

**Department of Transportation
Project No. 101-113
Replacement of Bridge No. 02781
Route 184 (Providence - New London Turnpike) over Shunock River
Town of North Stonington**

**February 24, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
North Stonington New Town Hall Conference Room**

Minutes

Present:

Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT or Department)

Julie F. Georges, Transportation Principal Engineer
Bartholomew P. Sweeney, Transportation Supervising Engineer
Mary E. Baker, Transportation Engineer
Michael A. Washington, District 2 Construction Office
Derrick P. Ireland, Office of Rights of Way

Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM)

E. Allen Randall, Liaison Director
Robert A. Cosker, Project Engineer

Town of North Stonington (Town)

Nicholas H. Mullane, II, First Selectman
Shawn P. Murphy, Selectman
Bill Ricker, Selectman

Presentation:

The Public Information Meeting was presented as the first major agenda item at the North Stonington Board of Selectmen's regular monthly meeting. First Selectman Mullane called the meeting to order. He noted that the Board of Selectmen meetings are routinely audio-recorded and, as such, the Public Information Meeting would be included on the recording. He then introduced ConnDOT's Mary Baker, who presented the following information:

- ConnDOT's responsibility for initiating and implementing projects to maintain and enhance the State's transportation infrastructure
- CJM's role as Consultant Liaison Engineers retained to supervise the design development of this bridge project
- Project goals of efficiently and cost-effectively replacing Bridge No. 02781, while minimizing disturbance to the travelling public

- Existing Bridge Description
 - Reinforced concrete slab structure built in 1935 and most recently rehabilitated in 1989
 - Located on a horizontally curved section of Route 184, between the Route 2 (Norwich-Westerly Road) rotary to the west and the Route 49 (Pendleton Hill Road) intersection to the east. Surrey Lane situated immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the bridge
 - Carries one lane of Route 184 traffic in both directions
 - Average Daily Traffic (ADT) (2007 data): 7,000 vehicles (3%, or 210±, trucks)
 - Cast-in-place reinforced concrete slab superstructure
 - Reinforced concrete, timber friction pile-supported substructure (foundation)
 - Total Length = 28 feet; Clear Span = 22 feet
 - Widths: out-to-out = 35'-3"; between curbs = 30'-0"
- Reasons for Project
 - Structurally deficient ("poor" condition of concrete superstructure)
 - Moderate substructure deterioration
 - Scour critical (exposed abutment footings)
 - Hydraulically inadequate (constricted bridge waterway opening causes wetting of concrete slab bottom and overtopping of west approach roadway during significant storm events)
 - Functionally obsolete deck width (minimum 32 feet curb-to-curb required vs. 30 feet existing)

CJM's Robert Cosker then described the proposed construction:

- Replace bridge with a longer, slightly wider single span structure
 - Total Length = 73 feet (vs. 28 feet existing); Clear Span = 62 feet (vs. 22 feet existing)
 - Widths: out-to-out = 35'-8" (vs. 35'-3" existing); between curbs = 32'-0" (vs. 30'-0" existing)
 - Superstructure to be cast-in-place reinforced concrete deck on galvanized steel beams
 - Substructure to be steel pile-supported integral abutments
- Place rock riprap along river banks for erosion protection
- Raise roadway profile 2.5 feet (±) at the bridge to improve hydraulic efficiency of structure and provide nearly 1 foot of bridge underclearance to river during flood events
- Reconstruct pavement full depth to 345 feet (±) east and 385 feet (±) west of bridge for transition from elevated roadway to existing roadway
- Construct roadway drainage improvements
- Replace roadside safety appurtenances (guide railing)

Mr. Cosker continued with a synopsis of project impacts with respect to the following:

- Public Utilities – relocation of overhead telephone, electric and cable television poles and wires along south side of the bridge
- Environmental Resources – Permits and Approvals required:
 - Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Permit from Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (ConnDEP)
 - Flood Management Certification Approval from ConnDEP
 - Project authorization under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Programmatic General Permit
- Rights-of-Way - relocation of private driveway at the northeast corner of the bridge

The method by which the construction would be accomplished was discussed. A complete closure of the bridge and detouring of traffic over the following State owned and maintained roadways is proposed:

- Route 49
- State Road (SR) 617 (connector between I-95 Southbound Exit 92 and Route 2)
- Route 2

The length of the detour travelling between opposite ends of the bridge is approximately 3.25 miles. The rationale for proposing the use of a detour rather than utilizing other means of construction that would maintain traffic on-site was conveyed in terms of the benefits offered by detour implementation:

- Ease of construction
- Fastest construction time
- Best quality of construction
- Least expensive construction cost

Ms. Baker and Mr. Cosker concluded the presentation with statements of the anticipated project cost, funding and schedule:

- Cost estimated at \$2,000,000; 80% federal funds and 20% state funds
- Construction duration of 8 months beginning in the Spring of 2012; schedule is preliminary and predicated upon funding availability and receipt of all required environmental permits and approvals

Public Comments and Questions:

The three selectmen were first in offering comments and questions:

- Selectman Ricker inquired about maintaining access to and from Surrey Lane during construction and whether consideration had been given to re-aligning Surrey Lane to create a “T” intersection with Route 184. Concern was also expressed regarding the proposed detour’s effect on emergency service response times.

Response: The Department indicated that ingress and egress to and from Surrey Lane would be maintained at all times during construction. While funding guidelines would generally preclude undertaking major roadway improvements within a bridge rehabilitation or replacement project, ConnDOT agreed to evaluate what could be done to adjust the intersection configuration and implement improvements if reasonably achievable within the limits of Surrey Lane construction appurtenant to the Route 184 roadway elevation change. The Department will also coordinate with local police, fire and ambulance agencies to ensure that public safety needs are accommodated during construction.

- Selectman Murphy questioned the impact that the roadway elevation increase would have on sight lines.

Response: It was explained that the bridge is currently located within a sag vertical curve (or in a depressed section of roadway). As such, the proposed raising of the bridge and adjacent roadway approaches would not create a “hump” that would compromise sight lines. The proposed vertical geometry is being designed to meet or exceed existing conditions.

- First Selectman Mullane requested that a dry hydrant be installed near the bridge crossing to enhance fire suppression capabilities in the area. He also requested that the proposed bridge incorporate aesthetically pleasing treatments. Finally, First Selectman Mullane wanted to ensure that fish habitat would not be adversely affected during or after construction.

Response: ConnDOT will coordinate further with the Town regarding the dry hydrant installation. The use of form-lined concrete to produce an aesthetically pleasing appearance of the new structure was offered; the Department will also coordinate further with the Town on the specifics (color, pattern, etc.) of the concrete form-liners to be utilized. With respect to fish habitat protection, ConnDEP will review the project and recommend any necessary mitigative measures as part of the environmental permitting process.

In addition to a newspaper reporter for The Westerly Sun, three (3) members of the general public attended the meeting. The public’s comments and concerns were as follows:

- A local resident inquired as to the potential use of a temporary bridge to maintain traffic at the site during construction. She expressed concern about detouring large, slow-moving farm equipment over SR 617. She requested that the Department consider installing I-95 signage to advise traffic destined for the casino to utilize Exit 92 during construction. Moreover, the Town advocated permanent I-95 signage revisions in an attempt to re-direct casino-bound traffic to this exit and not Exit 93.

Response: ConnDOT indicated that construction of a temporary bridge was neither reasonably feasible nor prudent due to the associated adverse impacts to regulated wetland resources and private property, as well as the increased construction time and costs that would result. The Department agreed to further investigate the I-95 signage issue.

- Another resident expressed concern that the proposed bridge replacement project could expand to one of greater scope. Specifically, she was apprehensive of a more extensive widening of Route 184.

Response: The Department assured this resident that the proposed project was initiated and will be implemented for the sole purpose of addressing the structural and functional deficiencies of the Shunock River bridge. As a means of providing further assurance, the Department agreed to send progress submissions of the design to the Town. This will also serve as an opportunity to apprise the Town of any minor changes that may occur as the design development progresses to completion.

- A third resident reiterated concern for emergency service response times with the proposed detour in place. He also questioned the need to temporarily adjust the traffic signal operational characteristics at the intersection of Route 49, SR 617 and the I-95 Southbound Exit 92 ramp. Finally, he inquired as to the source of current ponding of water on his property from Route 184.

Response: ConnDOT will evaluate and adjust, if necessary, the signal timings at the subject intersection as part of the proposed detour plan development. District 2 Construction's Michael Washington agreed to meet with the resident in the field to investigate the ponding problem, and the drainage design proposed for the project will consider the findings of this field meeting.

Adjournment: The Public Information Meeting portion of the Board of Selectmen's meeting ended at approximately 8:15 p.m.