Connecticut Department of Transportation

State Project No. 0157-0088
80% Federal Funded 20% State Funded
Replacement of Bridge No. 07001, Michaels Way over West Branch Saugatuck River
Town of Weston

January 26, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

In Attendance: There were 15 people in attendance (9 on MS Teams and 6 on YouTube). The meeting participants included residents and representatives of the Town of Weston, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and BL Companies.

Presentation: The virtual meeting, using MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live, was started at 6:45 p.m. with an introductory slide which provided project contact and website information for attendees to view while they waited for the presentation to start. At 7:00 p.m., the formal presentation started with Transportation Supervising Engineer Priti Bhardwaj introducing the representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and BL Companies (BLC), the Consultant Liaison Engineer. Ms. Bhardwaj then stated the role of the Department and the role of BLC as liaison engineers and continued with a summary of the Design Managed by the State (DMS) program and subject project goals. Ms. Bhardwaj turned it over to Mr. Jonathan Luiz, Town of Weston (Town) Town Administrator, who provided a timeline of the project and explained the Town's involvement in the project. Ms. Bhardwaj followed, stating the purpose of this public information meeting is to present the proposed design and discuss any questions, comments, or concerns that the public or Town officials may have.

Mr. Sean Laudati from BLC continued with the technical portion of the presentation. He explained the existing bridge condition, and the purpose of the project. Mr. Laudati presented the proposed project plans, maintenance and protection of traffic plan, proposed detour plan, and construction methods to replace Bridge No. 07001. Mr. Laudati described the utility, environmental, and right-of-way impacts associated with the project. Mr. Dennis McDonald from CTDOT Division of Rights of Way presented an explanation of the right-of-way acquisition process. Mr. Laudati finished the presentation with a summary of the project cost and schedule.

Key points of the presentation were:

- The existing bridge is classified as in poor condition due to the condition of the existing superstructure. The latest inspection report indicated the superstructure was rated as poor due to the condition of the steel beams. This is primarily due to areas of rust, protective coating loss, and section loss. The deck and substructure were rated as good and satisfactory condition, respectively.
- A soil boring program and geophysical analysis were performed to determine the subsurface soil conditions, approximate location of the existing bottom of piles, and to determine if the existing substructure could support a new superstructure. Based on the initial findings, it was determined the existing substructure cannot be reused based on the anticipated loads of the proposed superstructure. Rehabilitation or superstructure replacement alternatives were not further investigated.

- The proposed replacement consists of replacing the existing structure in its entirety in the same approximate location as the existing structure. The proposed structure will consist of a steel beam superstructure on pile supported integral abutments. The proposed structure will maintain the existing span length of 60 feet and will be hydraulically adequate. The steel beams will be topped with an 8.5-inch shear slab, a waterproofing membrane and 3-inch bituminous wearing surface. On either side of the bridge, there will be 5-foot-wide sidewalks and 42-inch-tall open bridge rail flanked by vertical faced concrete endblocks with stone veneer. The stone veneer can be created using either stone cladding or concrete formliner.
- The existing horizontal alignment and curb-to-curb width of Michaels Way will be maintained at the project site. The roadway width will accommodate an 11-foot travel lane in each direction with no striped shoulders. The vertical profile of Michaels Way will be raised approximately 6 inches to improve the hydraulics at the bridge. The vertical curves at the eastern and western approaches will be reconstructed to meet design criteria for crest and sag curves. The existing bituminous concrete curbing and timber guiderail will be removed, and new bituminous concrete curbing will be installed. New steel-backed timber guiderail will be installed along both sides of the eastern approach and along the southern side of the western approach.
- The existing telecommunication and electrical conduits located along the northern side of Michaels Way will be temporarily supported and protected during construction and be attached to the new structure. The existing gas main located along the southern side of Michaels Way will be temporarily supported and protected during construction and be attached to the new structure.
- The proposed maintenance and protection of traffic plan involves a closure of the bridge and detour of traffic for the duration of the bridge construction, which is estimated to be 4-months. Access to all driveways within the project limits will be maintained at all times. The proposed detour route is approximately 2.24 miles long and uses Newtown Turnpike, West Godfrey Road, and Orchard Drive. Emergency Services, the post office and the school district will be coordinated during design so they can plan accordingly prior to the start of the detour.
- Temporary construction easements will be required to accommodate construction and water handling activities. One drainage right-of-way will be required for the existing storm drain outlet east of the bridge.
- Environmental permits will be required from federal, state and town permitting agencies for the project.
- Construction is currently anticipated to start in the Fall of 2023 and end in the Fall of 2024. The detour is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2024 and anticipated to have a duration of 4 months.
- The Project construction is funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% Town funds. The estimated construction cost is currently $2.95 million.

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:

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  Where will the contractor place his equipment?

Verbal Response: BLC stated that the contractor can place his equipment at the approaches to the bridge since the roadway will be closed during construction and traffic will be detoured.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  What are the paving limits?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the bridge replacement will require approximately 230 feet of full depth roadway reconstruction along Michaels Way.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  Can stage construction be used instead?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that due to the narrow width of Micheals Way, staged construction is not feasible at this site and a detour will be required.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  Will mail delivery be impacted? How will EMS be coordinated?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the post office, emergency services, and school district will be notified of the detour, construction schedule and proposed route so they can plan accordingly prior to start of the detour.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  Why was the scope change from a superstructure replacement to a full bridge replacement?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated this project was originally scoped as a superstructure replacement due to the poor rating of the steel beams. BLC added that during the preliminary design, a soil boring program and geophysical analysis were performed to determine if the existing substructure could support a new superstructure. Based on the initial findings, it was determined the existing substructure cannot be reused based on the anticipated loads of the proposed superstructures. BLC continued that rehabilitation and superstructure replacement alternatives were not further investigated. BLC added that the original scope change was presented to the Board of Finance and Selectmen in December 2020 with a preliminary cost and schedule presented based on similar structures. The cost and schedule presented today is the current costs based on the advancement of the design to a preliminary design level.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  Will there be advance warning of road closure?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the contractor will be required by contract to post construction signs with advanced warning of the roadway closure. BLC added that BLC will be coordinating with the Town to keep the public informed of the construction and detour schedule as the design progress and construction starts. BLC also added that the design of the construction signs will provide adequate advanced warning so drivers do not need to use residents' driveways or yards to turn around.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

  How did they decide on stone or the cheaper alternatives? Shouldn't it maintain the original look?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the proposed structure will have a stone façade which is currently on the existing structure. BLC continued that the decision will ultimately be from the Town on whether it is stone cladding or concrete formliner. BLC added the final appearance would be similar to the existing structure. A representative of the Town added the Town will go with the recommendation of the bridge designer. The Town added that they are concerned first and foremost with safety and protection to the traveling public, and the longevity of the bridge as well. The Town added they are open to feedback from the residents and will work to determine if suggestions received are feasible without compromising the safety or longevity of the bridge.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  What hours or days of the week is construction allowed?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the contract hours will be set based on Town ordinances and will coordinate with the Town to determine the set hours. BLC added typically work hours do not include nights and weekends. BLC added work hours are typically 7:00 to 3:00 and are set by the contract during design.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  What utilities could be affected? How and with how much notice will we be notified if utilities are impacted?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that the utilities are not anticipated to be impacted for the residents. BLC added the utilities will be temporarily supported and protected during construction and attached to the new structure. BLC added a preliminary utility coordination meeting has already occurred and the utility companies concurred with the proposed plan. BLC also added that BLC will continue the coordination with the utility companies as design progresses.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  > There are no sidewalks on Michael's Way (or, in fact, anywhere in the town of Weston). Some of the bridges pictured in your presentation do not have sidewalks. Would it not reduce cost and environmental impact to omit the sidewalks from the design?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the proposed design was designed to match the existing bridge. BLC added that typically when an existing bridge has sidewalks, the proposed bridge would as well. This would allow for any future sidewalks. The project has minimal environmental impacts as there will not be in-water work and the proposed structure will be in the approximate same location as the existing.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  > How will snow plowing work? Is there a runoff plan in the event of storms and the street is blocked?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated the contractor will be required to do any snow clearing on the project site. BLC added that the Town will be coordinated with during design for the plowing of Micheals Way. BLC added the roadway closure is anticipated to start in the spring and be completed in approximately 4 months. BLC continued that the roadway closure would not occur during the winter. The Town added that if a snow issue does arise, the Town will coordinate with the Contractor to assist with snow clearing.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  > Who is responsible for assuring that no damage is done to private property and property is restored to original condition? Is there a performance bond backing these obligations?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that the construction contract will require the Contractor to restore any private property to the existing condition. BLC added that the CTDOT construction group and the consultant inspection team will be on site to ensure the contractor’s work is per the contract documents and if any work is beyond those limits, the Contractor will be required to be restore those areas. BLC added that if the Contractor decided to work outside the project limits, they would be required to coordinate any right-of-way impacts but these occurrences are not typical, and all work is completed per the plans.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  > Who will maintain the private grass/trees etc. within the barrier? Will landscapers have access? Will the mature trees be affected?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that the Contractor will be responsible for the area within the project site. BLC also added that typically public is not allowed within the work area

for safety reasons. BLC added that mature trees will be affected at the location where outlet protection will be installed for the existing outfall east of the bridge. BLC continued the existing storm pipe outlets down a slope and the outlet protection will be installed to eliminate any potential erosion in the future.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  Will security be provided to assure that workers do not trespass, eat, sleep or park on private property?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that typically these projects will have a construction inspection team which will be hired through the Department and Town. BLC added the inspection team will be present and help oversee any of these concerns. The Town added that they will participate in regular meetings on site and will be able to review the site for any of those concerns. The Town added that with the continual presence of the inspection team on site, the chance of any of these concerns occurring is very low. The Town continued that if any does occur, the Town will hear of it and will address it immediately.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  Who is responsible for making sure construction debris, food, etc is kept off private property?

  Verbal Response: A representative of CTDOT noted this question is in line with the previous question asked. CTDOT added that it would be the same inspection team would be on-site while the contractor is also on site, as previously noted.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  Who is the proper contact once construction begins that is reachable to deal with any issues?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated as the design progresses and a construction inspection team is hired, contact information will be available for the residents. The Town added that if there are any concerns, people can email or call Jonathan Luiz and he will work on any issue received.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the project email:

  Will the stonework on the bridge be preserved?

  Verbal Response: BLC stated that the existing stonework on the structure will not be preserved. BLC added that it would be a difficult and costly process to remove and preserve the existing stone. BLC added the proposed new stonework, whether it be stone cladding or concrete formliner, will have a similar appearance as the existing.

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 February 9, 2022.

The presentation was well received, and the meeting was adjourned around 7:50 p.m.