



## REPORT OF MEETING

PROJECT NO.: 0041-0121

Date Prepared: 10/26/2023

PROJECT NAME: Replacement of Bridge No. 00853, Route 16 over the Salmon River

FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: 0016(102)

TOWN/CITY: East Hampton

LOCATION OF MEETING: Virtual, Zoom Meeting

DATE OF MEETING: 10/05/2023, 7:00 PM

SUBJECT OF MEETING: Virtual Public Information Meeting (VPIM)

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Name	Office	Position
Francisco Fadul	CTDOT, CLE Bridge Program	Project Manager
Kevin Fleming	CTDOT, Office of Environmental Planning	Project Engineer
Matt Geanacopoulos	CTDOT, CLE Bridge Program	Project Engineer
Brian Chamberlin	Prime AE Group, Inc.	Project Manager
Michael Brady	GM2 Associates, Inc.	Project Engineer
Ron Sacchi	GM2 Associates, Inc.	Project Engineer
Michael Dalickas	GM2 Associates, Inc.	Project Engineer
Eileen Ego	CTDOT District 2 Construction	Attendee
Mark Elliott	CTDOT District 2 Construction	Attendee
Dennis Woessner	Police Chief, East Hampton	Attendee
Bill Hayes	Public	Attendee
Emmet Delgaizo	Public	Attendee
Kim Clouser	Public	Attendee
Linda Brunza	Public	Attendee
Mark Marseglia	Public	Attendee
Mary Dostaler	Public	Attendee
Patricia Young	Public	Attendee
860-638-9934	Public	Attendee

### **TRANSACTIONS AND DETERMINATIONS:**

This was a Virtual Public Information Meeting (VPIM) to introduce the proposed project to the public within the Town of East Hampton. Francisco Fadul, from CTDOT gave an initial introduction and Brian Chamberlin from Prime AE Group, Inc., presented the proposed project to the attendees.



What follows is the presentation of the project and a discussion between the attendees:

**Project presentation:**

1. CTDOT Project manager Francisco Fadul gave thanks to David Cox, Town Manager of the Town of East Hampton, for assisting to set up the public information meeting for this bridge replacement.
2. Francisco Fadul gave a brief project introduction related to the Purpose and Need for the replacement of the existing bridge.
3. Kevin Fleming gave a brief introduction into the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) as a public process that must be followed for any project that may have an adverse effect on the environment, social and/or economic resources.
4. Brian Chamberlin introduced the proposed project, presenting the existing and proposed bridge plan for the Project.
  1. Explained method of construction and property easements required.
  2. Explained how traffic will be maintained during construction.
5. Francisco Fadul finished the presentation with the preliminary Construction dates and planned schedule before addressing the audience to address questions sent into the live meeting session.

**Key Points of the presentation were:**

- The Connecticut Environmental Policy Act process was outlined by Kevin Fleming discussing State and Federal requirements that are to be addressed during this project involving the replacement of this bridge. He went on to describe the resources that must be evaluated during the CEPA process.
- The Purpose and Need statement was presented to address the observed structural deficiencies of Bridge 00853 and to provide a structure that provides safe travel to all vehicular traffic, stating the bridge is currently safe to travel on but cannot be left to deteriorate over time.
- The project area and locale of the bridge were presented with aerial views and a conventional map view.
- The existing bridge inspection ratings were indicated as a “five” (Fair Condition) for the Superstructure and Deck and Substructure having an inspection rating of “six” (Satisfactory). Photo examples were presented of deterioration present at the structure as visual representations of these inspection ratings.
- The existing roadway was described as a two-span structure, approximately 126 feet long over the Salmon River, with a 30-foot-wide curb-to-curb width for one lane in each direction, with narrow shoulders.
- The existing Superstructure was described as having steel beams encased in concrete with a concrete deck and a bituminous concrete wearing surface along with concrete parapets with architectural detailing.
- The proposed replacement bridge was presented as a 152 ft single span bridge with approach slabs and wingwalls to support the roadway slopes. It was stated the length of reconstructed roadway was approximately 820 feet in length, including 325 feet west of the



- bridge and 370 feet to the East of the bridge. The vertical profile was stated to increase by 1.25 feet from its current position.
- Typical Sections were presented to indicate the removal of the existing bridge and the replacement sections of the proposed bridge structure along with planned traffic control during construction phases. Proposed Roadway sections were shown to have two (2) one-directional travel lanes each with a 4' shoulder. Proposed Typical section of the bridge portion was shown to have steel girders and connecting braces with the proposed concrete deck.
  - A bridge elevation view was shown and verbally indicated to have planned the removal of the existing substructure pier in the Salmon River to improve the existing river conditions.
  - Bridge stage construction cross sections were presented showing how the structure will be built in construction stages; existing, stage 1, stage 2 and final. It was pointed out by the Department inclusion that the project is currently under review for additional bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as part of the Complete Streets Policy Considerations.
  - The traffic control during construction for US Route 16 was presented as a single traffic lane controlled with the use of temporary traffic signal. It was presented that the construction is planned to occur over 2 construction seasons.
  - Locations where property impacts may be necessary were presented as requiring a temporary Right of Way easement to acquire land for temporary use. These property impacts were discussed as a need for temporary access roads on the existing property areas and additional information regarding impacts to existing property areas.
  - It was stated that options for detouring traffic during construction was looked into however the closest accessible detour was stated as being 18 miles away from the project site.
  - It was stated a USGS Gage Station will be temporarily relocated prior to construction work related to the bridge replacement.
  - It was presented that project location appears to qualify as a Categorical Exclusion due to the minimal environmental impacts .
  - This project will be evaluated under the Department's Complete Streets policy for additional pedestrian and bicycle considerations as design progresses.
  - The anticipated schedule has construction starting in Spring 2026 and complete by Fall 2027.
  - The anticipated construction cost is \$11 million dollars (verbally updated), and the project is to be funded with federal and state funds.
  - It was noted that the rights-of-way and environmental impacts, and the preliminary project cost and schedule are all preliminary and subject to change as design progresses.

**Public Question and Answers section:**

1. A question from Kim Clouser stated she is a property abutter and asked when she should expect to be contacted by the Department. Matt Geanacopoulos responded that the Department would directly contact her approximately Spring to Summer of 2024, but could change depending on how design progresses.
2. A follow-up question from Kim Clouser asked if any night work was planned for construction for this bridge replacement. Brian Chamberlin addressed this question and replied by stating the project is some specific activities such as erection of the



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superstructure may require night work but in general that is not the overall planned approach for this project.

3. A question from attendee Linda Brunza asked if the design team was working with DEEP Fisheries Division regarding “in-water” work. This was addressed by Brian Chamberlin stating the coordination is planned however have not presently reached out to the Fisheries Division as it is early in the design phase of the project.
4. A follow up question from Linda Brunza asked if it was anticipated that there would be any wetland fill. This was addressed by Brian Chamberlin, stating the fill limits were still being worked out but stated that it was not planned to have this as part of the overall project, but also restated that this is currently early in the design process and may change later in the project development.
5. Kim Clouser inquired about a potential improvement to the line of sight at the Comstock Bridge Road intersection with Route 16. A follow-up question was for a potential improvement to the line of sight at the Route 16 intersection with Bridge Street and Gulf Road. These questions were addressed by Brian Chamberlin stating the Comstock Bridge intersection could not have substantial changes to the alignment without interfering with the local parking lot. Bridge Street and Gulf Road’s intersection was indicated to be outside of the limits of the project area and were not part of the initial traffic study for any possible improvements.
6. Kim Clouser asked about the line of site from the road to the Comstock Bridge, and its possible interference with the proposed parapet. Brian Chamberlin stated the parapet is a standard height and should not interfere with the line of sight but will also look further into this during the project development to verify.
7. Kim Clouser asked if she was permitted to have additional discussions with the project manager because she is a property abutter. Francisco Fadul responded to refer to the DOT project e-mail as indicated during the VPIM presentation and could also share her contact information in the Q&A box during the meeting.
8. An additional question from Kim Clouser asked what happened with artifacts that were found from previous archeological digs. This was addressed by Francisco Fadul stating the Department is still looking over the site and proper measures will be taken to address any findings. Currently the report containing findings is not complete, any findings will be released to the Department later.
9. Kim Clouser, had asked if there are additional meetings like this. This was addressed by Francisco Fadul stating that there will be additional opportunities for the public to leave comments to the Department. For this event, the closing date is October 19, 2023. For this project, one can continue to reach out via the email address.

Subsequent to the Virtual Public Information Meeting, CTDOT received the following inquiries during the comment period:

- A voicemail from Ms. Kim Clouser was received Monday, 10/9/2023 at 1:24 p.m. asking to speak with the Project Manager from the CE, Brian Chamberlin.
  - *Brianna Ritacco contacted Ms. Clouser and she submitted her questions via the project email address.*



- An email from Ms. Kristen Warzecha was received on 10/9/2023 asking questions and was responded to on 10/16/2023 as follows:
  - Thank you for a very informative virtual meeting last evening. It was well organized and thorough. Most of my questions were addressed during the presentation. I am a resident of Bridge Street, which is off Route 16 and dead ends at the Comstock Bridge. I have two concerns. Will there be signs posted on Route 16 at the intersection with Bridge Street instructing drivers not to block the intersection as they wait for the light to change during construction? Also, I am concerned about westbound traffic entering our little street looking for a place to park to access the Salmon River and hiking trails rather than wait in line on Route 16 to cross the river to get to the parking lot on the other side. There are no parking signs the length of the street but there is room at the end where three to four vehicles can park. That poses problems for the four sanitation trucks that access our road every week and need a place to turn around. Perhaps a sign directing drivers to use the parking lot would be helpful.
  - *Response: Thank you for bringing these concerns to our attention during the Preliminary Design Phase of this project. We will investigate and determine the types of roadway/traffic signs needed in order to prevent any traffic or safety concerns while the one-way alternating traffic scheme is being implemented during construction. Additionally, further investigation will be done regarding the "no parking" on Bridge Street to determine if this is within the impacted areas of the project and can be incorporated into the contract or if further enforcement needs to be handled by the Municipality/DEEP.*
  
- An email from Ms. Kim Clouser was received on 10/18/2023 asking additional questions and was responded to on 10/18/2023 as follows:
  - Any long term closures?  
*Response: At this time, we do not anticipate any long-term closures of Route 16.*
  
  - There is poor visibility at the nearby intersections, this would be a great time to address that.  
*Response: Under this project, the Department will investigate improving any sight line issues caused by the bridge parapet. Any additional sight line improvements at the nearby intersections are outside of the scope of this project, however we will pass on these concerns to the Department's Project Development Unit.*
  
  - Are plans being made to avoid increased traffic and parking on Bridge St?  
*Response: Our initial assessment is that Bridge Street is not within the project limits, however we can investigate adding temporary signage on Route 16 notifying the public that the Comstock Covered Bridge parking lot will be open during construction. Bridge Street is a town road and therefore parking enforcement needs to be handled by the town.*



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- Will there be any boring or other work with vibrations that could harm my well or foundation?  
*Response: Activities anticipated to cause vibration are the installation of temporary sheet piling and pile driving for the new bridge foundations. As design progresses, it will be investigated whether or not a vibration monitoring program will be necessary based on the proximity of these activities to your well and foundation.*
  - Will there be excessive dust during the project, if so how will the area(my yard and home) be cleaned?  
*Response: The project will include provisions for the Contractor to apply water for dust control in dry areas to keep the dust to a minimum. This is typical on most state projects.*
  - What will be done to discourage people from crossing the road and walking through my yard to access the covered bridge and river? How will the ROW be finished to discourage this behavior.  
*Response: This project will be evaluated under the Department's new policy for additional pedestrian and bicycle considerations as design progresses. Sidewalks are being investigated along Route 16 between the intersections with Comstock Bridge Road and Bridge Street.*
  - A follow-up email from Ms. Clouser was received on 10/18/2023 asking additional questions or comments and was responded to on 10/19/2023 as follows:
    - The parapet does currently effect sight lines from Comstock Bridge Road looking east towards Colchester.  
*Response: We will ensure during the design development that the placement of the bridge parapets do not infringe upon the required sight distance from this intersection.*
    - Anything to help traffic flow and reduce lost cars on our little road will be a plus. Also Bridge St is a town and county line with State Forest access. Each town and the state typically try to make issues on this little road another's responsibility. It would nice to have agreement on enforcement before project begins.  
*Response: We will relay your concerns to the town, but we also recommend that you or any other residents that have concerns reach out to them as well.*
    - Sidewalks in this area is extremely scary. Accidents are already high, I can't imagine what would happen if people were encouraged to walk this stretch of RT 16.  
*Response: Under CTDOT's new policy and federal regulations, investigation of the applicability of sidewalks and bike lanes on all projects is required. Your feedback and concerns for this site are appreciated.*
    - Also I specifically want to (know) what will be done to keep people out of my yard (the land between RT 16 and the Comstock Bridge).  
*Response: Placement of a fence at the edge of the highway ROW can be investigated as design progresses.*



- What is happening with the artifacts found in the area? Will there be more digging for artifacts?

*Response: The artifacts are presently being analyzed by professional archaeologists, any artifacts found on State land will eventually go to the State Museum / Office of the State Archaeologist in accord with State law. If any artifacts are found on private property, the property owner will have the option of having these returned after analysis. There may be more excavations in the future, but this will depend upon whether or not the statutory consulting parties decide the site contains anything of significance.*

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. The presentation will be distributed via the project website along with the VPIM presentation recording via the provided web access links.
2. Additional comments outside of the presentation are to be addressed and responded to within the 2-week open comment portion of the Project, stated to be received and addressed by October 19, 2023.

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Sacchi, PE, GM2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_  
for Francisco Fadul, PE, CTDOT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_