

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Public Information Meeting State Project No. 0105-0221 Raise the Superstructure of Bridge No. 02708 Carrying Route 154 over Plum Bank Creek

**August 27, 2026 - 7:00 PM
Old Saybrook Town Hall
302 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475**

Report of Meeting

Present:

Attendance included 29 members of the public participating both in person and virtually. Town and State officials were present in addition to the Connecticut Department of Transportation project team, with representatives from State Bridge Design, and the Office of Environmental Planning.

Town and State Officials Present:

- Carl P. Fortuna, Jr., First Selectman, Town of Old Saybrook
- Larry Hayden, Information Technology Director, Town of Old Saybrook
- William C. Onofrio, Chief of Police, Town of Old Saybrook
- Devin Carney, State Representative

Team Presenting from the Connecticut Department of Transportation:

- Derick M. Lessard, P.E., Division Chief, Division of Bridges
- Andrew J. Cardinali, P.E., Principal Engineer, State Bridge Design
- Jonathan J. Kempf, P.E., Project Manager, State Bridge Design
- Raymond I. Basar, P.E., Project Engineer, State Bridge Design
- Gregory N. DeArmond, E.I.T., Project Designer, State Bridge Design
- Mujo Kurtovic, E.I.T., Project Designer, State Bridge Design
- Amanda M. Saul, Supervising Planner, Office of Rights of Way
- Julianna Goldfluss, Public Involvement Specialist, Office of Communications

Presentation:

First Selectman Carl Fortuna opened the meeting at approximately 7:00 PM with a brief welcome to attendees participating in person and virtually. Mr. Fortuna explained that CTDOT had previously informed the Town that corrective work would be required at Bridge No. 02708 following the bridge replacement completed in 2021. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to allow CTDOT to explain the reason for the corrective project, the proposed work, and how the Department intends to address the issue. Mr. Fortuna thanked CTDOT for presenting the project to the public.

Jonathan J. Kempf introduced himself as the CTDOT Project Manager, introduced the project design team, and reviewed the meeting agenda. Mr. Kempf noted that the meeting would include a formal presentation followed by a public question-and-answer session. He also stated that questions and

comments could be submitted after the meeting by email or voicemail and that the comment period would remain open through September 10, 2026.

Mr. Kempf reviewed Title VI policies and explained that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation or subject to discrimination in the development of the project. Information related to Title VI, the voluntary post-meeting survey, the project webpage, and contact information was identified as being available online. Instructions were also provided for virtual attendees to submit questions using the Zoom Q&A feature.

Existing Site and Bridge Conditions

Raymond I. Basar began the formal presentation with an overview of the project location and the bridge. Bridge No. 02708 carries Route 154 (Plum Bank Road) over Plum Bank Creek in Old Saybrook and is located approximately 1.1 miles south of the intersection of Route 1 and Route 154. The bridge is located between Harvey's Beach and Town Beach, with Plum Bank Creek connecting the coastal waters to the adjacent tidal marsh.

Mr. Basar presented the following information regarding the existing Bridge No. 02708:

- The current bridge was fully replaced in 2021.
- The current structure is a single-span, fully integral abutment bridge consisting of prestressed concrete deck units composite with a reinforced cast-in-place concrete deck.
- The bridge is supported on pile-supported abutments.
- The bridge has a center-to-center span of 43 feet and a clear span of 40 feet.
- The curb-to-curb roadway width is 30 feet, and the out-to-out bridge width is 36 feet.
- The average daily traffic is approximately 3,600 vehicles per day, with approximately 2 percent truck traffic.

Photographs of the northbound and southbound roadway approaches and the east and west bridge elevations were presented. Mr. Basar also identified the original and current abutments, revetments, tidal marsh, coastal side of Plum Bank Creek, and scour protection measures at the site.

Project Background

Mr. Basar explained the design constraints associated with the 2021 bridge replacement. Portions of the prior bridge abutments and existing concrete struts within the channel were retained because they provided scour protection and because their removal would have required greater disturbance within the tidal waterway. The replacement abutments were therefore constructed behind the existing abutments, which increased the span length of the bridge. The increased span, in turn, required a deeper bridge superstructure than that of the original structure.

The roadway profile was maintained as close to the existing profile as practical to minimize impacts to Route 154 and surrounding properties. Maintaining the roadway profile also reduced the extent of approach roadway reconstruction, right-of-way impacts, and impacts to tidal wetlands and other environmentally regulated areas. The current bridge, as constructed, satisfies applicable structural requirements and State and Federal structural design standards. Additionally, the 2021 replacement increased the hydraulic opening and maintained or enhanced scour protection at the crossing.

Mr. Basar explained that, because the replacement superstructure was deeper while the roadway profile was generally maintained, the resulting low chord elevation was lower than the low chord elevation of the original bridge that existed prior to the 2021 replacement. The lower low chord

elevation was not properly conveyed in the environmental permit documentation associated with the 2021 project. As a result, a discrepancy existed between the constructed condition and the permitted condition.

It was subsequently determined that the current bridge condition does not comply with an applicable coastal statute requiring that coastal highway improvements in no case decrease coastal access and recreational opportunities. The proposed corrective project is intended to restore the prior low chord elevation and bring the bridge into compliance with the applicable coastal and tidal wetland requirements.

Purpose and Need

Mr. DeArmond presented the purpose and need for the proposed corrective project, which is to raise Bridge No. 02708 superstructure to restore its previous low chord elevation and, in doing so, restore coastal and recreational access beneath the bridge. The proposed project will also improve navigational clearance while maintaining the lowest practical roadway profile, meet applicable coastal statutes and tidal wetland regulatory requirements, and minimize impacts to tidal wetlands, the waterway, roadway approaches, and adjacent properties.

Proposed Design and Construction

Mr. DeArmond presented plan, section, and elevation views of the proposed work. The current bridge superstructure will generally remain in place and will be raised approximately 8.5 inches to restore the previous low chord elevation. The Route 154 roadway profile and adjacent embankments will also be raised and regraded to transition into the raised bridge elevation. Portions of the concrete bridge backwalls, deck ends, wingwalls, and parapets will be removed and reconstructed. The roadway approaches will be raised and regraded to tie into the proposed bridge elevation, and adjacent embankment slopes will be raised and regraded as required. The current bridge foundations, revetments, and major substructure components are generally anticipated to remain. The work is anticipated to remain entirely within the State right-of-way limits.

Mr. DeArmond described the anticipated bridge jacking operation. The contractor will excavate behind the abutments to obtain access to the structure. Portions of the parapets, wingwalls, deck ends, and backwalls will be removed. A horizontal saw cut, or an equivalent contractor-selected means and method, will be used to separate the bridge superstructure from the substructure. Portions of the deck ends will be removed to provide space for bridge jacking equipment. Hydraulic jacks will be positioned to raise the superstructure slowly and uniformly. The bridge will be raised to the proposed elevation and temporarily supported using incompressible temporary supports. Additional portions of the deck ends and backwalls will be removed as necessary. New reinforcing steel will be doweled into the adjacent concrete. The deck ends, backwalls, parapets, and removed portions of the wingwalls will be reconstructed. The roadway approaches and embankment slopes will then be reconstructed to match the raised bridge elevation.

Mr. DeArmond noted that the construction sequence presented represents an anticipated approach for completing the work and that the contractor may elect to use an alternative construction method, provided that the proposed method complies with the contract requirements.

Traffic Considerations

The Department presented a full road closure and detour for the primary bridge construction. The detour is generally the same route that was utilized during the 2021 bridge replacement.

- Route 154 would be fully closed at Bridge No. 02708 during the primary bridge work.
- The closure limits would extend approximately from the Harvey's Beach driveway to the north to Tom's Road to the south.
- Access to residences would remain available from the appropriate side of the closure.
- The signed detour would utilize Old Boston Post Road, Main Street, and Maple Avenue.
- The detour is approximately four miles in length and is anticipated to add approximately eight minutes of travel time.
- The primary bridge and roadway closure is anticipated to last approximately 8 to 10 weeks and would occur between Labor Day and Memorial Day outside of the prime beach season.
- A separate shorter closure of approximately 2 to 3 weeks may be required before the primary bridge work to temporarily relocate utilities, including the water main.

Utility Relocation and Protection

The Connecticut Water main is currently attached to the east side of the bridge and must be temporarily relocated to provide room for the bridge work. CTDOT presented a conceptual temporary water main alignment east of the bridge and stated that coordination with Connecticut Water is ongoing.

- The water main will be temporarily relocated and subsequently restored to the raised bridge.
- Water service interruptions are anticipated to be minimal.
- The exact temporary support configuration remains subject to coordination and final design.
- Overhead utility coordination is also required as the project advances.

Environmental Impacts and Permitting

Mr. DeArmond reviewed anticipated environmental impacts and permitting requirements. The project is located within FEMA Flood Hazard Zone VE and is adjacent to tidal wetlands on both sides of Route 154. Some tidal wetland impacts are anticipated due to the approach roadway and embankment grading required to accommodate the raised bridge.

- The proposed bridge improvement will restore the previous low chord elevation and will ensure coastal and recreational access from Plum Bank Creek.
- Most construction activities are anticipated to occur on or immediately adjacent to the bridge rather than within Plum Bank Creek.
- Construction activities within the waterway will be minimized to the extent practical.
- The current fish passage conditions beneath the bridge will be maintained.

The following environmental permits and approvals are anticipated:

- CTDEEP Individual Flood Management Certification.
- CTDEEP authorization for Structures, Dredging, Fill and Tidal Wetlands.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pre-Construction Notification.

Rights of Way

Mr. DeArmond stated that right-of-way acquisitions are not currently anticipated and that the proposed work is expected to remain within the State right-of-way.

Anticipated Project Schedule and Cost

Mr. DeArmond summarized the anticipated project schedule and cost.

- Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2028.
- Final design plans are anticipated in 2027.
- The overall construction duration is anticipated to be one construction season.
- A shorter closure may occur in Spring 2028 to accommodate temporary water utility relocation.
- The primary bridge construction and road closure are anticipated to occur after Labor Day and outside of the prime beach season.
- Unconfined in-water work is restricted to the period between June 1 and September 30.
- The estimated construction cost is approximately \$3.4 million.
- The project is anticipated to be funded with 100 percent State funds.
- The schedule is subject to the availability of funding, permitting, and other project requirements.

The presentation concluded with information on how to submit questions or comments. Comments may be submitted by email to Jonathan.Kempf@ct.gov or by voicemail at (860) 594-2020. Attendees were asked to include the project number, 0105-0221, in any correspondence. The comment period remains open through Thursday, September 10, 2026.

Public Comments and Questions During the Q&A Session that Followed the Presentation:

Question/Comment: A resident asked why the recently replaced bridge over Back River, located north of Bridge No. 02708, does not require similar corrective work despite also appearing to have limited vertical clearance.

Response: CTDOT stated that the Back River Bridge replacement maintained the previous low chord elevation at that location. Bridge No. 02708 differs because the 2021 replacement resulted in a low chord elevation lower than that of the structure it replaced.

Question/Comment: A resident questioned whether raising Bridge No. 02708 approximately 8.5 inches is sufficient given rising sea levels and stated that the same recreational clearance issue may occur again in the future. The resident stated that this project does not solve the problem, and in their opinion \$3 million is being wasted. The resident asked why CTDOT would not raise the bridge higher as part of the current project. The resident also noted that boats with windshields used to fit under the bridge, but kayaks now barely fit underneath.

Response: CTDOT stated that the purpose of the corrective project is to restore the low chord elevation that existed prior to the 2021 replacement and comply with the applicable coastal statute. CTDOT explained that raising the bridge substantially higher would increase structural forces on the current bridge, and one of the constraints is structural capacity. Furthermore, additional raising would require more extensive roadway reconstruction, grading, right-of-way impacts, and impacts to adjacent tidal wetlands. CTDOT stated that the comments regarding sea level rise and a greater bridge elevation would be documented and discussed further with regulators.

Question/Comment: A resident asked why the bridge was constructed at the lower elevation during the 2021 replacement and questioned why additional State funds are now required to correct the condition.

Response: CTDOT explained that the new bridge was constructed with a substantially longer span because the replacement abutments were placed behind the original abutments that currently provide scour protection. The longer span required a deeper superstructure. In order to minimize roadway, environmental, and right-of-way impacts, the roadway profile was generally maintained, resulting in a lower low chord elevation. The hydraulic opening was enlarged. CTDOT acknowledged that an oversight occurred because the lower low chord elevation decreased coastal access. After this issue was brought forth, the lower low chord elevation was verified, and this project was initiated to address the issue and meet State statutes.

Question/Comment: A resident asked why the remaining original bridge abutments and embankments could not be removed to further widen the channel and reduce the force or pressure of tidal water moving through Plum Bank Creek. The resident also expressed concern regarding erosion of adjacent marshland.

Response: CTDOT stated that hydraulic engineers reviewed the condition and determined that the water level at the bridge is principally controlled by the tidal elevation on the coastal side. Removing the remaining original abutments would not significantly change the governing water levels. CTDOT also explained that removal would require substantially more intrusive work within the waterway, including temporary sheeting and dewatering, and would increase environmental impacts. The existing abutments and concrete struts within the channel also provide scour protection, so the existing abutments were cut down and maintained to be left in place and act as a flooding shield. Hydraulic analysis of the site showed that the entire Route 154 roadway would be overtopped during a major storm event. The main purpose of the previous project was to replace the original bridge built in 1935 to address the structural condition of the degrading bridge. Removing the original abutments

would not improve the hydraulic condition of the Route 154 roadway or the conveyance underneath the bridge. The entire corridor along the roadway would have to be raised in order to address the hydraulic issues, and this was outside the intended scope of our project. The concrete struts within the channel in-between the original abutments also presented constructability challenges. In order to drive sheeting and dewater the area, these concrete struts would need to be removed. The water would need to be cut off from the entire system in order to remove the original concrete struts and abutments. To minimize impacts, maintaining the original abutments without touching the concrete struts allowed for construction beyond the original abutments, reducing impacts to the waterway.

Question/Comment: A resident questioned whether spending approximately \$3.4 million and closing Route 154 for several weeks with a four mile detour is justified to increase the bridge clearance by approximately 8.5 inches. The resident questioned whether the resulting recreational benefit is sufficient to warrant the cost and inconvenience. The resident also expressed that the project does not make sense despite the regulations and statutes concerning access under the bridge.

Response: CTDOT stated that the Department understands the concern and is not undertaking the corrective project solely as an elective navigational improvement. The project is being pursued because CTDOT is required to comply with applicable State coastal statutes and environmental requirements. CTDOT stated that the comments received regarding the project would be documented and brought back to Department management and the applicable regulatory agencies.

Question/Comment: A resident asked why the proposed elevation increase is specifically 8.5 inches.

Response: CTDOT stated that approximately 8.5 inches represents the difference between the current low chord elevation and the low chord elevation that existed prior to the 2021 bridge replacement. The intent of the corrective project is to restore the previous minimum low chord elevation.

Question/Comment: A resident asked how the low chord elevation is established and whether it is measured from high tide, low tide, or another water elevation.

Response: CTDOT explained that the low chord is the elevation of the lowest portion of the bridge superstructure. While the entire elevation is not going to be the same as the original bridge, the lowest point of the proposed bridge will be no lower than the original bridge. It is established using a fixed survey elevation datum and is not measured directly from a particular high- or low-tide water surface.

Question/Comment: First Selectman Fortuna and members of the public questioned whether restoring the physical elevation of a bridge that existed many decades ago provides the same effective navigational clearance today, given changes in sea level. First Selectman Fortuna expressed that this low chord elevation is a relative term given the changes in sea level.

Response: CTDOT acknowledged that if water elevations increase over time, available vertical clearance beneath a bridge at the same physical elevation would decrease. CTDOT stated, however, that the corrective project is intended to restore the prior low chord elevation to satisfy the applicable coastal access requirement. CTDOT also noted that the current bridge has a substantially greater horizontal span and hydraulic opening than the previous structure.

Question/Comment: A resident asked who establishes the applicable regulatory parameters and whether future sea level rise is specifically considered when determining the required low chord elevation.

Response: CTDOT stated that the applicable coastal statutes address maintaining coastal and recreational access and do not directly establish a new bridge elevation based on a projected future sea level. CTDOT stated that resiliency is considered in bridge design and that, at this location, major

storm events may overtop the roadway. The bridge is therefore designed to be resilient and withstand the forces associated with flooding and overtopping.

Question/Comment: A resident asked for the number of people that go under the bridge in a year.

Response: CTDOT noted that this comment would be documented, but the Department did not have this number.

Question/Comment: A resident noted that many in attendance are disappointed with State funds being spent on this project, and a \$3.5 million project does not make sense. The resident also assumed that legal specialists have looked at the statutes and the regulation cannot be read as materially impairing access. The resident noted that many of the meeting comments are addressed to people who are not in attendance, including the State legislature.

Response: CTDOT explained that the proposed project is a localized corrective project specifically addressing Bridge No. 02708 to meet the coastal access requirement.

Question/Comment: A resident of Plum Bank Road expressed that the roadway needs to be raised further in the future due to flooding and asked whether the State is currently evaluating a larger improvement to investigate and address recurring flooding and future sea level rise along this portion of Route 154.

Response: CTDOT noted that flooding issues are known, and hydraulic specialists have determined that the roadway will be several feet below the 100-year design and 500-year check flood elevation levels. CTDOT representatives stated that they were not aware of a specific corridor-wide project currently being developed for this section of Route 154. CTDOT stated that the bridge is designed to remain structurally stable during significant flood events even if the roadway is overtopped. A project to raise a larger portion of Route 154 would be a significantly larger undertaking involving extensive roadway reconstruction, right-of-way impacts, driveway impacts, environmental impacts, and impacts to adjacent properties. CTDOT stated that the concern would be brought back to the Department to determine whether other studies or planning efforts are underway.

Question/Comment: First Selectman Fortuna announced that he had a different meeting to attend. First Selectman Fortuna made it known to attendees online and in-person that the Chief of Police was present, and if there are any traffic or safety issues with regard to this project Chief Onofrio should be able to address them. First Selectman Fortuna explained that even after the bridge is raised, a greater discussion may be about where residents are living along the shoreline because some residents may not be able to live in their current houses. First Selectman Fortuna noted the depressing nature of the comment he was leaving attendees with, but he thanked attendees and the State for the meeting.

Question/Comment: A resident asked why the bridge is being raised and whether the roadway approaches will also be raised. The resident also asked how the roadway will tie into the raised bridge.

Response: CTDOT stated that the roadway approaches on either side of the bridge will also be raised and re-graded gradually as necessary to tie into the elevated bridge and provide a smooth transition between the roadway and bridge.

Question/Comment: One resident asked why not raise the roadway further, which may also require raising the bridge further in the future. The resident also asked how the hydraulic opening is better when the water goes over the roadway during flooding.

Response: CTDOT conducted a hydraulic analysis, and the conveyance opening under the bridge is larger and improved when compared to the original bridge. During a storm event the water goes above the existing abutments that were left in place which increased conveyance. The bridge is

designed to be resilient in a storm event. After a storm the roadway may need to be reconnected to the bridge, if necessary, but the bridge itself is designed to be resilient. The scope of the project was to address the structure itself.

Question/Comment: A resident familiar with Plum Bank Creek stated that the creek becomes extremely shallow during portions of the tidal cycle and noted that the bulk of the small creek does not even allow kayaks through during mid-tide because of sand flats. The resident noted he had kayaked up the river previously many times, oftentimes through mud. The resident stated that portions of the marsh may also be accessible through Back River and Oyster River and recommended that CTDOT and regulators review actual field conditions. The resident also recommended noting that access is not being cutoff whatsoever if negotiations take place with regulators. The resident also recommended taking pictures of Plum Bank Creek to show how much the creek dries up. The resident also stated that the bridge will never be hydraulically adequate.

Response: CTDOT thanked the resident for the local information and stated that the comments would be documented and considered.

Question/Comment: A resident expressed concern regarding ongoing erosion within the tidal marsh and stated that tidal currents through the bridge openings appear to contribute to erosion and sediment movement. Access is also filling in with silt, pressure against the bridge opening is increasing, and the velocity of the water may have been measured at a rate of 35 mph under the Great Hammock Beach bridge. The resident also mentioned previously asking to reference the bridge carrying Route 1 over Oyster River, asking how that bridge is allowed to have such a large span underneath whereas this bridge has a narrow opening. The resident further noted that an extra 8.5 inches won't make much of a difference trying to get a boat underneath.

Response: CTDOT stated that the 2021 bridge replacement increased hydraulic conveyance when compared to the original bridge. CTDOT reiterated that the retained original abutments and concrete struts provide scour protection and that removing these elements would result in greater construction and environmental impacts.

Question/Comment: A resident asked how and whether one individual or office was responsible for the design and permitting oversight that resulted in the lower low chord elevation and a mistake that could cost over \$3 million.

Response: CTDOT stated that bridge projects are developed and reviewed by multiple offices and personnel and that the issue could not appropriately be attributed to one individual. CTDOT stated that the discrepancy occurred because information shown in the design plan documents and permit applications did not match. The original elevations were not shown on the plans, and without this information present on the plans the necessary checks to identify the lower low chord condition during review were missed. Since the original elevation was not presented, it is difficult to correspond the existing and proposed elevations together. CTDOT stated that additional internal checks and procedures have since been implemented.

Question/Comment: A resident stated that the previous Plum Bank Creek Bridge had noticeably greater clearance than the nearby Back River Bridge and that several inches of additional clearance can make a meaningful difference for kayakers at high tide. The resident described instances in which kayakers experienced difficulty passing beneath the nearby bridge and expressed support for restoring the previous clearance at Bridge No. 02708.

Response: CTDOT thanked the attendee for the comment and stated that it would be included in the public record.

Question/Comment: A resident asked if there are future proposals being considered or planned for regarding elevating the roadway further. The resident also mentioned that at abnormally high tides saltwater is present all over the roadway. The resident questioned whether improving clearance for a relatively small number of recreational users justified the approximately \$3.4 million construction cost and the inconvenience associated with the detour. The resident suggested that recreational users could wait for a more favorable tide that would permit underpass.

Response: CTDOT reiterated that the Department is required to address the applicable State statute governing coastal and recreational access and stated that the comment would be documented for discussion with regulators. CTDOT also noted that the State would be fully responsible for the project construction costs.

Question/Comment: A resident asked who was responsible for the State statute and whether the applicable State statute could be changed so that the corrective project would no longer be required.

Response: State Representative Devin Carney explained that changes or amendments to State statutes require legislative action through the Connecticut General Assembly. Representative Carney advised residents that concerns regarding the statutory requirement could be raised with their state legislators when the General Assembly reconvenes. Representative Carney also requested that CTDOT convey the comments raised during the meeting to the Department and relevant regulatory agencies.

Question/Comment: A resident asked which agency is requiring CTDOT to perform the corrective work and whether the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) directed the Department to raise the bridge.

Response: CTDOT explained that the issue involves compliance with the environmental permits and applicable coastal statutes administered through CTDEEP. CTDOT stated that the Department identified the discrepancy and brought it to the attention of CTDEEP, and subsequent coordination confirmed the need to bring the bridge condition into compliance.

Question/Comment: A resident asked if CTDOT was looking into flooding and the flooding issues that occur regularly on the roadway. The resident noted that the water levels at Plum Bank Creek are high, water from the creek reaches the roadway monthly, and often motorists are unable to drive through the roadway.

Response: CTDOT explained that most of the members attending the meeting focus on bridges and they are not currently aware of any corridor plans or projects along the route. CTDOT understood flooding issues generally along the Connecticut coastline. If State Route 154 were to be raised, then there would likely be extensive right-of-way impacts with many homes, driveways and properties affected.

Question/Comment: Residents asked whether a waiver, variance, commission action, or other administrative relief could eliminate the requirement to raise the bridge.

Response: CTDOT stated that the matter has been reviewed internally, including by Legals, and that the Department is presently required to comply with the applicable statute and permit requirements. CTDOT stated that the public comments would be brought back to Department management and regulatory agencies for further discussion. CTDOT did not make a commitment that a waiver or exemption would be available.

Question/Comment: A member of the public noted that the 2021 bridge replacement reportedly cost approximately \$2.5 million and asked why the proposed corrective project is estimated at approximately \$3.4 million when the entire bridge is not being replaced.

Response: CTDOT explained that the proposed bridge jacking operation is highly specialized work. The contractor must excavate around the bridge, separate the current superstructure from the substructure, raise the bridge uniformly, temporarily support it, reconstruct concrete components and roadway approaches, and coordinate utilities while avoiding damaging bridge components intended to remain. CTDOT also noted that construction costs have increased significantly since 2021 and that both inflation and the specialized nature of the work contribute to the estimated cost.

Question/Comment: A resident asked for clarification as to whether the bridge over Plum Bank Creek is the same height as the bridge over Back River. The resident noted that the bridge over the Back River appears to have less clearance when boating underneath.

Response: The low chord elevation of the original bridge over Plum Bank Creek was higher than the low chord elevation of the original bridge over Back River.

Question/Comment: A resident asked whether a prefabricated bridge could be used instead to reduce construction time or cost.

Response: CTDOT stated that the prefabricated bridge systems generally available to the Department are intended primarily for temporary use and would not provide the same long-term redundancy and durability as the current concrete bridge. CTDOT stated that multiple alternatives were evaluated and that raising the current bridge was selected because the structure is relatively new and in good structural condition. More extensive replacement alternatives would result in greater cost and impacts.

Question/Comment: A resident asked about the anticipated design and service life of Bridge No. 02708.

Response: CTDOT stated that bridges are generally designed for a 75-year design life, with service lives approaching 100 years. CTDOT noted that Bridge No. 02708 has only been in service since 2021 and remains in good structural condition, making preservation of the current bridge an important consideration.

Question/Comment: A resident questioned whether restoring a low chord elevation based on the original bridge sufficiently considers projected sea level rise over the anticipated service life of the existing structure. The resident stated that a more comprehensive solution addressing both the bridge and Route 154 should be considered.

Response: CTDOT stated that resilient bridge design does not necessarily require the bridge or roadway to remain above the water surface during an extreme flood event. The bridge itself is designed to withstand a storm event and remain structurally stable after floodwater recedes. CTDOT reiterated that the current project is a localized corrective spot improvement to address the condition of the original bridge. A comprehensive project that includes hydraulic improvements along the entire stretch of Route 154 would involve significantly greater scope and impacts.

Question/Comment: A resident expressed that proceeding with the project to raise the bridge only 8.5 inches for \$3.4 million does not make sense while noting the possibility of needing to raise the whole roadway including the bridge in the future.

Response: The Department noted that the comments and concerns will be documented.

Question/Comment: A resident expressed that decision makers and legislature do not regard the feedback and opinions of the group attending the meeting. The resident expressed a lack of common sense and noted the \$3.4 million is not likely to change the consideration of the State legislature.

Response: The Department acknowledged the comment.

Question/Comment: One resident commented that design and coastal resistance does not mean that roads are built to an elevation above a 100-year flood. The resident stated that coastal resilience means that roads and bridges can survive floods. The resident proclaimed that Route 154 will never be raised above the flood elevation of 9.2 feet, which is several feet above the roadway. The resident noted that the design of the roadways and bridges are such that they can be overtopped, then the flood recedes, and road and bridges are still there afterwards. The resident then stated that it is not practical to build everything for a 100-year event, and the purpose of coastal resistance is to resist and survive the floods. The same resident also noted that this project is in a flood area that always has flooded and always will flood.

Response: The comment was acknowledged by the Department.

Question/Comment: A resident asked, given \$3.4 million is to be spent on the project, if consideration is given to future projects on the roadway that will be needed before determining if the bridge should be raised 8.5 inches. The resident referred to flooding along the roadway and asked why the bridge would be raised if you cannot get to the bridge during flooding. The resident claimed that the roadway floods at every extreme high tide, which usually occurs during a full moon.

Response: The Department explained that storm events have a probability of occurrence, and such storms do not occur every day. CTDOT explained that the corrective project is not being conducted to address the flooding of the roadway. The bridge was designed and built to resist overtopping, as currently constructed. In theory, should that area flood significantly, the bridge would remain. The statute is specific to the recreational vessels passing underneath the structure. The additional 8.5 inches is to provide the same recreational access as the original structure. Addressing the statute is the purpose of this corrective project. The Department also noted that every comment is documented and taken seriously. CTDOT recognized that the consensus among most of the meeting attendees is opposition to the project.

Question/Comment: A resident asked whether raising the bridge by approximately 8.5 inches would provide sufficient clearance for recreational boating. The resident noted that, prior to the 2021 bridge replacements, they were able to pass a boat under both the Plum Bank Creek and Back River bridges, although they had to duck their head to do so. The resident questioned whether an 8.5-inch increase would make a meaningful difference and whether boats are considered recreational access.

Response: CTDOT confirmed with the resident that they were able to pass a boat under both bridges in 2020, prior to the 2021 replacements. CTDOT stated that, because the proposed project will restore the bridge to its original low chord elevation, the intent is to restore the same clearance that existed prior to the 2021 replacement. Therefore, in theory, a boat that was able to pass under the bridge before the 2021 replacement should again be able to pass underneath following the proposed work.

Question/Comment: A resident noted that Plum Bank Creek is subject to a no-wake restriction with a posted sign near Great Hammock and questioned the type and amount of recreational boating that would benefit from restoring the previous clearance. The resident claimed that this restriction would limit the recreational boating in the area.

Response: CTDOT stated that the applicable coastal statute addresses recreational access generally and is not limited to a particular type or quantity of watercraft. The corrective project is intended to restore the level of access that existed prior to the 2021 replacement.

Question/Comment: Several residents reiterated opposition to spending approximately \$3.4 million and imposing the anticipated road closures to raise the bridge approximately 8.5 inches. Residents stated that the project appeared to address a regulatory requirement rather than a significant structural

or hydraulic deficiency and expressed concern that the surrounding roadway remains susceptible to flooding.

Response: CTDOT acknowledged the substantial opposition expressed during the meeting. CTDOT stated that all comments would be formally documented and provided to Department management and the applicable regulatory agencies. CTDOT stated that further discussions would occur with regulators following the public meeting.

Adjournment:

Following the conclusion of the public question-and-answer session, CTDOT thanked the Town of Old Saybrook, State Representatives, the members of the public attending in person, and the virtual participants for their time, questions, comments, and participation. CTDOT also provided attendees with contact information for further comments and questions related to the project, which is also available on the project website. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM.

Public Comments and Questions Received During Comment Period that Followed the Public Information Meeting Held on Thursday, August 27, 2026:

Following the adjournment of the Public Information Meeting for State Project No. 0105-0221, the formal comment period remained open through Thursday, September 10, 2026. A summary of the questions and comments received during this comment period with respective responses provided by CTDOT has been included below:

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Friday, August 28, 2026:

First, thank you for last night's presentation at the Old Saybrook Town Hall regarding the proposed Plum Bank Bridge project. The presentation was clear and thorough, and I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and provide comments.

I am a longtime Old Saybrook resident, having lived here since 1955. I grew up at Great Hammock Beach, where I still own property, and I have also lived on the marsh side of Briarwood Drive. I am a retired State of Connecticut employee and former president of SVFT Local 4200A. I also served for eight years as president of the Great Hammock Beach Association.

I grew up boating and fishing in this area and, years ago, we even water-skied in the Back River tidal marshes. I know these waterways and the surrounding marsh very well. For many years, the Plum Bank Bridge was our access point to and from Long Island Sound, and there was once a substantial deepwater channel through that area.

I appreciate that the proposed Plum Bank Bridge project is intended, in part, to improve and preserve recreational access and use. As a working general contractor, the proposed \$3.4 million cost is secondary to me compared with the larger issues affecting this area.

My primary concern is the significant erosion and loss of the tidal marsh. A second concern is the continued accumulation of silt and shallowing of the tidal waterways, which increasingly restricts navigation and recreational boating access. Whether the Plum Bank Bridge can ultimately be raised to the desired height is, of course, an engineering question.

Although last night's presentation specifically addressed the Plum Bank Bridge, I believe the conditions at the Great Hammock Bridge are also important and provide a useful comparison when evaluating the broader issues affecting these waterways.

As I indicated last night, the velocity of the water exiting through the Great Hammock Bridge area during low tide has been measured at speeds of approximately 35 mph. That type of current creates a significant safety concern for kayakers and other recreational boaters attempting to navigate through or near the bridge. It also raises questions about how changes to the marsh, tidal flow, channel configuration, sedimentation, and bridge openings may be affecting water velocity throughout this interconnected area.

What I find difficult to understand is that the bridges constructed in 1935 served those traveling through these waterways well for many years. This raises a broader question as to what has changed in the surrounding marsh and waterways over time and whether those changes are contributing to the access, erosion, sedimentation, and water-velocity problems we see today.

If your department has not already done so, I strongly encourage you to review the historical data, meeting records, correspondence, and comments submitted over the years by the Great Hammock Beach Association to both DEEP and your agency. I believe that history is important to understanding the conditions that exist today.

In my view, there is a much larger environmental and waterway issue here than simply raising Plum Bank Bridge No. 02708. The erosion of the tidal marsh, sedimentation and shallowing of the waterways, changes in tidal flow and velocity, and the conditions at both the Plum Bank and Great Hammock bridges should be considered as part of the broader discussion.

Lastly, I would like to address the comments made regarding flooding along Route 154 in the Plum Bank/Town Beach area. While the road elevation is certainly a contributing factor, based on my observations over many years, a significant amount of the flooding appears to result from several storm drains that discharge through the seawall on private properties. During abnormally high tides, you can actually observe tidal water flowing back through these drains and onto Route 154.

To my knowledge, these stormwater outlets do not have filtration structures or backflow-prevention gates. I believe the effect of these drainage systems during high-tide events warrants further evaluation as part of any discussion about flooding in this area.

Thank you again for your presentation and for taking the time to consider my comments and observations.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Monday, September 14, 2026:

Sorry for the delay in response, as we reached the conclusion of the public comment period I would like to let you know that, all of the public comments are being documented, and the public opposition to this project will be brought to the attention of the Regulators when we meet with them in the coming weeks. We appreciate your feedback and I completely understand your frustration with the project as proposed. Please know your comments are being taken into consideration when steering the proposed project work. If you have any further questions or concerns please feel free to let me know.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Friday, August 28, 2026:

I attended the Old Saybrook CT DOT information session via Zoom last night and would like to reiterate public comments that Plum Bank Creek Project 0105-0221 is a terrible waste of taxpayer

money. Spending \$3.5 million to raise a new 5-year old bridge 8.5" over a creek that leads into a swampy marsh that exists part of the day and no one uses does not make any sense. The long term closure and detour of Rt. 154 for a third time makes the project even less worthwhile. A better (free) solution is to remind concerned users that Back River to access Plum Bank Creek provides 24 hour unimpeded access, unlike direct Plum Bank Creek access which can only happen twice daily for a brief period at mid-tide.

I'm interested in seeing the cost/benefit analysis and how many users actually travel under the bridge annually. Additionally, the circumstances surrounding non-timely notification (5 years later) and how anyone would be able to notice and measure the bridge was lowered by inches. Furthermore, how can it be proven that the new bridge is too low given the seemingly daily rise in water levels. As outlined last night, DOT and DEEP should be ensuring our legislature is proactively earmarking funds to deal with the current and future rise in sea levels.

I was hoping this was an early (or late) April fools joke but I think this is actually happening. The entire state needs to know when taxpayer money is being wasted and makes me wonder how frequently this happens. Perhaps this needs to be reported in the local news in order to get more public attention.

I'm copying our First Selectman, Hartford legislative representatives, and Governor Lamont in hopes that a project pause can be granted immediately until the outdated regulations are amended. I'm in favor of expanding public use of public lands/waters but common sense MUST always prevail when it comes to use of our finances.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Monday, September 14, 2026:

As we have reached the end of the comment period we have documented your concerns and the public comments are being taken into consideration when steering the proposed project work. I would also like to provide some responses to the questions you had asked in your previous email.

Q. I'm interested in seeing the cost/benefit analysis and how many users actually travel under the bridge annually.

A. The DOT does not have any information on how many users travel under the Plumb Bank Creek Bridge. The low chord of this bridge is lower than that of the previous bridge in conflict of state statute Sec. 22a-92 "to require that coastal highways and highway improvements, including bridges, be designed and constructed so as to minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources; to require that coastal highway and highway improvements give full consideration to mass transportation alternatives and to require that coastal highways and highway improvements where possible enhance, but in no case decrease coastal access and recreational opportunities". The driving reason for the project is to address the statute compliance and therefore a cost benefit analysis was not performed.

Q. Additionally, the circumstances surrounding non-timely notification (5 years later) and how anyone would be able to notice and measure the bridge was lowered by inches.

A. The conflict of the bridge being lower than the previous bridge was brought to the DOTs attention by a resident after construction had been completed. The DOT investigated and determined that the low chord was lowered by survey through comparing the elevations of the existing bridge to the original survey of the previous bridge tied into the vertical datum used in Connecticut. Once the low chord was determined to be lowered from the original structure, a project initiated to address the statutory and regulation issue, including comparing various repair alternatives and developing preliminary plans before presenting to the public.

Q. Furthermore, how can it be proven that the new bridge is too low given the seemingly daily rise in water levels.

A. The DOT has surveys of both the previous bridge and current bridge and can confirm the change in low chord elevation. The low chord elevation is not measured from the water surface elevation, but rather the standard, fixed vertical datum in CT used in official A-2 topographical surveys. The state statute being referenced does not consider the change in water levels, but is only in reference to coastal access and recreational opportunities being reduced by the new bridge by the lower structure being more restrictive to recreational access.

Q. As outlined last night, DOT and DEEP should be ensuring our legislature is proactively earmarking funds to deal with the current and future rise in sea levels.

A. The concerns brought up regarding rise in sea levels at this location have been passed on to relevant staff at the DOT, and DOT management for consideration.

Thank you again for your feedback, and if you have any outstanding questions or concerns please let me know.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Monday, August 31, 2026:

I was unable to attend the public hearing in Old Saybrook on this project but did watch the video recording of the meeting.

First, thank you to you and your colleagues who attended the meeting. Your overview of the project and responses to questions was very helpful.

I have two primary concerns as a taxpayer:

Number 1 – this was clearly a big miss by the state, and my concern is that errors like this be avoided in the future. Based on comments at the meeting it sounds like new procedures are being put into place to assure that a costly error like this does not happen again. I certainly hope that is the case and that the procedures are fool proof. When I first saw the announcement of this project I was pretty annoyed (as a taxpayer) that we needed to take corrective action on a bridge that was only 6 years old.

Number 2 – I understand that the driving force for the repairs is to conform to CT statutes. While I appreciate the importance of adhering to statutes and regulations I wonder if this is a situation where a variance would be warranted. I am not sure a \$3.4 million expenditure to address recreational needs by a VERY small number of people makes sense. I am sure there are a lot of infrastructure projects across the state that need to be funded which would be of more value than raising this bridge 8.5” to conform with a statute. So, I would like to see the state issue a variance and leave the structure as is.

A couple of other comments:

1. During the meeting someone from the state indicated the bridge was from the early 1900’s. That is inconsistent with the material posted on the state website which date the bridge to 1958.

2. Your team did a great job explaining the hydraulic improvement of the new bridge, I did not pick up on that when I first reviewed the project material.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Tuesday, September 15, 2026:

Thank you for your feedback, and I completely understand your frustrations. All of the public comments are being documented, and the public opposition to this project will be brought to the

attention of the Regulators when we meet with them at the conclusion of the public comment period. We have also begun internal discussions on potential ways to mitigate the raising of the structure. In addition, new procedures are in place to alleviate this unfortunate occurrence from happening again in the future. Again we appreciate the feedback and please know your comments are being taken into consideration when steering the proposed project work.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Monday, August 31, 2026:

Thanks for the presentation on the bridge project the other night. I was wondering if you could give me the regulation/requirement that you referred to that indicates that you can't affect recreational access to the river when replacing a bridge.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Tuesday, September 1, 2026:

Sec. 22a-92. Legislative goals and policies. (a) The following general goals and policies are established by this chapter:

(c) In addition to the policies stated in subsections (a) and (b), the following policies are established for federal and state agencies in carrying out their responsibilities under this chapter:

(1) Policies concerning development, facilities and uses within the coastal boundary are: (A) To minimize the risk of spillage of petroleum products and hazardous substances, to provide effective containment and cleanup facilities for accidental spills and to disallow offshore oil receiving systems that have the potential to cause catastrophic oil spills in the Long Island Sound estuary; (B) to disallow any filling of tidal wetlands and nearshore, offshore and intertidal waters for the purpose of creating new land from existing wetlands and coastal waters which would otherwise be undevelopable, unless it is found that the adverse impacts on coastal resources are minimal; (C) to initiate in cooperation with the federal government and the continuing legislative committee on state planning and development a long-range planning program for the continued maintenance and enhancement of federally maintained navigation facilities in order to effectively and efficiently plan and provide for environmentally sound dredging and disposal of dredged materials; to encourage, through the state permitting program for dredging activities, the maintenance and enhancement of existing federally maintained navigation channels, basins and anchorages and to discourage the dredging of new federally maintained navigation channels, basins and anchorages; (D) to reduce the need for future dredging by requiring that new or expanded navigation channels, basins and anchorages take advantage of existing or authorized water depths, circulation and siltation patterns and the best available technologies for reducing controllable sedimentation; (E) to disallow new dredging in tidal wetlands except where no feasible alternative exists and where adverse impacts to coastal resources are minimal; (F) to require that new or improved shoreline rail corridors be designed and constructed so as (i) to prevent tidal and circulation restrictions and, when practicable, to eliminate any such existing restrictions, (ii) to improve or have a negligible adverse effect on coastal access and recreation and (iii) to enhance or not unreasonably impair the visual quality of the shoreline; (G) to require that coastal highways and highway improvements, including bridges, be designed and constructed so as to minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources; to require that coastal highway and highway improvements give full consideration to mass transportation alternatives and to require that coastal highways and highway improvements where possible enhance, but in no case decrease coastal access and recreational opportunities; (H) to disallow the construction of major new airports and to discourage the substantial expansion of existing airports within the coastal boundary; to require that any expansion or improvement of existing airports minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources, recreation or access; (I) to manage the state's fisheries in order to

promote the economic benefits of commercial and recreational fishing, enhance recreational fishing opportunities, optimize the yield of all species, prevent the depletion or extinction of indigenous species, maintain and enhance the productivity of natural estuarine resources and preserve healthy fisheries resources for future generations; (J) to make effective use of state-owned coastal recreational facilities in order to expand coastal recreational opportunities including the development or redevelopment of existing state-owned facilities where feasible; (K) to require as a condition in permitting new coastal structures, including but not limited to, groins, jetties or breakwaters, that access to, or along, the public beach below mean high water must not be unreasonably impaired by such structures and to encourage the removal of illegal structures below mean high water which unreasonably obstruct passage along the public beach; and (L) to promote the revitalization of inner city urban harbors and waterfronts by encouraging appropriate reuse of historically developed shorefronts, which may include minimized alteration of an existing shorefront in order to achieve a significant net public benefit, provided (i) such shorefront site is permanently devoted to a water dependent use or a water dependent public use such as public access or recreation for the general public and the ownership of any filled lands remain with the state or an instrumentality thereof in order to secure public use and benefit in perpetuity, (ii) landward development of the site is constrained by highways, railroads or other significant infrastructure facilities, (iii) no other feasible, less environmentally damaging alternatives exist, (iv) the adverse impacts to coastal resources of any shorefront alteration are minimized and compensation in the form of resource restoration is provided to mitigate any remaining adverse impacts, and (v) such reuse is consistent with the appropriate municipal coastal program or municipal plan of development.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Friday, September 4, 2026:

I am a life-long summer resident of Old Saybrook. While I was not able to attend the public meeting, I have watched the meeting via YouTube https://youtu.be/vsWdALy4tP8?si=Z_n5rLbcWZil-IC6. I feel the presentation for the reason why the bridge needs to be raised was very informative.

My concern with this project: Have you contacted land management groups to ensure that the proposed grading on each side of the paved road surface is acceptable by Coastal Statutes and Tidal & Wetland regulations? If you have not, all work (design, and initiatives) should be stopped until written approvals are received. At this point based on General Plan view, showing the bridge and Wetland contour limits, it is clear that the proposed side grading slope goes past the Wetland limit. There is no point in asking for \$3.4 M if your plan already exceeds Wetland limits with no approval from Wetland.

I feel that during the design process, as soon as the/a non-compliant issue was identified, action should have been initiated to address the issue. In this case the Wetland group should have been contacted. Then in your presentation you could have said that you are working with Wetland and you will not proceed with funding if you cannot work out a solution.

The last line in your presentation outlines it clearly--permits are the last step.

- Schedule subject to the availability of funds, right-of-way acquisition & permits.

I believe you talked about the 2021 bridge in your presentation and then at the end during public questions, with the upshot basically as follows: 'The bridge was designed to match the same height as the first bridge built in the 1920ish, funding was secured, then the plans were sent out to all the land management groups for approval. The drawings showed that the side grading was going to exceed

the Wetland contour limits and that Wetlands would not approve it. So, what does the team do--we have the funding. How can we get approval from Wetland? Lower the bridge'.

Let's not make the same mistake again. Permits/approvals should be obtained when there is a concern of not meeting regulations, and before any work proceeds.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Tuesday, September 15, 2026:

CTDOT has already been in contact with the Regulatory Agencies involving permitting during the preliminary design portion of this project and will hold a meeting with them to discuss at the conclusion of the public comment period, to allow for the public's concerns with this project to be brought to their attention. This meeting is typical for all projects, and it allows the design team to introduce the regulators to the environmental impacts associated with the project, and discuss which permits and any mitigation that may be required with the work (this would include mitigation for impacts to the tidal wetlands from the grading activities you mention). As the project transitions into Final Design, the Bridge Design team will work with CTDOT's Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) to develop permit plan sets and applications. All necessary State and Federal permits will be acquired before construction begins. Permits were acquired before the previous project in 2021, but there are 2 components to permits, the permit plan set which called out the low chord elevation as built, and the permit applications which included a narrative that the low chord would not change, which is where the conflict occurred.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Monday, September 7, 2026:

My husband and I attended the presentation meeting held on 8/27/26 regarding this project.

First we have to give a lot of credit to the team who showed up to present this information they knew was not going to go over well. They kept their composure under pressure.

That being said, saying they built a great bridge except for the little 3.5 million (the cost now but who knows how much when it is actually being done) "oops" was not accepted well. And to find out the high cost of this repair is really only going to go back to 100 year old specs to follow a regulation. This cost is not really going to fix today's problems and definitely not the future.

The state really doesn't care how much tax payer money they waste on this project. They only want to follow a regulation. Our Governor, Attorney General and legislators fail to follow laws they don't like every day in this state. But I guess since it doesn't interfere with their choices it is one they can choose to "die on the hill" for. And it is only tax payer money after all!

Unfortunately the state has a history of "oops". Such as no drainage on I-84.

I asked who is responsible for this bridge "oops" and if they still had a job? The answer was no one was. Well I bet if this was a private company who was responsible it would be sued and someone's head would roll.

We, the taxpayers, are sick and tired of our tax money being thrown away. Especially to put a bridge back to useless 100 year old specs in an ever changing world.

We haven't even mentioned yet the inconvenience of having this road closed for months again. Which it definitely is. This 4 mile detour is really 15 minutes each way. For us it is 99% of our trips that will be inconvenient as well as more expensive.

We all knew these bridges needed to be rebuilt so we bore the burden for the good before but for a hundred year old “oops” fix that doesn’t address the future and costs us millions makes us upset and angry.

This letter is probably going to be useless as our leaders do exactly what they want when they want but it needed to be said as we, the taxpayers are tired of being ignored.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Tuesday, September 8, 2026:

Thank you for your feedback, and I completely understand your frustrations. All of the public comments are being documented, and the public opposition to this project will be brought to the attention of the Regulators when we meet with them at the conclusion of the public comment period. We have also begun internal discussions on potential ways to mitigate the raising of the structure. In addition, new procedures are in place to alleviate this unfortunate occurrence from happening again in the future. Again, we appreciate the feedback and please know your comments are being taken into consideration when steering the proposed project work.

Question/Comment: Question/Comment received Thursday, September 10, 2026:

I attended the DOT’s presentation of proposed Project No. 0105-0221 on August 27, 2026. I understand the raising of Br. No 02708 is proposed as the current bridge was built with a low chord elevation lower than its previously existing low chord elevation. Raising the existing low chord elevation is proposed to ensure coastal and recreational access as required to comply with the coastal regulations. The cost is estimated to be \$3.4 million, consisting entirely of State Funds.

The current low chord elevation, 8 inches lower than the previous bridge, has minimal adverse impact the recreational accessibility of Plum Bank Creek, upstream of Br. No. 02708.

- Plum Bank Creek’s inlet is, in general, too shallow and laterally unstable to provide a reliable recreational access to upstream of Br. No. 02708. Bridge No. 02708 is located near the mouth of Plum Bank Creek, roughly 450ft upstream of the creek’s confluence with Long Island Sound. Plum Bank Creek is very shallow at the confluence with Long Island Sound. The “channel” as it is, shifts seasonally based on storms and tidal conditions. The channel at the inlet is unmarked.
- Recreational boaters desiring to visit Plum Bank Creek will typically access it through the Oyster River and the Back River, via Br. No. 01386.

At low tide, the creek is 6 inches and less deep, at approximately low tide. There is insufficient draft to get a motorboat up the creek under these tidal conditions. The creek is accessible only to canoes and kayaks, at best. Vertical Clearance under the current Br. No. 02708 was approximate 6.3ft at Low Tide. Tidal elevation variation on that day, according to the website “Salt Water Tides” was roughly 3.5 ft, suggesting that a canoe or kayak could still pass under bridge No. 02708 at high tide, although it would be tight.

The Oyster River and the Back River, via Bridge No. 01386, provide better access to Plum Bank Creek under all tidal conditions.

Hopefully, the CTDOT is able to negotiate with the State of Connecticut and find a better solution than spending \$3.4 million dollars to raise Br No. 02708 8 inches. There is a lack of Public Boat Ramps in the Town of Old Saybrook. The Old Saybrook Conservation Commission has been working on establishing a Kayak/ Boat Launch for many years. Putting money towards a Kayak/Boast Launch would better serve recreations boaters in this area.

Response: Response provided by CTDOT on Friday, September 18, 2026:

Thank you for attending the Public Information Meeting and for providing the Department with your detailed follow-up comments regarding Project No. 0105-0221.

We appreciate the additional hydraulic and tidal information you provided regarding Plum Bank Creek, including your observations of water depths, tidal conditions, recreational navigation, and the alternative access available through the Oyster River and Back River. We also appreciate your suggestion regarding the potential benefits of improving kayak/boat launch opportunities in the Old Saybrook area. It helps to have someone with both extensive hydraulics knowledge, as well as knowledge of this location.

The Department values this type of local knowledge and technical feedback. All of the public comments are being documented, and the public opposition to this project will be brought to the attention of the Regulators when we meet with them. We also passed on your email to our Hydraulics and Drainage section, to make them aware of your comments. Your comments and supporting information will be considered as the Department continues to evaluate the project.