

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 0116-0135
Replacement of Bridge No. 01015
Carrying Route 53 over Saugatuck Reservoir
Town of Redding**

**June 27, 2024 7:00 PM
74 Lonetown Road, Redding Community Center**

Minutes of Public Information Meeting

Present:

Julia Pemberton, Redding First Selectman
James Gracy, Redding Highway Department, Director of Public Works
Ten (10) Residents

Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department)

Andrew J. Cardinali, Principal Engineer, Bridge Design
Ken-Taro Plude, Project Manager, Bridge Design
Stephen M. Smith, Project Engineer, Bridge Design

Presentation:

The DOT presentation began at approximately 7:00 PM with Mr. Stephen M. Smith introducing the representatives from the Department and going through the Title VI information.

The following are the key points of the presentation:

- The condition of the existing bridge rates as 6 for the superstructure and 4 for the substructure.
- There are overhead and underground utilities in the area, with class 1 watershed land surrounding the bridge. The overhead utilities require temporary relocation to the north to allow for the demolition and construction. The underground utilities will be supported in place.
- The surrounding roadways are classified as Scenic Roads which the Scenic Road's Committee recommended preservation of the exposed rock outcroppings, specifically the one at the intersection of Glen Road and Newtown Turnpike.
- The determination of no historic properties affected was made under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The project is avoiding areas of moderate archaeological potential by restricting Contractor staging and layup areas to existing roadways and paved surfaces within the detour closure area.
- Throughout the project, fish passage will be maintained, trail access will be maintained, and fishing access will be maintained.

- The project will be a full bridge replacement, increasing the span length from 44 to 63ft, increasing the curb-to-curb width from 30.2 to 32ft. Roadway or intersection realignments are not included.
- All Right of Way impacts will be to Aquarion Water Company land, with permanent takes around the proposed bridge wingwalls, and temporary easements along the roadways and water to perform the work.
- The detour will be a 13.5-mile, 22-minute full detour, closing Rt 53 at the Tudor Road intersection, closing Newtown Turnpike at the hiking trail parking lot, and closing Glen Road at the hiking trail parking lot. The roads will be closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic during the detour, and the Contractor will only be allowed to use this area for their access to avoid the hiking trails and Right of Way impacts.
- The anticipated construction start will be in the Fall of 2026, with 2-3 months for the overhead utility relocation before winter shutdown. The construction is anticipated to be a single season, starting in Spring of 2027 through Fall 2027. The detour closure will start in Spring of 2027.
- The estimated cost is \$7.2million, with no town funds required. It will be funded through State and Federal funds.

After the presentation was concluded, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

Public Comments and Questions:

- Is the bridge safe to continue using?
 - Response: Yes, the substructure's rating of a 4 is what initiated the project, and the load rating analysis for the bridge's ability to handle various truck loads are all above 1.0 which is the requirement before needing to post a bridge for a lower load.
- How will you ensure the project gets completed on time?
 - Response: There are Contract provisions in place for breaching Contract schedule through liquidated damages. There are sometimes incentives that can be offered for finishing the Contract early. These help to prevent the Contractor from not finishing on time.
- Questions regarding the detour on state routes
 - Are you going to signalize the local roads adjacent to the detour route?
 - Response: We will coordinate with Traffic to see what options are available and inform them of the concerns of sight lines turning out of these roads, as well as increased volume.
 - Will Tudor Road be closed during the project?

- Response: No, the intersection of Tudor Road and Route 53 will remain open. The closure of Route 53 will start right after the Tudor Road intersection. This will allow local traffic from Tudor Road to still travel south on Route 53 without having to go west to Dayton Road and Route 107.
 - When is the detour going to start and end?
 - Response: The detour will start in the Spring of 2027 and end in the Fall of 2027.
 - Impacts of adding 2600 vehicles to the local roads?
 - Response: We will coordinate with Traffic to verify if local road volumes were analyzed and what options are available.
 - Where is the closure along Route 53?
 - Response: The closure starts at the south end of Route 53/Newtown Turnpike at the intersection of Tudor Road. The closure ends at the northeast end at the parking lot for the hiking trail on Newtown Turnpike. The closure ends at the northwest end at the small parking lot for the hiking trail on Route 53/Glen Road.
- Why are there no wetlands?
 - Response: When the survey was performed, only ordinary high water was flagged. Wetlands were not flagged. We will verify again about the wetlands.
- The closure of Route 53 will impact bus routes through the area. Has this been discussed?
 - Response: We have spoken with Mr. Mike D'Agostino from central district to inform of the detour, and discuss concerns or impacts to the bus routes. Since we still have a couple years until the detour goes into effect, Mr. D'Agostino has no concerns coordinating with the bus companies to find alternate routes during that year.
- Will you be installing rumble strips on Route 53, Route 57 and Route 107 because the roads are not safe?
 - Response: The amount of roadway that will be repaved will be local to the bridge site. Some distance past the new south abutment, and most of the intersection of Glen Road/Newtown Turnpike. If there are not currently rumble strips in that section of roadway, we will coordinate with Pavement Design about whether rumble strips can be installed here. But we will inform them of the concern for

all of the surrounding routes, for when they do roadway resurfacing jobs, they can consider these routes.

- Will you have a good Contractor?
 - Response: Since we are a State Agency, we are required to send the project out for public bid and award to the lowest bidder. We will not know who the Contractor is until sometime in 2026.
- How are you going to prevent the Contractor from parking their vehicles and equipment along the local roads adjacent to the road closure?
 - Response: Part of our Contract requirements is to keep the trail access points fully open and unobstructed by the Contractor. They will not be allowed to crowd the barricades or approaching roadways of the detour closure areas, preventing the public from accessing the trails or their homes. In past projects, Contractors have had similar requirements, where they can carpool in from an outside location, to reduce the number of vehicles they need to have on the site.
- Are you coordinating with DEEP?
 - Response: Yes, we are coordinating with them due to the Rights of Way impacts to the Aquarion properties that have an easement with DEEP on them.
- Did you evaluate the safety of the roads because the roads are not in good shape?
 - Response: We coordinated with the other design units and looked at the roadway conditions in the project area directly around the bridge and compared them against Department standards and requirements. We are including the bridge replacement which includes slightly wider shoulders which will tie into the existing roadway local to the bridge, and the remaining roadway geometry will remain the same. There are different project types, and a roadway improvement project or repavement project may be able to further analyze the roadway routes as a whole for future consideration. But that is not included in this project.

Adjournment:

The project was generally well received by those in attendance. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15pm.