

---

**From:** Douglas Odell < >  
**Sent:** Friday, July 01, 2016 6:42 PM  
**To:** DOT Environmental Planning  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Saugatuck Swing Bridge

To: Mark W. Anderson

I am a long time (30+ years) resident of Westport and live very close to the Saugatuck bridge. Needless to say, the #1 priority for the bridge is to ensure it is structurally sound and safe for both vehicles and pedestrians. That having been said, the historic significance of the bridge to Westport and the Saugatuck area is enormous and everything should be done to preserve its look and historic characteristics. Clearly the width and height of the bridge are part of it's historic character. Sadly the daily traffic on it is much higher than it should be as far too many non residence historically take route 136 (and the bridge) in a failed attempt to bypass congestion on 95 and, in the majority of instances, they avoid nothing and needlessly congest the local streets.

Miraculously there have been very few accidents on the bridge - given its use (13,000 cars/day) and in spite of it being relatively narrow. That characteristic (width) incidentally is clearly a major factor in the small number of accidents because everyone is extra cautious with their speed, concentration and space they allow cars in front of them - as they cross over it. While I could support a somewhat wider bridge (primarily for bikes, suitcases, baby carriages and pedestrians) widening the vehicle space has little upside and a lot of downside (cars would go faster, drivers less cautious) and, as a result, there would be more accidents and, surely, fatalities. Widening the road to any large degree would have a similar impact. The current height inhibits large trucks to cross the bridge and that is a positive as this is not an area where large trucks can (or should try to) maneuver - it too is a positive.

In my view there should be five priorities regarding the bridge improvements:

- 1) ensure it is structurally safe
- 2) preserve its historic significance
- 3) provide safer passage for bikes and pedestrians
- 4) ensure nothing is done to encourage drivers to pass over it recklessly
- 5) do what is necessary to minimize large truck usage and do nothing to encourage it's use as a bypass for 95

Sincerely,  
Douglas Odell