

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Virtual Public Information Meeting
State Project 0062-0096
Replacement of Bridge No. 02591
Route 97 (Pomfret Road) over Fuller Brook
Town of Hampton**

June 29, 2021 7:00 PM

Meeting streamed live to attendees via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live

Report of Meeting

Present:

~4 Attendees viewing via MS Teams Live Event stream

~5 Attendees viewing via YouTube Live Stream

Team Presenting from the Connecticut Department of Transportation:

Andrew Cardinali, Principal Engineer, Bridge Design

Kevin Blasi, Project Manager, Bridge Design

Jacob Platt, Project Engineer, Bridge Design

Andrew Shields, Design Engineer, Bridge Design

Matthew Geanacopoulos, Office of Rights of Way

Jason Burgess, District 2 Construction

Presentation:

The meeting lobby opened up at 6:45pm to the public and the presentation began at 7:00pm. Kevin Blasi opened with a brief welcome and introduced the project design team. Mr. Blasi outlined the Department's May 13, 2021 meeting with First Selectman Cahill, which included a presentation of the project and a discussion about the coordination that will be required with neighboring towns during the closure of Route 97 to ensure timely emergency services responses are maintained.

Mr. Blasi offered information to the attendees on how to contact the design team during the live Question and Answer session that followed the formal presentation. The following means of contact were provided:

Project email: DOTProject62-96@ct.gov

Project Q&A phone: (860) 944-1111

MS Teams Chat (available during the live stream event only, for those accessing the meeting via MS Teams)

The period to provide comments and questions to the project team extends through July 13, 2021.

Andrew Shields began the formal presentation of the project. The following are key points of the formal presentation:

- The existing bridge is a stone arch covered in concrete abutted by a slab on stone abutments. Mr. Shields reassured the public that the structure, while rated in poor condition, is still safe for passage by all vehicles and is structurally sound.

- The existing structure plan view was shown followed by the preliminary proposed plan view of the new structure. The new structure is proposed to be a 22 foot wide by 8 foot high precast concrete three-sided rigid frame set on a micropile foundation.
- Temporary and final utility relocations and potential ROW impacts were then presented. Included with this was the need for removal of trees within the impact areas.
- Matt Geanacopoulos presented an overview of the Rights of Way acquisition process followed by the Department of Transportation, including property acquisitions.
- Andrew Shields continued the presentation outlining the construction sequence starting with the existing condition, continuing through construction phasing, and ending with the final condition.
- A detour will be required for the construction of the new bridge that will be in effect for approximately 14 weeks and will be about 21.4 miles following State routes (no local roads will be signed for the detour).

Following the presentation of the project scope, the project schedule, estimated cost, funding sources, and a summary of anticipated environmental permits was presented.

- Estimated Construction Cost: \$2,350,000 (80% Federal, 20% State funds)
- Project Schedule:
 - Utility Relocations: Fall 2023
 - Start of Construction: Summer 2024
- No endangered species or fish were encountered at the project location. The two permits anticipated were deemed to be USACE Pre-Construction Notification, and the DEEP Inland Wetland General Permit.

The presentation ended with Kevin Blasi reminding attendees how to contact the design team with questions and comments. The presentation was opened for the live virtual Question & Answer session for questions and comments.

Question & Answer:

- **A question was posted to the Q&A chat:** Can you run through the detour one more time?

Response: Starting at the bridge, heading in the southern direction, the detour heads down Route 97, onto Route 6. At the end of Route 6 the detour proceeds north along Route 169 to Route 101, merging onto Route 44. From Route 44, the detour will direct travelers back onto Route 97.

- **A question was posted to the Q&A chat:** How long will the new bridge last?

Response: The bridge is designed to last a minimum of 75 years.

- **A question was posted to the Q&A chat:** Can you go over the schedule for the detour again?

Response: The utility relocation will begin in Fall of 2023. The detour is not anticipated to begin until The Spring of 2024 starting around mid-May.

- **A question was posted to the Q&A chat:** Are you going to maintain access to Utley Road through construction?

Response: It is possible to maintain access to Utley Road from Route 97 during the project duration. Route 97 will most likely be closed just south of the intersection of Route 97 and Utley Road.

- **A question was posted to the Q&A chat:** Can you explain again why the detour is necessary?

Response: The steep slopes on both ends of the of the structure, as well as the approximately 20 feet of fill beneath the roadway, require substantial excavation. The steep slopes and narrow roadway provide a challenge to stage the project to keep one lane of traffic through the site without substantial Rights-of-Way impact and tree removal along Route 97. Staging the project in such a way would very likely require two construction seasons spanning a two year period, rather than the single construction season that will be required with the closure of Route 97 at the project location. Additionally, a multi-staged project would likely double or even triple the project cost.

- **A question was transmitted via voicemail:** Has a tunnel been investigated to provide wildlife passage for small animals?

Response: Environmental regulations typically require that all new buried structures provide streambed grading to create a natural shelf to allow for wildlife passage through the structure and this will be included in this project.

Following the answer regarding wildlife passage, reiteration was requested.

Response: The final condition rendering shows grassed slopes along the inner sides of the culvert. These sloped portions will provide passage for small wildlife through the structure.

Closing:

Mr. Blasi reiterated the contact information that was provided during the presentation and the live Question and Answer session. The period to provide comments and questions to the project design team extends through July 13, 2021. At this point no further questions were offered at the Live Virtual Public Information Meeting

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00pm.