

**Connecticut Department of Transportation**

**State Project No. 0148-0213**

**Federal-Aid Project No. 0015(140)**

**Rehabilitation of Bridge 00793A – Route 15 Northbound Over Quinnipiac River**

**Town of Wallingford**

**May 12, 2022, at 7:00 PM**

**Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

**Minutes of Virtual Public Informational Meeting**

**Present:**

~7 Attendees viewing via MS Teams Live Event Stream

~7 Attendees viewing via YouTube Live Stream

**Team Presenting from the Connecticut Department of Transportation:**

Andy Cardinali, Principal Engineer, Bridge Design

Kevin Blasi, Project Manager, Bridge Design

Nicholas Martin, Project Engineer, Bridge Design

Anthony Bui, Project Designer, Bridge Design

Matthew Geanacopoulos, Office of Rights of Way

Scott Adkins, District 3 Construction

**Presentation:**

Kevin Blasi opened the meeting promptly at 7:00 pm with a brief welcome and introduced the project design team.

Mr. Blasi offered information to the attendees on how to contact the design team during the live Question and Answer session following the formal presentation. The following means of contact were provided:

Project email: [DOTProject148-213@ct.gov](mailto:DOTProject148-213@ct.gov)

Project Q&A phone: (860) 944-1111

MS Teams Chat (available during the live stream event only, for those accessing the meeting via MS Teams)

The period to provide comments and questions to the project team extends through May 26, 2022.

Anthony Bui began the formal presentation of the project. The following are the key points of the formal presentation:

- The existing structure was built in 1946 and was previously repaired under a 1984 rehabilitation project. The bridge consists of two simply supported spans with 5 rolled steel beams.
- Bridge 00793A is located on Route 15 Northbound and carries 2 lanes of traffic with an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 29,600 vehicles per day.
- Based on the 2020 bridge inspection report, the deck is rated a 4 (poor condition), superstructure a 6 (satisfactory), scour a 3 (serious).
- The purpose for the project is to bring the existing superstructure to good standing, rated a 7.
- Construction of access roads will be necessary to facilitate both superstructure and substructure project work.
- Substructure and scour concerns will be addressed during the first construction season of the two-season project.
- During the second construction season, Route 15 Northbound traffic will be shifted to Route 15 Southbound through the use of a crossover which will be in place during 4 separate weekend closures of Route 15 Northbound at the project location. During the crossover, Route 15 Southbound will accommodate one lane of southbound traffic and one lane of northbound traffic.
- Prefabricated Bridge Units, or “PBUs”, will be installed as a replacement superstructure. PBUs are concrete deck and steel beams components that are manufactured off-site, then shipped to the project location and installed by crane. The use of PBUs shortens the time required for the installation of the superstructure, which benefits the travelling public.
- The Quinnipiac River Linear Trail will remain open and active throughout construction. Construction fencing will be in place for the protection of the public. Construction vehicles will occasionally have to cross the trail at which time trail users will be safely stopped for brief periods to enable such crossings.
- Permits anticipated for this project are as follow:
  - Individual Flood Management Certificate;
  - United States Army Corps of Engineers Pre-Construction Notification;
  - Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Pre-Construction Notification Concurrence of Eligibility;
  - Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Inland Wetland General Permit.
- Rights-of-way impacts to 2 properties will require construction easements. Town of Wallingford and Wallingford Group LLC (parcel occupied by United Concrete).
- Matt Geanacopoulos presented an overview of the Rights of Way process and relevant laws and CT DOT procedures pertaining to property acquisition.

Following the presentation of the project scope, the project schedule, estimated cost, funding sources, and a summary of anticipated environmental permits was presented.

- Estimated Construction Cost: \$6,500,000 (80% Federal, 20% State)
- Project Schedule:
  - Start of Construction: April 2024
  - 2 construction seasons

The presentation ended with Kevin Blasi reminding attendees how to contact the design team with questions and comments. The presentation was opened for questions and comments.

**Public Comments and Questions During the Live Q&A that followed the presentation:**

- **A question transmitted via email:** What will the access roads be used for?

**Response:** Access roads will be used primarily during the first construction season when access to the Quinnipiac River will be needed. Construction equipment and materials needed for the river bottom re-grading and placement of rip rap, as well as for the rehabilitation of the abutments and pier.

- **A question transmitted via email:** Are access roads permanent?

**Response:** The Southwest access road is temporary and will be restored upon construction completion by retuning the area to the pre-existing grade and by placing plantings to address the areas that were cleared as needed for the construction of the temporary road.

The Northeast access road shown within this presentation will make use of an existing road and therefore will require minimal alterations to that road for the necessary access. This existing dirt road will remain at construction completion.

- **A question transmitted via email:** It looks like there is a direct conflict with the proposed access road location with the Quinnipiac River Linear Trail, yet it was mentioned that the trail would stay open. Could you please clarify?

**Response:** The Northeast access road will cross the QLRT. Flaggers will be in place to protect the users of the trail. The work area will be fenced off to separate the trail from the construction area.

- **A question transmitted via email:** You mentioned the bridge is in poor condition. Is it safe to drive on?

**Response:** Yes, the bridge is safe to drive on and handle all legal and permit loads.

- **A question transmitted via email:** How do you ensure that two lanes will be back open in NB and SB direction on Monday morning after weekend work? What if there is a delay on the weekend when installing the Bridge Units?

**Response:** Within the Contract, the Department will include what are called “liquidated damages” which would heavily penalize a Contractor by way of monetary fines for every hour that any potential delay would impact the bridge to reopen during those weekday hours. The Department will also review the Contractor’s proposal for the closure beforehand.

- **A question transmitted via email:** Why does the project cost so much?

**Response:** About 15 percent of the overall cost is contributed to Maintenance and Protection of Traffic throughout the construction phase, site prep at the beginning of the project and closeout of the project once construction has completed. This is a complex project involving prefabricated bridge units. Precast components require large cranes and construction equipment which come at a high cost. A thorough investigation has been performed to obtain a balance of minimizing the impact to the traveling public and to keep the project cost as low as possible. In this case, minimizing the impact to travelers of Route 15 is worth the extra cost associated with the proposal.

This 30% cost estimate may decrease as the design progresses.

- **A question transmitted via voicemail:** Why are we replacing the northbound bridge and not the southbound bridge as well?

**Response:** The northbound bridge deck was rehabilitated under a separate project in 1990. Current inspection reports show that the northbound bridge is in a state of good repair and does not currently require major rehabilitation.

- **A question transmitted via email:** How long is a construction season going to last?

**Response:** Typically, a construction season spans from April 1<sup>st</sup> to November 31<sup>st</sup>.

- **A question transmitted via email:** Will the linear trail need to be closed either in the northbound direction or the southbound direction? If so, how many days or hours? Is the trail surface likely to be harmed or broken by heavy equipment?

**Response:** During construction, the linear trail will stay open. Flaggers will navigate trail users while construction vehicles are actively crossing. Any damage that may occur due to vehicles crossing would be repaired, at a minimum, to the original condition.

**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 to fill out the survey and that any additional comments can be submitted until May 26, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.