

REPORT OF MEETING

SUBJECT: Public Information Meeting – City of Middletown

DATE OF MEETING: December 16, 2013

BRIDGES:

<u>Bridge No.</u>	<u>Project No.</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Location</u>
3993	82-305	Middletown	West Street	Providence & Worcester RR

LOCATION OF MEETING: City Hall Council Chambers

IN ATTENDANCE:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>
Senator Paul Doyle	State Senate Deputy Majority Leader	
Representative Joseph Serra	State Representative	
Representative Matthew Lesser	State Representative	
Mayor Daniel Drew	City of Middletown – Mayor	mayor@MiddletownCT.gov
William Russo	City of Middletown – Public Works	william.russo@MiddletownCT.gov
Robert Dobmeier	City of Middletown – Public Works	bob.dobmeier@MiddletownCT.gov
Carl Chisem	City of Middletown – Public Works	carl.chisem@MiddletownCT.gov
Officer Doug Clark	City of Middletown – Traffic	dclark@middletownctpolice.com
Scott Hill	CTDOT – Manager Bridges and Facilities	scott.hill@ct.gov
Timothy Fields	CTDOT – Consultant Design	timothy.fields@ct.gov
Louis Bacho	CTDOT – Consultant Design	Louis.bacho@ct.gov
Joseph Scalise	CTDOT – Consultant Design	joseph.scalise@ct.gov
Derrick Ireland	CTDOT – Rights-of-Way	derrick.ireland@ct.gov
Gene McCarthy	MacFarland-Johnson – Design Consultant	gmccarthy@mjinc.com
James Hall	MacFarland-Johnson – Design Consultant	jhall@mjinc.com
Nicholas Giardina	BL Companies – Liaison	ngiardina@blcompanies.com
Steven Fraysier	BL Companies – Liaison	sfraysier@blcompanies.com

Several members of City staff were in attendance.

Approximately 35 Middletown residents were in attendance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The meeting opened with a brief introduction by Mayor Drew followed by the design presentation. The project was presented using MS PowerPoint and the key project plans were on display. Handouts of the bridge were also available to the attendees. After the presentation, the meeting was opened to questions and comments. The following is a summary of the presentation and comments.

Replacement of Bridge No. 03993 – State Project No. 82-305

Bridge No. 03993 is located on West Street in the city of Middletown, approximately 0.1-miles

south of Route 157. The existing bridge consists of a four-span, timber, multi-beam structure with a timber wearing surface and timber deck, supported on brownstone-founded abutments, wingwalls and timber piers.

The purpose and need for State Project No. 82-305 is to address the structural and geometric deficiencies of Bridge No. 03993. The bridge is structurally deficient due to the poor condition of the superstructure. Cracks are evident in the timber piers and the timber decking is deteriorated. The stone masonry abutments and pier foundations show evidence of mortar cracks. The bridge is functionally obsolete due the existing 17-foot bridge deck width being less than the required 32-feet measured from curb to curb. Contributing to the functional obsolescence is the existing 18-foot vertical clearance over the railroad tracks being less than the 20'-6" clearance required of structures over non-electrified railroads. The existing 7.5-foot horizontal clearance of the railroad to a substructure support (pier) is less than the 8-feet required, as measured from the center of the tracks to the nearest substructure support.

The recommended course of action for this structure involves replacing the existing bridge with a new single-span structure consisting of a concrete deck and superstructure supported by new cast-in-place concrete abutments and wingwalls. The proposed curb-to-curb width over the new bridge will match the approach roadway width of 28-feet by providing two 14-foot travel lanes. A 5-foot sidewalk will be provided along the east side of West Street on the bridge and within the project limits. Minor adjustments to the West Street profile will be made to improve sight distance and maintain the existing 18-feet of vertical clearance over the railroad tracks in the proposed condition. It is anticipated that the proposed project will involve approximately 600-feet of roadway reconstruction.

The proposed construction will resolve all existing structural deficiencies. Design exemptions will be required to allow the proposed bridge to have a curb-to-curb width of less than 32-feet and a vertical clearance over the railroad tracks of less than 20'-6".

During construction, West Street will be closed at the bridge and traffic will be detoured via Route 157 to Wadsworth Street. Route 157 is a two-lane road and has an estimated 2012 Average Daily traffic of 1,900 vehicles. Wadsworth Street is a two-lane local road.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will require a Stormwater Discharge permit in order for this project to be constructed.

It is anticipated that utility poles in the project limits will need to be relocated during construction of the proposed bridge. It is anticipated that the manholes for a sewer line running under the tracks to the west of the bridge will need to be reset as part of this project. It is anticipated that the existing gas main will be relocated and supported on the proposed bridge.

A representative from CTDOT discussed the right-of-way/easement process. Five permanent slope easements and two temporary construction easements will be required in order to construct the proposed bridge.

The estimated construction cost for the replacement of Bridge No. 03993 is approximately \$3,000,000. Design of the project is anticipated to be funded using Federal (80%) and State (20%) capital while construction of the project is anticipated to be funded using State (100%) capital.

It is anticipated that construction activities for State Project No. 82-305 will start in the spring of 2016.

The above schedules should be considered tentative as the start of construction activities is predicated on the receipt of all necessary environmental permits, the acquisition of all required rights-of-way, and the availability of funding.

TRANSACTIONS AND DETERMINATIONS:

A resident expressed concern that sight distance while trying to leave his driveway will be worsened as a result of the proposed bridge construction. A representative of BL companies stated that the proposed design includes improvements to the approaches to the bridge. These improvements will make the sight distance slightly better than what currently exists. This, coupled with speed humps and stop signs in close proximity to the bridge will allow the resident to safely pull in and out of his driveway (see comment response below for more information on stop signs and speed humps).

A resident asked if anything would be done about storm drainage. He noted that the current storm drains outlet onto the railroad tracks and the resident's backyard exhibits ponding of water as a result. A representative of CTDOT and BL Companies responded that there will be a new properly designed drainage system, including structures and pipes, that will be included as part of the proposed project. Drainage as it pertains to the roadway will be handled by this system.

Several residents acknowledged that the existing bridge, due to its narrow curb-to-curb width, acts as a traffic calming measure by slowing traffic on West Street and that the proposed bridge without stop signs would promote faster vehicular speeds on the bridge and along the road. Several residents questioned why the proposed bridge has a 28-foot curb-to-curb width. A representative of BL Companies responded that the proposed bridge curb-to-curb width matches the existing West Street approach roadway width of 28-feet. Narrower curb-to-curb widths were determined to not calm traffic in it of itself unless the bridge was designed as a one-way bridge. A one-way bridge would not be a desirable design due to the fact that the existing West Street traffic pattern is two-way. A representative of BL Companies and CTDOT suggested that the City entertain several options of treatments to the project area on West Street to help facilitate slower traffic. Since West Street is a local road, speed humps and stop signs at either approach to the bridge and within the project limits could be incorporated into the project if approved by the City.

Several residents stated that the existing bridge, due to its narrow geometry and current 10-ton weight restriction, acts as a means to deter truck traffic and that the proposed bridge would promote heavy vehicle (large trucks) traffic through the project area. It was suggested by residents that "No Thru Trucks" signs be posted along West Street as a means to deter truck

traffic. A resident suggested putting a height restriction on the proposed bridge (or cover the proposed bridge). A representative of BL Companies stated that truck traffic would likely increase as a result of the proposed bridge and suggested that the City, due to the local nature of West Street, investigate means of discouraging truck traffic over the proposed structure. A representative of the City Traffic Division noted that “No Thru Trucks” signs could be installed but currently there is no way to legally enforce obedience/adherence to such signs. A representative of CTDOT noted that a height restriction on the proposed bridge would not be desirable since it might prohibit emergency vehicles from crossing the bridge.

A resident asked if an at-grade crossing was considered as a replacement design for the existing bridge. A representative of BL Companies responded that it was considered but was found to be undesirable due a steep (approximately 9%) down-grade required on West Street approaching the tracks from the south. Another at-grade option considered and found to be undesirable was of raising the railroad tracks and creating an at-grade crossing at the new track elevation. There would still be a downgrade approaching the tracks from the south, which is not ideal, and designing the proper grade of the tracks to match back to existing may impact the railroad bridge over Route 66 or the existing at-grade crossing at Butternut Street.

A resident suggested that a traffic circle be placed at the Butternut Street intersection with West Street as a means to calm traffic. A resident suggested that a traffic light be placed at the Butternut and West Street intersection. A representative of BL Companies stated that the City would need to commit to such design features and that such endeavors are beyond the scope of the subject bridge replacement project.

A discussion was made about the inclusion of a sidewalk along the east side of West Street and the proposed bridge. Several residents voiced their approval of such a design feature. One resident questioned why a 5-foot sidewalk was included in the design. A resident suggested that sidewalks be incorporated on both sides of the proposed bridge. A resident requested that the proposed sidewalk be wide enough to accept motorized scooters that are commonly operated by handicapped individuals. A representative of BL Companies stated that a 5-foot wide sidewalk was chosen to exceed the minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and to match into the existing sidewalk on the southern end of the project limits. A sidewalk on both sides of the bridge was not considered since the sidewalk in the vicinity of the project is currently only located on the east side of West Street. A representative from CTDOT stated that, included as part of this project, the proposed sidewalk on the east side of West Street shall be extended beyond the current northern limits of the project to meet with the terminus of a sidewalk just south of the Route 66 and West Street intersection.

A few residents requested that pedestrians be accommodated at the project site during construction. A pedestrian bridge was suggested by a resident as a means to accomplish this. A representative of BL Companies responded that although West Street vehicular traffic will remain detoured during construction, pedestrian accommodations through the project area during construction, including a temporary bridge for pedestrians, will be investigated.

Several residents questioned why the idea of rehabilitating the bridge, instead of replacing it, was not considered in the design process. A resident asked if it was possible to replace the wooden

deck with a new wooden or concrete deck of similar dimensions. A representative of BL Companies stated that based on the most recent inspection report, the existing wood deck has been replaced so many times that it no longer has room for more anchor bolt holes to be drilled through the wood without compromising the structural integrity of the deck. Also, the existing abutments are stone masonry from the 1930s and exhibit areas of cracking and repointing of the mortar. It would not be advisable to place a new superstructure (lifespan ~ 75 years) on the original abutments (remaining life span ~ 25 years). Rehabilitating the existing bridge was not considered for these reasons, and because of the fact that the geometric deficiencies would remain unaddressed.

A resident representing Complete Streets Committee from the city of Middletown stated that West Street is a key bike route to cross Route 66 and connects the northern part of the City with the southern part of the City. The resident suggested the use of narrow lanes and wider shoulders on the proposed bridge and the use of “Shared Use” signs with shared lane markings on the bridge and approach roadway. The resident also suggested that a separate pedestrian bridge be investigated. A representative from BL Companies stated that restriping the proposed roadway lanes on the bridge to be two 10-foot lanes and two 4-foot shoulders would be considered. He also responded that pedestrians will be accommodated on the proposed bridge. Since West Street is a local road, shared use signs along the road and shared lane markings within the project limits could be incorporated into the project if approved by the City.

A resident asked if this bridge project will be coordinated with a proposed intersection improvement project at West Street and Route 66. A representative of BL Companies responded that the two projects will be coordinated, as needed.

A resident requested that illumination be included on the proposed bridge. A representative of BL Companies stated that illumination will be incorporated into the design. The existing illumination along West Street will be maintained within the project limits.

A resident asked what the current traffic counts were on the bridge. A representative from BL Companies stated that a new count may reveal more traffic than the 2011 ADT year data available at the time of the meeting.

A resident expressed concern that the proposed detour will not be followed by truck/vehicular traffic since Butternut Street acts as a cut-through to West Street. A representative of BL Companies stated that the proposed detour route was chosen for its close proximity to the project site, its ability to handle the existing traffic volume as well as its available turning radii required by trucks. Butternut Street was not chosen as a detour route due to restrictive roadway geometry.

A discussion was made concerning several design options that should be considered instead of the proposed design presented at the meeting. A resident suggested the use of a movable bridge system over the tracks and lowering the road at the bridge to make sight lines better. Another resident suggested realigning the horizontal geometry of West Street so that horizontal curves would be introduced at the bridge to create a winding road effect at the bridge crossing, thereby slowing traffic down. A resident suggested the complete removal of the bridge and not rebuilding it. A representative of BL Companies responded that these suggestions will be

considered. A complete removal of the bridge without a replacement bridge was not encouraged due to the lack of pedestrian accommodation under that scenario. A multi-use pedestrian bridge would need to be installed at a minimum. In addition, if the roadway was closed off at this location, the current volume of traffic would be rerouted to the surrounding roadway network.

A resident asked if the project was federally funded. A representative from CTDOT responded that the design of the project is anticipated to be funded using Federal (80%) and State (20%) capital.

Construction of the project is anticipated to be funded using state (100%) capital.

A resident asked about the process of incorporating public comment into the design of the project. A representative of CTDOT responded that any comments will be recorded and answered in a Report of Meeting. The answers to comments may require further investigation into a comment on the part of the designer to determine if a suggestion/comment is reasonable. If a comment carries a valid argument, the design can still be revised to accommodate the comment.

Any questions or comments regarding these projects or minutes should be directed to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Attention: Mr. Scott Hill, Manager of Bridges and Facilities, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06111.

Submitted by: _____
Steven D. Fraysier

Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Date: _____