

**Department of Transportation
Project No. 32-148
Replacement of Bridge No. 02866
Towns of Coventry and Mansfield**

**February 25, 2015 at 7:00 PM, Coventry High School, Large Lecture Hall
78 Ripley Hill Road, Coventry, CT**

Minutes

Present:

Timothy Fields - Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)
Louis Bacho - CTDOT
Theodore Nezames - CTDOT
Lesgie Ruiz - CTDOT
Dean Cerasoli - CTDOT District 1
Mark St. Germain - CTDOT District 1
Paul Carl - CTDOT District 1
Michael Woods - Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM)
Mark Levesque - CJM
Thomas Ryan - CJM
John Elsesser - Coventry Town Manager
John Carrington - Mansfield Director of Public Works
Eric Thomas - Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
15 - 20 Local Residents

Presentation:

A presentation was delivered by Ms. Lesgie Ruiz from CTDOT and Mr. Michael Woods from CJM. The following items were included in the presentation:

- The existing bridge is a two-span precast concrete box beam superstructure on stone masonry abutments and pier. Each span measures approximately 61 feet and the total structure length is 122 feet. The curb-to-curb width is 14.5 feet which accommodates alternating one-way traffic controlled by stop signs located at each approach to the bridge. The bridge is in need of replacement due to the condition of the box beams and the substandard roadway width. The railroad bridge, located just east of Bridge No. 02866, will not be rehabilitated as part of this project.
- The proposed replacement structure is a two-span precast concrete box beam superstructure on new pile supported concrete abutments and the existing stone masonry pier. The roadway width will be widened to 32 feet to accommodate an 11-foot travel lane and 5-foot shoulder in each direction. The new abutments will be built behind the existing abutments to maintain the general aesthetics of the area. The existing pier cap will be replaced with a concrete cap designed to support the wider superstructure. Open metal bridge rail will be used in lieu of concrete parapets to help maintain aesthetics and provide hydraulic relief during large storm events.
- There are no Rights-of-Way impacts associated with this project.

- Aerial utilities located on the south side of the bridge will be shifted further south to accommodate the new bridge and avoid conflicts during construction.
- DEEP and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits are required for this project.
- Construction will be performed during a 2-month detour of Route 275 at the project site. The detour route will utilize State Routes 32 and 31. Due to the width and condition of the existing bridge, stage construction while maintaining traffic at the site is not possible. Access to the parks in the vicinity of the bridge will be maintained during construction.
- The estimated construction cost is approximately \$2,900,000.
- Construction is anticipated to begin in summer of 2015 and be completed by fall of 2015.

Public Comments and Questions:

Discussion of the project was opened with a local resident asking why the bridge had to be widened. He asked if the existing traffic scheme and bridge width can remain the same from existing to proposed conditions.

It was explained that there is a state statute that requires all bridges on 2-lane state maintained highways to have a minimum curb-to-curb width of 28 feet. It was added that there are Federal requirements that require a bridge with an ADT of 3,100 vehicles to have a minimum curb-to-curb width of 28 feet. A curb-to-curb width of 32 feet has been provided to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

A few residents asked when the detour would take place and how it would be signed. Another resident asked if a temporary bridge could be used to maintain traffic.

It was explained that the detour period would likely start in the middle of September and run through November. The Contractor will post signs at least 2 weeks in advance of the detour period to notify the public. Additional signing will be provided along the detour route to direct traffic accordingly and advanced signing will be posted notifying the public that the bridge is closed. A temporary bridge was dismissed due to site conditions, the railroad bridge is too close to Bridge No. 02866 to allow for safe traffic operations and would have significant impacts to park property. It was also explained that constructing a temporary 150-foot bridge would add excessive costs to the project.

A resident asked what the overall depth of superstructure would be.

It was explained that the proposed bridge would be approximately 6 inches deeper than the existing structure due to the required 5-inch shear slab that is poured on top of the box beams.

A resident asked if the bridge is in poor condition, why large/heavy trucks are still allowed to cross.

CTDOT explained that the bridge will be posted for maximum loadings in the near future to prevent this.

A representative of DEEP asked what would be done to prevent bird guano from coating the bridge and polluting the water.

It was explained that the proposed bridge will be a butted box beam structure with a flat bottom (similar to the existing bridge) and would not support "bird habitat;" therefore, bird guano would not be an issue.

The representative of DEEP also asked what permits would be required. He expanded this question further by asking what would be needed for the FEMA Floodway that is located at the project site. He asked if the floodway elevations would be changed.

It was explained that an Inland Wetlands General Permit and Army Corps of Engineers Category 1 Permit would be required. The bridge would not become hydraulically adequate, but would also not create a raise in floodway elevations; therefore, only a Flood Management Certification with Exemption will be required. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision will not be required.

A resident asked if the bridge would be signed for fishing.

CTDOT responded that there would be no fishing restrictions unless there are issues after construction at which time a restriction could be posted.

A resident asked how the boat launches located at the bridge would be maintained or enhanced.

It was explained that there are no formal boat launches immediately under the bridge and that the embankment along the Willimantic River just downstream of the bridge could be and are utilized. Coordination with Willimantic River Alliance and CTDOT agencies will continue.

Residents continued the discussion with questions pertaining to the overall aesthetics of the bridge and how the parks/greenways/waterways would be affected.

CTDOT and CJM explained that the overall feel of the area should remain similar. An open rail system will be utilized on the structure to maintain the open feeling on the bridge. It was explained that aesthetic rails seen on other bridges may not be applicable for this project because they may not be crash tested and therefore safe to use. Coordination with the town for overall appearance is ongoing. The new abutments will be constructed behind the existing stone masonry walls to address aesthetics and to not disturb the 100+ year old walls lining the channel. The concerns relating to the greenway and waterway access had not been investigated due to the current design stage (environmental review is still ongoing). Coordination with the Willimantic River Alliance and Willimantic River Greenway Council will continue to address their concerns and needs.

Resident asked if a sidewalk or positive protection could be added to protect pedestrians across the bridge. They also asked if a sidewalk could be added to one side instead with narrower shoulders in lieu of the 5-foot shoulders.

It was explained that a sidewalk was not added because additional width would be needed to meet the bikeway guidelines recommending at least 4-foot shoulder widths. Sidewalks cannot take the place of shoulders or be utilized for bikeways. Additional protection for pedestrian passage would not be added because it adds blunt ends at each abutment which would create a dangerous vehicular condition. Signs and pavement markings will be added to help identify pedestrian/bikeway areas.

Residents asked what could be done to slow vehicular traffic speeds now that the additional stop signs have been removed.

A crosswalk will be added to help provide pedestrian safety when crossing Route 275 to access the parks. Additionally, graphics will be added to the shoulders to make motorists aware of the bikeway at the project location. The advance warning signs for stop signs and pedestrian crossings will be added or maintained to help control speeds at the site.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.