

**Department of Transportation  
Project No. 112-114  
Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 02197  
Route 17A over Carr Brook  
Town of Portland  
Public Information Meeting**

**Monday, March 12, 2012, 7:00 p.m.  
Portland Public Library, Mary Flood Room  
20 Freestone Avenue  
Portland, Connecticut**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Scott A. Hill – Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)  
Louis D. Bacho – CTDOT  
Derrick Ireland – CTDOT  
Richard Kelsey – Portland Director of Public Works  
Thomas M. Ryan – Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM)  
Mark F. Levesque – CJM  
Jeffrey J. Fontaine – CJM  
Remo Lalama – Luchs Consulting Engineers  
12 Residents

**Presentation:**

A presentation was delivered by Mr. Louis D. Bacho from the Department and Mr. Jeffrey J. Fontaine from Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C.

The following items were included in the presentation:

- The existing Route 17A bridge is a single span, reinforced concrete frame structure with a clear span length of 13'-0" and a curb-to-curb roadway width of 23'-2".
- The bridge has been recommended for rehabilitation due to structural deficiencies (substructure rating of "4" - poor) and a substandard curb-to-curb width deeming it functionally obsolete. Overtopping of the bridge and flooding occurs on a regular basis during large storm events.
- The proposed replacement bridge will be a 28-foot clear span precast concrete rigid frame structure founded on pile supported, cast-in-place concrete footings. The roadway and bridge will be widened to allow for an 11-foot lane and 5-foot shoulder in each direction.
- Overtopping of the bridge cannot be alleviated due to the fact it would require raising the bridge and roadway an additional 8 feet.
- The construction of the proposed bridge will require the bridge be closed and a detour implemented. The proposed detour would utilize Route 17.
- The only utility located at the bridge site is a 10-inch diameter water main. The water main will be relocated to prevent any conflicts with the construction of the proposed structure.

- Derrick Ireland presented the CTDOT's Rights of Way Process. The anticipated Rights-of-Way impacts to private property at the project site include temporary slope easements and a possible construction partial take along the upstream side of the bridge.
- The estimated construction cost of the project is approximately \$2,500,000 which will be undertaken using both Federal and State funds.
- Construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2014 and be completed in the Fall of 2014.

## **Public Comments and Questions:**

### Question:

Mr. Kelsey requested that CTDOT look into providing additional width to the bridge. He stated that the approach roadways are currently 12-foot lanes, and the proposed 11-foot lanes across the bridge seemed like a step backwards from existing. He mentioned that the current status of the bridge presented a hazard at its present condition for any pedestrians crossing the bridge as vehicles approach. Additional widening from what is proposed should be considered to allow for safe passage for pedestrian and vehicles. The safety of the people crossing the bridge should hold higher clout than the fear of impacting the surrounding wetlands.

*CTDOT agreed with Mr. Kelsey that if the existing approach travel lanes are 12 feet wide, then the proposed lanes should match. CTDOT agreed to review the existing conditions, and alter the proposed lane widths as required. Due to constraints from wetlands and rights-of-way along both sides of the project, however, CTDOT would not be able to provide additional widening from what is proposed. CTDOT noted that certain environmental constraints need to be met or the bridge permit will not be approved. The proposed curb-to-curb width is greater than required by current standards and is wider than the existing roadway approaches.*

### Question:

A question was asked by a town resident regarding when construction would be completed and if access would be granted for emergency vehicles across the bridge during construction. Route 17A, in the area of the subject bridge, acts as a primary access road between the Portland fire house and the Portland Fairgrounds. He noted that his insurance for the Portland Fair specifically called for access of 1-mile or less for fire emergency vehicles from the fairgrounds. Route 17A also serves as an evacuation route in the event of an emergency during the fair. The Route 17 detour alone would not be adequate for successfully evacuating the fairgrounds.

*The Portland Fair is anticipated to be held during Columbus Day weekend in October of 2014. It was stated that construction would be complete before this time, and both lanes of traffic will be open. The construction contract will be set up so that the proposed construction schedule does not conflict with the Portland*

*Fair. CTDOT also mentioned that if emergency vehicle access was required during construction, a fire truck can be stationed closer to the fairground location. Another option could be to modify the construction process to allow one lane of traffic for emergency vehicles throughout the duration of the project, but this option is not desirable. CTDOT noted that they would explore these options, and work to incorporate any feasible options into the project.*

The resident followed up by asking if notification will be provided if the construction schedule is running late and will not be completed before the weekend of the Portland Fair. He stated that advance warning would need to be provided near the beginning of September to allow for the proper adjustments to be made.

*Because the proposed bridge superstructure is precast concrete, installation of the superstructure will be quick and could be accelerated if necessary. With the superstructure in place, traffic can be opened across the bridge as required if construction is not fully complete in time for the Portland Fair. Correspondence will be maintained with the Town, and in the event the construction is behind schedule, advance warning will be provided.*

Question:

A similar question was brought up by a resident who questioned when construction of the project was scheduled to begin. During a date within the first two weeks of July, the Town of Portland usually holds a fireworks display at the fairgrounds, which usually attracts a large amount of attendees. Similar to the problem presented during the Portland Fair, Route 17A acts as an evacuation route from the fairgrounds, and access over the bridge would be necessary in the event of an emergency.

*CJM was confident that the road closure for the proposed construction would only be necessary after the fireworks display at the beginning of July until just prior to the Portland Fair on Columbus Day weekend in October. It was also stated that the construction process would be reviewed and modified to accommodate both events; for example, most of the work not requiring the closing of the roadway could begin before July. It was requested that during the year of construction, the fireworks display be held earlier in the month of July to provide as large a construction timeframe as possible. Coordination will continue with the fireworks committee.*

Question:

Concern was brought up that the increased hydraulic opening of the bridge would cause additional flooding to the fairgrounds. It was stated that much of the flooding in the area is caused by the backfilling of Carr Brook from higher water levels of the Connecticut River, and the wider opening would only aggravate this issue.

*The hydraulic opening of the bridge was developed using the necessary standards. It was explained that regardless of the bridge opening, higher waters from the Connecticut River would flood Carr Brook anyway because the water*

*level would act in equilibrium through the bridge opening. It was noted that in the event where water levels were higher for Carr Brook than the Connecticut River, the larger opening would prevent Carr Brook from backing up and flooding on its own. CTDOT did agree that when the Connecticut River water levels were higher than Carr Brook, the flooding through the bridge opening would occur faster than it currently does, conversely however, once the water levels drop, the flood water will recede quicker as well.*

Question:

Another concern brought up by residents was how traffic would be mitigated along Bartlett Street. While the detour shows traffic utilizing Route 17, the reality is that most local residents will take Bartlett Street instead, as is typical when Carr Brook floods, which presents a danger to pedestrians and children who live in the area.

*Signing will be placed detouring traffic towards Route 17; however, the issue of traffic along side roads outside of the proposed detour does not fall within the jurisdiction of the State. CTDOT will coordinate with the Town of Portland to discuss possible methods of mitigation (speed bumps, additional traffic protection, etc.), but it will ultimately be the responsibility of the Town to implement them.*

Question:

It was questioned if the culvert located upstream on Carr Brook carrying Route 17A was also on the list of bridges to be replaced, because it requires frequent cleanout by CTDOT.

*CTDOT responded that the structure must be rated as structurally deficient to be considered for replacement. CTDOT did not believe this bridge was listed as structurally deficient, but would verify.*

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.