

Connecticut Department of Transportation

State Project No. 37-103 80% Federal Funded 20% State Funded Replacement of Bridge No. 02442, Route 68 over Sawmill Brook Town of Durham

**December 17, 2020 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via MS Team Live Event and YouTube Live**

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

In Attendance: There were 22 people in attendance. The meeting participants included residents and representatives of the Town of Durham, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and BL Companies.

Presentation: A Public Information Meeting was held for this project on the night of December 17, 2020. This meeting was held virtually via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live. At 5:45 p.m. the meeting went live with an informative introductory slide for attendees to view prior to the event. The formal presentation began at 6:00 p.m. Transportation Project Engineer Susan Morneault began the presentation by introducing the representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), BL Companies (BLC), the Consultant Liaison Engineer and noted the project Designer as CHA Companies. Susan Morneault, CTDOT Transportation Project Engineer, and Thomas Beckman, BLC Senior Engineer, gave a twenty-minute PowerPoint presentation describing State Project No. 37-103, the Replacement of Bridge No. 02442, Route 68 over Sawmill Brook in the Town of Durham. Matt Geanacopoulos with the CTDOT office of Rights-of-Way also presented information regarding the rights-of-way acquisition process.

The presentation included the following items:

- The existing conditions of the bridge.
- The purpose and need for the project describing the deteriorated deck and substructure.
- The proposed replacement of the bridge including design elements, and construction limits.
- Traffic will be accommodated with the use of signalized alternating one-way traffic and potential use of short duration detours.
- Utility, local airport, environmental, and rights-of-way impacts.
- Project schedule, construction cost, and project funding.

Public Comments and Questions: Following the formal presentation, a live Question and Answer session was opened to the attendees. The questions and comments below were provided via voicemail, email, and MS Teams Live Event chat:

- Chat question: Will the Contractor be working at night? If so, how late?

A representative of BLC, noting the condensed time frame for construction, stated that it is not expected that the contractor will have to do any overnight activities. Expanding on this, the representative expressed the fact that certain contracted activities will be restricted in concurrence with the Noise Ordinances outlined by

the Town of Durham. It was also noted that this project is still in the preliminary design phase, so coordination is still ongoing.

- Voicemail question: When was the bridge last inspected?

A representative of BLC noted that conditional bridge assessments are completed every two years by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The subject bridge was last inspected on September 17th, 2020, however the inspection report which has triggered this project was conducted in September 2018.

- Voicemail question: Will the traffic lights at this construction site be operating all day and all night?

A representative of BLC stated that the utilization of the alternating one-way traffic method would be in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the anticipated four-month duration.

- Chat question: My pizza delivery guy has to cross the bridge, how long will this delay my delivery?

A representative of BLC was unable to provide an exact estimate as to how much longer it would take a pizza delivery guy to deliver a pizza. But noted that the delay would be minimal since alternating one-way traffic will be provided.

- Chat question: Can you please tell me if the bridge has a name? Or is it referred to as just Bridge No. 02442?

A representative of BLC responded that Bridge No. 02442 has no official name other than: Bridge No. 02442.

- Email question: Is bridge going to be completely closed to car during the replacement?

A representative of BLC stated that the majority of construction would be performed during the two stages that were shown during the presentation. Additionally, occasional road closures at the project site would be necessary for certain construction tasks. It was noted however, that these road closures are not anticipated to be in place for any significant amount of time. To conclude, the representative affirmed that the majority of construction would be performed while traffic can cross the bridge.

- Chat question: The gas line was just installed, why wasn't it put in an area outside of the limits?

BLC responded that they have been in constant communication with Yankee Gas Services Company dba Eversource Energy – Gas since being made aware of the gas main. It was elaborated that there was a miscommunication when Eversource initially installed the gas main, but due to the fact that it is not on the bridge structure proper, it should be easier to relocate in the future.

CTDOT is also working with Eversource Energy – Gas to install some preliminary ways to isolate the main more easily in the future. It was acknowledged that the current location of the main is not ideal, however stated that this issue has been caught earlier enough that additional costs to the project have been minimized.

- Email question: How many days will you be doing detour? What was rating of bridge?

A representative of BLC addressed the first part of the question by stating that the detour will likely be for one day at a time, solely for specific construction activities. Some of these activities are likely to include pile driving and setting of the superstructure members. The reason why a full closure will be necessary is the fact that the equipment needed to do those construction activities are simply too large to safely maintain traffic directly next to the work area. By closing the bridge site for a day for the aforementioned activities, a safe working area can be ensured for the traveling public.

BLC answered the second part of the question by stating that the project was initiated because of the condition of the superstructure which is rated a four on a scale of one to nine. Expanding on this, the representative of BLC noted that although the superstructure is rated a four, it is not currently an unsafe bridge by any means. It was then explained that the substructure is rated a six, which was explained to be in “satisfactory” condition.

- Email question: The signage for dot for last two projects this year was bad, will you have signage for this project?

A representative of BLC noted that for projects where potential road closures are anticipated will have advanced warning signage. Typically, these are done at least two weeks in advance of any potential road closures even for just a 24-hour period.

BLC elaborated that two weeks prior to when the alternating one-way traffic pattern is implemented, the travelling public will be notified of the change in condition at the project site again to attempt to keep the public informed of what’s going on in the area. In the event that an alternate detour route is selected, proper signage and notification will be provided.

- Email question: Why 12 ft to 30 ft?

The representative of BLC acknowledged the fact that going from 12 to 30-ft. is a large jump but provided the explanation that the widening is necessary to construct the bridge behind the existing substructure within the project limits. It was further expanded upon that the proposed abutments will be sitting a few feet behind the back of the existing abutments on both sides. This was done to make construction easier and avoids the in-water work activities to be avoided thereby alleviating the need to dig up in the channel. The existing bridge will channel the river flows, protect the environment, and protect the work area. An elevation view of the proposed bridge was from the presentation was displayed and utilized to help illustrate these points.

- Chat question: Are you planning on selling the old bridge as a used bridge?

BLC explained that the existing bridge will essentially be demolished, not sold or utilized elsewhere. As mentioned earlier, the existing abutments will be utilized to handle water and facilitate the construction of the new bridge behind those abutments.

- Email question: You answer to pizza was alternate traffics on at a time, but presentation said the road would be closed. Which one is it?

A representative of BLC clarified that the majority of the construction work will utilize alternating one way and that will happen for a period of four months, two months for one side, two months for the other.

As a representative of BLC mentioned earlier in the presentation, we are in the preliminary stages of design at this point in time, and that other roadway closures may be necessary for very specific, short-duration construction activities. In the event that the roadway needs to be closed, these closures would occur during off-peak hours, avoiding rush hour.

- Chat question: Can you please tell me which committee or organization was responsible for the bridge inspection?

A representative of BLC remarked that the State of Connecticut owns and maintains Bridge No. 02442. They are therefore responsible for inspecting the bridge. All bridges are on a different inspection schedule, but the representative stated that this bridge is either on a yearly or biyearly schedule. In conclusion, the work is overseen by the Department of Transportation.

- Chat question: Was the impact on the migration of the Durham salamanders and wetland creatures studied and how will their wellbeing be impacted?

A representative of BLC noted that the process of looking at doing a bridge replacement or rehabilitation, the Department works very closely with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Referring to the required permits which were presented earlier in the presentation, which are obtained prior to construction. In addition to that there is in water work restrictions and is done in an effort to protect these types of species and becomes part of the construction contract which the contractor will have to adhere to.

- Email question: Is that piece of land owned by midway farm? Will traffic light be camera?

A representative of BLC noted that the town records indicate the property to the north of the project is owned by Steven Grozinski. The representative elaborated by saying that he could not comment if Mr. Grozinski is the owner of the Midway Farm.

Regarding the traffic light camera, a representative of BLC stated that due to the fact that high and low peaks of traffic in either direction are to be expected,

particularly during commuting hours, there will be state-of-the-art equipment there that will be able to detect when vehicles have arrived and when there are no vehicles on the other to adequately address real-time traffic needs and to ensure good vehicular flow through the project area.

- Voicemail question: Will this project be finished before the Durham Fair starts in September?

A representative of BLC noted coordination with Town of Durham officials several months ago at the onset of the project. BLC and the Connecticut Department of Transportation understand the importance of the Durham Fair and the traffic volumes associated with it. The representative noted the short answer would be yes given the project is scheduled to be substantially completed prior to the Durham Fair, if not one or two weeks before. It is understood that the roadway which the subject bridge carries is utilized as part of the fair's setup, and therefore the state is considering including incentives and disincentives to the contractor to push the contractor to get the construction done in plenty of time prior to the fair.

Adjournment: The email address, telephone number and project webpage address were provided for any additional questions or comments regarding the project following the meeting. Attendees were reminded that any additional comments will be received until January 1, 2021.

The presentation was well received, and the meeting was adjourned around 7:00 p.m.