

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Virtual Public Information Meeting State Project No. 0103-0277 Replacement of Bridge No. 00279 Carrying Lawler Lane over I-395

December 13, 2022 7:00 PM
Meeting stream live to attendees via Zoom Webinar and YouTube Live

Report of Meeting

Present:

~4 Attendees including Mr. Patrick McLaughlin Public Works Director for Norwich viewing via Zoom Webinar

~0 Attendees viewing via YouTube Live Stream

Team Presenting from the Connecticut Department of Transportation:

Jonathan J. Kempf, Project Manager, Bridge Design
Raymond I. Basar, Project Engineer, Bridge Design
Roddy Makubikwa, Project Designer, Bridge Design
Matthew P. Geanacopoulos, R.O.W. Coordinator, Office of Rights of Way
Andrew J. Cardinali, Principal Engineer, Bridge Design

Presentation:

Jonathan Kempf opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 pm with a brief welcome and introduced the project design team.

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

Project email: DOTProject103-277@ct.gov

Project Q&A phone: (860)-954-2020

Zoom Q&A (available during the live stream event only, for those accessing the meeting via Zoom)

The attendees were informed that the period to provide comments and questions to the project team extends through December 27, 2022.

Raymond I. Basar began the formal presentation of the project with a brief project description and location. Mr. Basar continued presenting the following key points about the existing bridge condition:

- The existing bridge is a steel multi-girder system with a reinforced concrete deck.
- Bridge was originally constructed in 1958 with a partial reconstruction, and rehabilitation in 1993 and 2017 respectively.
- The overall length of the bridge is 165 feet and is supported by two equal spans that are 80 feet in length.
- The estimated average daily traffic (ADT) for the bridge is 1,700 vehicles and 2 percent of it are trucks.
- The underside of the concrete deck contains transvers and longitudinal map cracks, along with spalling that has exposed rebar. The exposed rebar was treated with a zinc primer to stop further deterioration. The rolled beams have approximately 75% peeling paint and have areas of laminated rust. In 2017 the beam ends were repainted to limit future corrosion.

- Abutments and pier also show random hairline cracks vertically and horizontally on the east and west sides. Repairs were made in 2017 to remediate the cracks.
- The beam bearings have corroded due to the leakage from the deck expansion joints.
- The utilities running overhead on the east side of the bridge will need to be relocated temporarily to the west side during the second stage of construction. This will allow for greater vertical clearances needed to construct the east half of the bridge.
- Rights of way impacts needed for the bridge are minor, with slope easements needed for slope stabilization. Besides a small portion from the Norwich Worship Center, most of the slopes fall within the town and states' rights of way.

Roddy Makubikwa continued the presentation by offering the following details of the Department's proposal:

- **The Existing Structure:** The deck of the bridge is in poor condition, and given the rating of 4, due to the spalls and exposed rebar. The superstructure is in fair condition, with a rating of 5, due to the failing paint system and laminated rust.
- **Scope of project:** Replace the existing structure with a two-span steel girder bridge with cast-in-place wingwalls, piers, and abutments through staged construction.
- **Proposed Superstructure and Substructure:** Proposed bridge will have continuous parapets at the gutter line with a protective fence running along the top. The roadway will consist of 3 inch-thick bituminous concrete overlay over an 8.5 inch-thick concrete deck, that is supported by two spans of 80 foot plate girders. The substructure will be constructed of cast-in-place concrete abutments and pier wall with their respective footings.
- **Superstructure details:** The roadway will consist of two travel lanes with a curb-to-curb width of 39'-1/2". The concrete deck is supported by 6 steel girders for each span spaced at 7.5 feet.
- **Proposed Construction Details:** The bridge will be constructed in two stages with 2 sequences per stage. Stage 1, sequence 1 consists of the demolition of the western side of the existing bridge, leaving the eastern portion of the bridge to be carried by four steel girders. During this stage one-way alternating traffic will be maintained on Lawler Lane with temporary signalization on the eastern side of the existing bridge. Stage 1, sequence 2 will be the construction of the western half of the new bridge. During this sequence the superstructure, abutments, wingwalls, and wallpier for the western portion of the bridge will be constructed. Stage 2, sequence 3 will consist of the demolition of the eastern half of the bridge. During this sequence the overhead utilities will be relocated to the western side of the bridge. One-way alternating traffic will be facilitated by temporary signalization on the newly constructed western half of the bridge during the demolition of the eastern side. Stage 2, sequence 4 is the final sequence in which the eastern side of the bridge will be constructed and connected to the western half of the bridge.

Matthew Geanacopoulos then discussed the State's rights of way process:

- The proposed project design will require the acquisition of one slope easement.
- **The Acquisition process:** The ROW office will send out a letter of intent to acquire the property needed. The agent will then evaluate the current property cost and make an offer of Just compensation to the owner. The owner of the property can then negotiate the offer to come to an agreement. If no agreement is made, then the State may try to obtain the property through eminent domain where the property owner has 6 months to appeal or accept the State's offer.

Following the presentation of the Rights of Way, the project schedule, estimated cost, and funding sources were presented:

- Estimated Construction Cost: \$7,500,000 (100% State)
- Project Schedule:

- Start of Construction: Fall 2024
- 1 Construction Season
- Stage construction utilized to minimize traffic impacts

The presentation ended with Raymond Basar reminding attendees how to contact the design team with questions and comments. The meeting was then opened for questions and comments session for the public's participation.

Public Comments and Questions During the Live O&A that followed the presentation:

- **Question:** Are the rights to the property temporarily taken then given back to the owner? As the Norwich Worship center will obviously be affected?

Response: The easement to slope is not temporary, it would be permanent. The state or the town would need to maintain the slope in order to have the roadway properly supported. As for the driveway it is proposed to be reconstructed as a right to reconstruct. The reconstruction of the driveway is needed to blend in the new slope of the road to a new slope for the driveway. This would allow those, from the Worship Center, to enter and exit safely.

- **Question:** Has the ROW acquisition started yet? At what phase does acquisition start?

Response: The acquisitions have not started yet. Rights of way acquisitions cannot start until after the design approval. The design approval stage is usually around the 60% design phase.

- **Question:** When were the photos of the underside of the deck taken?

Response: The photos of the underside of the deck were taken in 2022, during the latest bridge inspection report.

- **Question:** Is the design all being done in house?

Response: Yes, for any permanent components of the structure, the design is all done in house. For those temporary components, it will be up to the contractor to design the features while making sure they conform to the States specifications.

- **Question:** What is the M&P of traffic for I-395 look like? Will there be shutdowns for I-395?

Response: Per safety regulations it is not permitted to erect or disassemble some bridge components, such as the girders, over live traffic. In order to comply with these regulations there will be some intermittent closures on I-395 to ensure the safety of the traveling public. To lower the impact on traffic the Department will try to schedule the closures for off peak hours.

- **Question:** Will there be granite curbs at the base of the parapet walls?

Response: The Department has changed their details over the years and will not be using granite curbing. The Department will be utilizing the Federal Highway Administrations requirements for a parapet system that conforms to their Mash 2016 guidelines. With the Mash 2016 requirements, the Department will be constructing a single slope concrete parapet. Outside the limits of the bridge parapets there will be bituminous curbing lining the roadway. On the new bridge the Department will also get rid of the sidewalks due to there being no sidewalks at the approaches to the bridge. The travel lanes will be very wide and can easily accommodate pedestrians who would like to make their way over the bridge.

- **Question:** The distance between the curbs, will it be smaller on the new bridge?

Response: Yes, it will be slightly less. The existing width from curb to curb is 40'-0". The proposed bridge width will be reduced to 39'-1/2".

- **Question:** Is the footprint of the center pier the same size as the existing?

Response: Yes, the pier will be around the same size as the existing. The footing itself will be slightly larger but the length of the pier may be slightly shortened. As for the height of the pier, it will be extended to meet vertical clearance requirement for military equipment passage.

- **Question:** What type of bearings will be used for this bridge?

Response: The project is still early in the design phase, but the preliminary plan is to construct a semi-integral abutment bridge. This means that the deck will extend past the ends of the abutments and will be floating over its supports. The deck will be supported on top of the abutments and pier by elastomeric expansion bearing pads.

- **Question:** Is the 7.5 million all state funds with no federal funds whatsoever?

Response: During the design phase, a certain percentage of the funds used will come from the federal government. During the construction phase of the project, the Department will be utilizing 100% state funds.

- **Question:** What about the impacts on ROW during the project? Will the driveway to the worship center be blocked for any amount of time, and if so for how long?

Response: The contract will include a provision that states that the contractor cannot block any access to properties without first coordinating with the property owners. During reconstruction of the driveway there may be a time when there will not be access to the entrance of the worship center. The contractor will coordinate the hours of operation to reconstruct the driveway to minimize the impact on the worship center.

- **Question:** Why would the State keep the width/ length essentially the same with no provisions for future widening of I-395?

Response: There is currently no projected plan to widen the section of I-395 that the bridge will be carrying traffic over. The isometric view of the structure shows that the abutments of the new bridge are far enough away to accommodate further widening of the roadway, though there are no current plans to do so.

- **Question:** Is there a preliminary CPM schedule posted anywhere yet?

Response: There is currently no schedule. The schedule will be developed later in the design process. Typically, the awarded contractor will provide a schedule for the project that the Departments Construction office will review and make changes if needed.

- **Question:** Traffic over the overpass will not be hindered at any time?

Response: There may be some intermittent closures on Lawler Lane for overhead work due to safety concerns, but it should take place during off peak hours.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.