DOT’s traffic engineering, countered Balskus’s assertion, saying three lanes would be narrower than standard lanes, and would cause motorists to flinch as they pass the Jersey barriers that will surround the construction site.

Carey said that assessment has been borne out by the snow piles that lined the edges of the bridge in the wake of the January storms.

Noting that the approximately 600 feet of the bridge surface will be open during the project, the transportation agency says it needs two lanes to safely conduct the work.

In all, the work is scheduled to take a total of 555 days, explained Dave Cutler, a DOT supervising engineer.

The project will be done in three stages, Cutler said, with work expected to begin “sometime this summer” and continue until Nov. 30. The middle phase of the project will begin at the end of November and continue through the winter ending on April 30, Cutler continued.

Stage Three will then pick up in May, and continue through until the expected end of the project on Oct. 30, Cutler said.

It is an aggressive schedule, Carey acknowledged.

“The DOT is just as interested in getting this job done as quickly as possible,” as are town officials and businesspeople, Carey said.

Throughout, Carey tried to paint an optimistic image of the project. But, Middletown’s Acting Police Chief Patrick McMahon pressed him on

what may lie beneath the battered roadway.

"You know how when you go to the doctor to get your gall bladder out and they open you up and find some really bad things?" McMahon said as he asked Carey how flexible the DOT is going to be.

"Do you have a contingency plan in place in case you open that bridge up and found something that means it's going to be a complete closure that going to last for weeks and months?" the chief said.

"Surprises are found," Carey acknowledged when a bridge is open. However, Cutler said DOT does not believe that will be the case in this instance.

"We're going to stay on it," Chamber president Larry McHugh said, because, "People can't believe what would happen if we go from four lanes to two."

Officials from both Portland and Middletown warned again Thursday of the overwhelming congestion that will almost certainly result from the project. They again raised concerns about how to safely get fire and ambulance services back and forth across the bridge in an emergency.

A chamber sub-committee has been organized to focus on those public safety-related issues.

Unfortunately, Carey said, most of the scheduled meetings of the subcommittee had fallen victim to the onslaught of snow during January.

McMahon also asked if the DOT could simplify the traffic plan by making the two lanes one way coming into Middletown during the morning rush hour and one way to Portland and east during the evening rush hour. Carey said the DOT had weighed that option but then ruled it out.

Among the other questions that Carey addressed was one about establishing a ferry service to help reduce congestion on the bridge. Carey said the idea was "unfeasible," because of a ferry's "limited carry capacity, as well as weather issues," and added, "It wouldn't be a significant carrier of traffic."

Much of the discussion focused on efforts to alert motorists to delays once the project does begin.

Carey promised the state will install "smart signs" on major roadways to alert motorists to congestion on the bridge, allowing them to take alternate routes.

After the meeting, several participants privately discussed the one option that has not yet been addressed: closing the bridge entirely in order to get the work done as quickly as possible.

While acknowledging that option would create its own problems, "I'd rather have to put up with six weeks of hassles than 18 months," one participant said.

Jeff Mill can be reached via e-mail at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com).

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Business

## **LARRY McHUGH: Snow removal and Arrigoni Bridge meeting wrap-up**

Monday, January 17, 2011 11:10 AM EST

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Big thanks to the Public Works departments throughout the county and the state Department of Transportation for their outstanding work last week when the toughest snowstorm in recent history hit the state. It is no small order to keep the roads clear and safe while being blanketed with 24 inches of snow, and I think that these agencies handled the situation very well.

We are prepared at the Chamber to host some great events this week. Tomorrow we are planning on a sellout breakfast meeting at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell when we welcome New York Yankees Senior Vice President and General Manager Brian Cashman at 7:45 a.m. Brian spoke to our Chamber for the first time in 2009 in front of a full house and I expect tomorrow to be a similar case.

Another event where we will have a large crowd is at the Chamber's annual legislative breakfast meeting on Friday, January 21, also at the Crowne Plaza. The Chamber will present its 2011 legislative agenda to the state legislators that represent our County, and members will also have the opportunity to ask the legislators questions about the 2011 legislative session.

I am very pleased with the outcome of last Thursday's Arrigoni Bridge Committee meeting. Thanks to all of those who attended the meeting from the Department of Transportation: Jack Carey, Julie Georges, David Cutler, Michelle Lynch, John Korte, Terri Thompson, and Jim Ruitto. Also, thanks to Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliano, state Sen. Paul Doyle, state Rep. Joe Serra, state Rep. Christie Carpino, business leaders plus police, fire, and other elected leaders from the region for attending the meeting and giving some valuable input.

This meeting was a case in point as to how the elected officials in the County have its best interest at heart. All of these leaders raised issues at the meeting that showed that they truly care about the economics of this region.

It is very important that we have elected leaders with this amount of concern because, as I said before, a mishandling of this situation will be detrimental to our local community and would impact all of Central Connecticut.

It would surely be ideal if the bridge repairs could be done all in one swoop. At the meeting, the DOT officials explained why exactly this strategy is not possible.

Jack Carey compared the work that needs to be done on the bridge to "dental work," which means that the work needs to be done a portion at a time. Repair crews need to perform the work in sections because of the very, very large scope of this project.

The approximate 55,000 square feet of the bridge's deck system and north and south sidewalks need to be replaced, and this type of repair is much larger of a project than any "spot repair." With this said, the construction will take place in three phases with each phase lasting four to six months.

However, with the extensive work that is to come going forward, it is important not to get ahead of ourselves and take things step by step. The design phase is expected to be complete by the end of January and the DOT expects to advertise the bidding process in the first week of March. The final contract is expected to be awarded during the first week of April with the goal of a "notice to proceed" for the summer of this year.

Plans are underway to create the best possible signage in the area to warn motorists of construction and delays on the bridge. Officials will do the best they can to give motorists an accurate time frame on the length of the delays. Routes 17 and 66 in Portland and East Hampton

are particularly important when it comes to signage.

As we move forward, it is the consensus of all involved that a subcommittee will be created to draft a workable plan for emergency vehicles and personnel to get onto the bridge if they need to.

We will have the subcommittee made up representatives from the fire departments, police departments and governments of Middletown, Cromwell, Portland and East Hampton as well as representatives from Middlesex Hospital, the local ambulance corps and the Middlesex Chamber.

One matter that absolutely needs to be ironed out at the next meeting is the question of making night work on the bridge optional or mandated. As of now, the workers will be allowed to work at night, but there will be no such mandate; workers will most likely be on site day and night.

I am completely behind Serra and Doyle in their stance that this night work must be mandated in the bridge repair contract. Both of them articulated this point at last week's meeting and this mandate is very important to the success of this project.

We at the chamber will continue to be vigilant of this very critical situation and there will be much more to come after the next meeting on Feb. 17.

For more information on Chamber events and activities, please contact Matt Fraulino at the Chamber at 860-347-6924 or email him at **[Matthew@middlesexchamber.com](mailto:Matthew@middlesexchamber.com)**

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# Arrigoni Bridge Project Scrutinized

Businesses, state and local leaders press state transportation officials to reduce traffic impacts

**EastHaddam-HaddamPatch**

By [Michael McCune](#) , January 14, 2011

Photos Credit [Michael McCune](#)



Local and state officials and area businessmen listened as officials from the state Department of Transportation described plans for a \$15 million overhaul of the deck of the Arrigoni Bridge. None of the 40 or so people packed into the chamber's basement Thursday morning disputed that the work is needed. But when it came to their turn to ask questions, many wanted to know how the state could cut costs. Not the state's construction costs; they meant the potential costs to the region in terms of lost business, congestion, slowed commutes and public safety.

John Carey, manager of traffic engineering for the DOT, said work is expected to start this summer and could, depending on what engineers find once the paving gets peeled back, require two construction seasons.

"I'm going to tell you like it is, and if it's less, we'll all be happy," he said.

Traffic will be funneled down to a single lane in each direction during construction, he said.

That didn't sit well with Mayor Sebastian Giuliano and several others in the audience, who urged the DOT to consider keeping three lanes open at rush hour — two in the direction of the heaviest traffic flow and one the other way — and to do as much work as possible at night.

At one point, Carey conceded that the plan called for nighttime work to be done "at the option of the bridge contractor." Clearly dissatisfied, state Rep. Joseph Serra (D-Middletown) and state Sen. Paul Doyle (D-Wethersfield) emphasized that the contract for the job should clearly stipulate that work be done at night to speed the project along.

Carey asked if the construction noise at night would be a problem. Chamber President Larry McHugh said no. "I'm more interested in getting this thing done," he said.

At the urging of audience members, DOT officials also agreed to look into speeding up road work on Route 17 in Glastonbury so that the Putnam Bridge, the next bridge to the north, will be able take the Arrigoni's overflow.

They also urged the DOT to come up with specific and effective ways to reduce traffic back-ups at either end of the bridge in Middletown and Portland. In Portland, morning rush-hour already backs up into Cobalt, McHugh said. "Can you imagine what it will be like? Traffic will be backed up into Marlborough, maybe."

Carey asked McHugh to form a subcommittee of police and fire officials from Middletown, Portland, Cromwell and East Hampton to explore ways of getting patients across the river to Middlesex Hospital in the event of emergencies, including the use of an emergency ferry service.

Toward the end of the meeting, a representative for Hubert E. Butler Construction Co. in Portland told DOT officials that 70 percent of tri-axle traffic his business relies on uses the Arrigoni Bridge. He said two years is a long impact on that business.

In response, several of the DOT officials bowed their heads quietly and took notes.

The next meeting of the Arrigoni Bridge Committee & Transportation Council is Feb. 17 at 9:30 a.m. at the chamber's offices.

What do you think the impact of possibly two years of construction involving the Arrigoni Bridge will be to the area?

Government, Business, The Neighborhood Files

## Arrigoni Bridge Project Scrutinized

Businesses, state and local leaders press state transportation officials to reduce traffic impacts

By [Michael McCune](#) | [Email the author](#) | January 13, 2011



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The next meeting of the Arrigoni Bridge Committee & Transportation Council is scheduled for Feb. 17, 9:30 a.m., at the chamber's offices.

News

# Officials face off over planned repairs to Arrigoni Bridge (UPDATED)

Thursday, January 13, 2011 8:38 PM EST

By JEFF MILL, Press staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Motorists who use the Arrigoni Bridge are on notice to expect extensive delays this summer as work begins to repair the center span of the 70-plus year-old bridge.

The work could carry over into next summer as well, officials of the state Department of Transportation warned Thursday.

Perhaps most critical for motorist and businesses, traffic on the bridge could be reduced to two lanes from the current four while the DOT replaces the deck system in the center portion of the bridge, which spans the Connecticut River and links Middletown and Portland.

A cadre of DOT officials met Thursday with more than three-dozen police, local officials and business people in a forum sponsored by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce.

An inspection of the bridge this past summer indicated that portions of the center span had degraded, officials explained.

Most recently the bridge had been rated a four on a sliding scale, with four equaling “poor.”

But during the summer inspection, portions of the center span were rated a 3, or “serious,” according to Dave Cutler, a supervising engineer with the transportation department.

Engineers are completing plans for the reconstruction of the 55,000-square-foot center span, Cutler said. Roughly 8-9,000 square feet of that total are now rated as “serious,” he said.

The DOT hopes to put the project out to bid in early March and award a contract in April, Cutler said. Construction could begin in July, he added.

The audience of local officials listened to that portion of the presentation without objection. But that changed when Cutler said the work would require reducing the traffic lanes from four to two.

He said the lane reduction would only create problems during the morning and evening rush hours, or no more than eight hours in a day.

Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliani took exception to that assessment, however.

“I can’t conceive how that’s only going to create problems for eight hours; an accident now wreaks havoc in downtown Middletown, and in Portland, East Hampton and Glastonbury,” Giuliani said.

“Three lanes would be an improvement,” he continued, as would working at night.

State Rep. Joe Serra and State Sen. Paul Doyle both urged Cutler to have the work done at night.

When Cutler said the DOT would consider that option, Serra indicated it wasn't a suggestion. He pressed the transportation agency for assurances that the contract would be written to include night work.

Chamber president Larry McHugh seconded that idea.

When DOT official Jack Carey worried there might be noise complaints about night work, McHugh reassured him there would be no complaints.

"We're interested in getting this done," McHugh said.

"We hear you loud and clear," Carey responded.

McHugh then asked if there was any flexibility in the DOT's plans to reduce the traffic to two lanes.

No, Carey said, there is no flexibility.

McHugh worried about the impact such a reduction would have on business in the towns served by the bridge – and beyond.

"With four lanes now, it's backed up to Cobalt," McHugh said. "If you reduce it to two lanes, it will be backed up to Marlborough!"

McHugh added that the repairs to the Putnam Bridge must be completed before the DOT launches repairs to the Arrigoni.

In an apparent effort to reassure McHugh, Cutler said, "We looked at no lanes" closing the bridge in its entirety. "We didn't look at that very long," he added to general laughter.

Giuliani said a solution has to be found to funnel traffic that is simply passing through the area en route to somewhere else out of the picture while the bridge reconstruction goes on.

In an effort to reduce the congestion that forms on Hartford Avenue by motorists who want to go north on Route 9, one attendee at the meeting suggested reopening access to Route 9 north from Route 66.

The DOT is scheduled to return with more detailed plans at a Feb. 17 meeting.

In the meantime, DOT officials pressed McHugh to establish a public safety subcommittee to discuss how to move police, fire, and especially EMS and ambulance traffic back and forth across the bridge and to and from Middlesex Hospital during the reconstruction.

Jeff Mill can be reached via e-mail at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com).

News

# Arrigoni Bridge repair meeting slated

Sunday, January 9, 2011

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Middletown Press

MIDDLETOWN — All stakeholders involved in the planned Arrigoni Bridge repairs are scheduled to meet this week at the Chamber of Commerce.

Repairs to the bridge that connects Middletown with Portland are expected to cost about \$15 million. Plans include replacing the bridge deck, expansion joints and the structure's sidewalks as well as repairs to the concrete viaduct on the Portland side.

"We must all react quickly to this developing situation, because if not handled properly, we could end up with major traffic congestion on each side of the Arrigoni Bridge, which is a major artery in central Connecticut," said Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh.

The chamber's Arrigoni Bridge Committee will host the meeting with officials from the state Department of Transportation, Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliano, Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, state Rep. Joe Serra, state Sen. Paul Doyle and elected fire and police officials from Cromwell, East Hampton, Middlefield, Middletown and Portland.

Preliminary design plans for the bridge's renovation were presented by state engineers at a public hearing in Middletown in December.

On a scale of one to nine — with one indicating danger of the structure's collapse — the Arrigoni Bridge ranks a three, according to project supervisor and DOT engineer David Cutler.

As it stands, the Arrigoni is in very poor condition with crumbling sidewalks and cracks. If rehabilitation does not occur in the near future, the bridge would "ultimately become a public safety issue," DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick has said. With the right repairs, however, the rehabbed bridge will last for several decades, he said.

The project is scheduled to go out to bid in February with a contractor hired by mid-April.

Eighty percent of the \$15 million cost would be federally funded, and the remaining 20 percent would come from the state, Nursick said. He also emphasized that the project is still in the design phase and can be modified as concerns arise.

Built in 1936, the Charles J. Arrigoni Bridge was the largest and most expensive bridge built in Connecticut at the time, costing \$3.5 million. Even today, its two 600-foot arches have the longest span length of any bridge in the state, according to historical data.

The bridge carries Route 66 and Route 17 over the Connecticut River from Middletown to Portland.

The meeting will be held Thursday at 10 a.m. at the chamber offices, 393 Main St., Middletown. For more information, call the chamber at 860-347-6924.

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News

## Meeting set for Thursday on Arrigoni Bridge repairs

Sunday, January 9, 2011 4:52 PM EST

By Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN – All stakeholders involved in the planned Arrigoni Bridge repairs are scheduled to meet this week at the Chamber of Commerce.

Scheduled repairs on the bridge that connects Middletown with Portland are expected to cost about \$15 million. Plans include replacing the deck area of the bridge, expansion joints and the structure's sidewalks as well as reparations to the concrete viaduct on the Portland side.

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Preliminary design plans for the bridge's renovation were presented by state engineers at a public hearing in Middletown in mid-December.

On a scale of one to nine — with one indicating danger of the structure's collapse — the 72-year-old Arrigoni Bridge ranks a three, according to project supervisor and DOT engineer David Cutler.

As it stands, the Arrigoni is in very poor condition with crumbling sidewalks and snaking fissures. If rehabilitation does not occur in the near future, the bridge would "ultimately become a public safety issue," DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick has said. With the right repairs, however, the rehabbed bridge will last for several decades, he said.

The project is scheduled to go out to bid in February with a contractor hired by mid-April.

Preliminary estimates place the cost of the project at about \$15 million. Eighty percent of the project would be federally funded, the remaining 20 percent would come from the state, Nursick said. He also emphasized that the project is still in the design phase and can be modified as concerns arise.

Built in 1936, the Charles J. Arrigoni Bridge was the largest and most expensive bridge built in Connecticut, costing \$3.5 million. Even today its two 600-foot arches have the longest span length of any bridge in the state, according to historical data.

The bridge carries Route 66 and Route 17 over the Connecticut River from Middletown to Portland.

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# Get Ready For Arrigoni Bridge Headaches

December 25, 2010|By MELISSA PIONZIO, mpionzio@courant.com, The Hartford Courant

The state already had maintenance plans in place for the Arrigoni Bridge, the 72-year-old, double-arched span that links Portland and Middletown across the Connecticut River.

But then the bridge's deck system got a low rating during a fall inspection — and that changed the plans from mere maintenance to a \$15 million renovation project scheduled to start in the spring and continue into 2012.

The work could wreak havoc for the more than 32,000 drivers who cross the bridge each day, many of whom might have to find alternate routes across the river.

The project, which is expected to take at least a year, will include replacing the concrete roadway on the 3,248-foot bridge, said Dave Cutler, a supervising engineer with the DOT.

"Normally there would be a lot more design time, but we are trying to expedite the design time so we can get the project underway," said Cutler. "The deck system received a rating of 3, which is serious, but not something that would cause a collapse or a safety issue. Three gets our attention; it's certainly something that we'd like to expedite as quickly as possible." Cutler said a rating of 5 is fair and 4 is poor.

During a recent public information session in Middletown, Cutler and Rich Ezyk of Stratford-based STV Inc., the architectural group that prepared the plans for the project, provided information on how the work would be carried out. Through a collection of photos, Ezyk highlighted problem areas such as potholes, sections where the concrete deck has been patched; deteriorating bridge joints and rust on the underside of the deck's arch bands, which cross both Route 9 and the Connecticut River.

The bridge, which cost \$3.5 million to build, opened to traffic on Aug. 6, 1938. It is named after Charles J. Arrigoni, the state senator from Durham who championed its construction.

The repairs will be done in three stages, said Cutler and Ezyk, starting with the erection of a temporary concrete barrier that will limit traffic to one lane in each direction, with a work zone on one side of the bridge behind the barrier. In the first stage, a portion of the deck system, metal sidewalk panels and handrails will be removed and replaced.

Stages two and three will include work on the center lanes and then the other side of the bridge. A staging area at the viaduct on the Portland side will be set up, Cutler said. Other than that, all work will be done on the bridge itself and should not affect water activity, such as recreational boating.

The federal government will pay for 80 percent of the \$15 million project, with the remaining 20 percent coming from the state, Cutler said.

"The project is on an accelerated schedule. We will put it out to bid and begin in the spring," Cutler said. "It should be finished in 2012. A lot of things need to be done before the bridge deck can be removed and it is not expected to be done in one construction season."

At the Middletown information session, residents and city officials expressed concerns about traffic delays, the overflow onto Route 9 and the effect of the construction on neighborhoods beneath the bridge.

Middletown Common Council member David Bauer asked if the use of road salt on the bridge during the winter might contribute to its deterioration. He suggested that bridge inspection reports be provided to members of the city's public works department and that the DOT do a better job with snow removal on the bridge's sidewalks. Cutler assured him that reports would be made available.

"It was a relief that it is not going to cost the city any money, but I was alarmed by the accelerated nature of the project — how quickly it went from being a maintenance issue to an immediate project," said Bauer. "That is why I suggested seeing some recent bridge inspections."

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she has suggested to DOT officials that the Arrigoni Bridge Committee be re-formed to provide input on the project. The committee, which Bransfield and Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh created in 2004, consisted of representatives from the chamber, the DOT, fire and police departments and officials from Middletown, Cromwell, Middlefield, Haddam and Portland. The committee met monthly to discuss bridge safety.

"They were very successful meetings; that's how we got those red and green variable message signs," said Bransfield. "It kept us all talking about bridge safety and helped us to establish diversion plans, which is how fire and police divert traffic when there is problem on the bridge."

Bransfield said she hopes the committee members will get a chance to look at the construction plans and discuss further ways to make the bridge safe. She said a planning session with public officials, the DOT and local business owners should be set up before construction begins.

"The state's job is to fix the bridge and ensure the safety and integrity of the bridge and make necessary repairs," she said. "And our responsibility is to ensure that commerce continues to occur and that public safety is ensured. I'll work very closely with the mayor of Middletown and other managers of area towns."

McHugh said he has scheduled a meeting with the DOT for Jan. 13 at the chamber office on Main Street in Middletown, and said he has already reactivated the Arrigoni Bridge Committee.

"We are reacting to this very quickly. We are very concerned about the situation that can happen," said McHugh, whose chamber represents hundreds of businesses in Middlesex County. "This could, unless it's run correctly, create parking lots on each side of the Arrigoni Bridge, especially on the Portland side."

The bridge and Route 9 are major arteries, not just for Middletown, but for a good part of the state, he said.

"The congestion could impact Wethersfield and the East Haddam area as people take alternate routes," he said. "This could become a major central Connecticut traffic problem unless it's handled properly."

When the DOT and bridge committee members meet, ideas can be shared on how to plan for possible traffic challenges caused by the project, he said.

"I want to hear DOT's rationale on what they plan on doing and then, hopefully, when we put people around the table, we can come up with suggestions," McHugh said. "You have to have major signage way out from the bridge for people to take alternate routes. The DOT has been a good partner with us in the past when we have had Arrigoni Bridge accidents."

News

# Arrigoni Bridge repairs to cost about \$15 million

Thursday, December 16, 2010 3:42 PM EST

By HILLARY FEDERICO, Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN — Major repair work on the city's iconic Arrigoni Bridge is planned for the next several months.

The state Department of Transportation will repair the existing deck and steel supports, which are deteriorating with age.

Preliminary design plans for the bridge's renovation were presented by state engineers at a meeting Tuesday and include replacing the deck area of the bridge, expansion joints and the structure's sidewalks as well as reparations to the concrete viaduct on the Portland side.

On a scale of one to nine — with one indicating danger of the structure's collapse — the 72-year-old Arrigoni Bridge ranks a three, according to project supervisor and DOT engineer David Cutler.

As it stands, the Arrigoni is in very poor condition with crumbling sidewalks and snaking fissures. If rehabilitation does not occur in the near future, the bridge would "ultimately become a public safety issue," DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick said.

"We have eked out all the life in that (bridge)," Nursick said.

With the right repairs, however, the rehabbed bridge will last for several decades, he said.

Though there is not yet a contractor for the project, Richard Ezyk, a structural engineer for the Stratford-based STV Inc., is working with the DOT to provide engineering and architectural services. Michelle Lynch, the DOT's project engineer, has also signed on to provide assistance. Nursick said he expects the project to go out to bid in February with a contractor hired by mid-April.

Preliminary estimates place the cost of the project at about \$15 million. Eighty percent of the project would be federally funded, the remaining 20 percent would come from the state, Nursick said. He also emphasized that the project is still in the design phase and can be modified as concerns arise.

Built in 1936, the Charles J. Arrigoni Bridge was the largest and most expensive bridge built in Connecticut, costing \$3.5 million. Even today its two 600-foot arches have the longest span length of any bridge in the state, according to historical data. The choice of large steel through arches for this location, with the roadway suspended from the arches by cables, allowed wide navigation channels on the river, minimized pier construction and provided a profile to the bridge that is aesthetically pleasing. Today, it carries Route 66 and Route 17 over the Connecticut River from Middletown to Portland.

Because it is such a heavily traveled stretch, at least one eastbound and westbound lane on the deck portion of the Arrigoni Bridge will remain open throughout construction, Nursick said.

The project, which will be carried out in three stages, is expected to begin in April and last for two construction seasons. Nursick said construction will most likely be completed by fall 2012.

Hillary Federico can be reached by e-mail at [hfederico@middletownpress.com](mailto:hfederico@middletownpress.com).

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News

## Arrigoni Bridge repairs to begin June 6

Wednesday, May 25, 2011 1:58 AM EDT

By JEFF MILL, Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN – Preliminary work on the Arrigoni Bridge repairs will begin on June 6, state officials announced Tuesday.

The work, scheduled to start a few weeks earlier than originally announced, will involve temporary lane closures, according to state department of transportation officials. Those closures will occur between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., the DOT said in a statement Tuesday.

The work involves preparatory prior to the beginning of the reconstruction.

Construction on the repair of the bridge's main span is expected to begin in the latter part of June, according to the DOT statement and continue through to November 2012.

Once the actual construction begins, concrete barriers will be installed closing off two of the four lanes on the bridge. Extensive delays are expected as a result of the work.

The Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, Mass., has been awarded the contract for the reconstruction of the bridge, which is almost three-quarters of a century old.

The contract totals \$16.946 million.

Apprised of the new schedule on Tuesday, First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield was positive about the first steps in the 14-month project.

"I think the sooner we get going the better," she said. "We need to get that bridge fixed so we can insure safe travel for our residents and the public at large."

Plus, Bransfield said, "The sooner we get started, the sooner we will get the project finished."

Jeff Mill can be reached via email at [jmill@middletownpress.com](mailto:jmill@middletownpress.com). Text MIDNEWS to 22700 to get news alerts directly to your cell phone. Standard messaging and data rates apply.

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News

## Prep work for bridge construction begins Tuesday

Sunday, May 29, 2011 2:58 AM EDT

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*From the Middletown Police Department:*

Construction Preparation to Begin Tuesday May 31, 2011, on the Arrigoni Bridge Carrying Route 66 Over the Connecticut River in The Towns of Middletown and Portland.

The work involves preparatory work prior to the first stage of construction. This includes putting up directional signs for traffic and setting up the staging material. No temporary barriers will be installed at this time. Daily lane closures will be limited to off peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The Middletown Police Department is reminding motorists not to block the intersections. Motorists should not enter the intersection unless they can drive completely through the intersection and not obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.

The Middletown Fire Department is also reminding motorists not to block the driveway to the Fire Department on Main St.

The Town of Portland has an Emergency Response Plan in effect for the expect bridge closures.

The project involves the rehabilitation of Bridge No. 00524 (Arrigoni Bridge) carrying Route 66 over Route 9, Connecticut River, P&W Railroad, and local roads. The rehabilitation includes replacement of the concrete filled steel grid deck and sidewalks on the main spans. All work will be completed from the bridge and from a temporary work platform suspended below the bridge. Other work includes replacement of elastomeric bearings, pedestal repairs on the Portland side, new bituminous overlay on the main spans, and new expansion joints.

The bridge work will be completed in three stages with the first stage scheduled to begin in the latter part of June and the last stage to be completed by November 2012. During stage construction, there will be one lane of traffic available in each direction. Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained on either side of the bridge dependent on what stage of construction the project is in.

A portable smart work zone system will be installed to detect the presence and speed of vehicles and send that information to message boards to provide information on current traffic conditions to motorists. More information on the system and locations of devices is available at the project website. Once the system is on line a web link will be included on the website for public access.

A separate web page for the Arrigoni Bridge Project that includes information on the project is now available at the Department's website [www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni](http://www.ct.gov/dot/Arrigoni) . Any questions or comments related to the Arrigoni Bridge should be sent to [DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov](mailto:DOT.Arrigoni@ct.gov)

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Editor [Michael Bartolotta](#): Heard some news you want us to check out? Let me know: [Michael.Bartolotta@patch.com](mailto:Michael.Bartolotta@patch.com)

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## Government

### Preparations on Arrigoni Bridge Have Begun

DOT workers are on the bridge today getting it ready for the more than year-long reconstruction project.

By [Eileen McNamara](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 31, 2011 Are you making plans to alter your commute when the Arrigoni work begins? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

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State workers today are beginning preparations for the reconstruction of the Arrigoni Bridge. The prep work includes putting up directional signs for traffic and setting up the staging material for the first phase of the construction project. No temporary barriers will be installed at this time and daily lane closures will be limited to off peak hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The staging work precedes the first stage of reconstruction of the bridge, which calls for replacing the steel grid deck on the bridge and the sidewalks on the main spans. The project, which is being overseen by the state's Department of Transportation, also calls for completing the work from the bridge and from a temporary work platform that will be suspended below it. Other reconstruction work includes replacing elastomeric bearings and pedestal repairs on the Portland side, putting down a new bituminous overlay on the main span of the bridge and installing new expansion joints.

The bridge work will be completed in three stages with the first stage scheduled to begin in late June and the last stage completed by November of 2012. Preconstruction is slated to begin June 6.

During the staged construction process traffic on the four-lane bridge, which spans the Connecticut River and runs from Middletown to Portland, will be limited to two lanes, one lane in each direction. Pedestrian and bicycle lanes will be open depending on which stage of the project is underway.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Middletown Police Department reminded motorists not to block the intersections when traffic from the bridge becomes backed up onto local streets. Motorists, police officials said, should not enter an intersection unless they can drive completely through the intersection and not obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians.

The Middletown Fire Department also is reminding motorists not to block the driveway to the firehouse on Main Street.

Portland's Emergency Response Plan is in effect for the expected bridge closures during the project.

The bridge work is estimated to cost \$17 million.

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