

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 0032-0150
Replacement of Bridge No. 04446
Hop River Road over Hop River
Towns of Coventry and Columbia**

**December 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live**

Report of Public Informational Meeting

In Attendance: There were approximately 20 people in attendance. The meeting participants included residents and representatives of the Towns of Coventry and Columbia (Towns), the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM).

Presentation: The Virtual Public Information 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 begin. At 7:00 p.m., the presentation began with DOT's Project Manager, Priti Bhardwaj introducing the project, gave a summary of the Design Managed by State (DMS) program and the goals for the night's meeting. Ms. Bhardwaj then explained the role of CJM as Consultant Liaison Engineer and introduced Mr. Todd Penney, the Town of Coventry Engineer and Project Coordinator. Mr. Penney explained the Towns' reasons for the project and the Towns' involvement in the project and cooperation with the CTDOT and CJM. Ms. Bhardwaj then introduced the various representatives from CTDOT and CJM and turned the presentation over to Mr. Daniel Carnein from CJM to discuss the technical portion of the project.

Mr. Carnein explained the existing bridge conditions and the purpose of the project. Mr. Carnein introduced the proposed project plans, water handling, and proposed detour necessary to replace Bridge No. 04446. Rights of way impacts, permitting requirements, construction schedule and project cost were also discussed during the technical portion of the presentation.

Key points of the technical portion of the presentation were:

- The structure carries Hop River Road over the Hop River, and is located on the Coventry/Columbia Townline 0.3 miles north of Route 6.
- The existing bridge has stop signs on each approach and carries one lane 12-foot of alternating one way traffic.
- The deck is functionally obsolete and the existing steel bearing show heavy deterioration and warrant replacement.
- The substructure is in fair condition and shows some deterioration and a few voids in the stone masonry.
- The existing structure will be replaced with a new superstructure comprised of galvanized steel stringers and an 8.5-Inch reinforced concrete deck supported by reinforced concrete integral abutments and pier cap.
- The proposed structure will have an overall length of 130-feet, to allow construction behind the existing stone masonry abutments.

- The top portion of the existing abutments and a small portion of the stone masonry wall will be removed to make room for the proposed superstructure.
- The center pier will remain and a new reinforced concrete pier cap will be constructed to accommodate the new superstructure.
- The existing culvert that carries Hop River Road over the mill stream on the south approach will be replaced with a precast concrete box culvert.
- Open bridge rail will be installed across the structure and terminate into reinforced concrete endwalls.
- New endwalls will be installed with a stone veneer to match the existing site conditions.
- The bridge will be widened to have a 24-foot curb-to-curb width consisting of two, 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction).
- Stop signs will be removed from both approaches, and the roadway will be realigned to soften the curve on the south approach.
- The roadway profile will slightly modified to provide a slope across the bridge and some fill will be placed on the north approach to remove existing angle points.
- Overhead utilities at the site will be temporarily relocated.
- The proposed detour is approximately 6.8 miles and will be in effect for the duration of construction, and will utilize State and Local Roads. Access to adjacent driveways and the trail entrance will be maintained at all times.
- Construction is anticipated to start in the Spring of 2022 and will take approximately 6 to 8 months to complete.
- The project is funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% Town funds. The estimated construction cost is currently \$3.35 million, with a municipal share on \$670,000.

The presentation was then turned over to Mr. Dennis McDonald who explained the CTDOT Division of Rights of Way role in the project and the rights of way process.

Ms. Bhardwaj then concluded the presentation by reviewing the live Q&A procedures.

Public Comments and Questions:

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Will the DOT be building the bridge or only carrying out the design phase?

Verbal Response: CTDOT provided an overview of the DMS project process, and stated that CTDOT will oversee design and the Town will carry out the construction phase of the project.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - What steps are planned to inventory and protect the historic remains on either side of the planned bridge alterations?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating coordination is ongoing with CTDOT Office of Environmental Planning which includes the Environmental Review process. Historic structures identified so far include the structure on the abutting property, the Hop River dam upstream from the bridge, and the mill sluice gate. CJM explained that these structures will not

be directly impacted as part of the project, but they will be monitored during construction. CJM explained only the top portions of the existing stone masonry abutments and wall will be removed within the limits of the proposed superstructure. CJM stated that it is intended to match the existing site aesthetics as much as possible by maintaining the existing pier and using stone facing on the proposed concrete endwalls.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - When is construction anticipated to start? How long will the detour be in place?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating construction is scheduled to start Spring 2022 with a construction duration of 6-8 months. CJM also stated construction will utilize a detour that is 6.8 miles long and utilizes State and Local roads.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Was a full replacement of the bridge investigated?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating a full replacement was considered, and that most of the existing bridge will be replaced as part of the project, including the superstructure and abutments. However, it was decided that the center pier should remain to maintain the existing site aesthetic and because it is in relatively good condition overall.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Will the new bridge be wider?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the existing one lane bridge will be widened, and two 12 foot travel lanes will be provided.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Where will the contractor place his equipment?

Verbal Response: CJM stated that since construction will utilize a detour, equipment will be most likely be stored within the closed and proposed roadway. The Contractor will have to maintain access to adjacent driveways.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Will the entrance to the trail be affected?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the parking area and trail access will not be closed, however, the trail entrance will have to be accessed from the upper portion of Hop River Road from the town of Coventry when the detour is in place.

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

- Will mail delivery be impacted?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating all FLBP projects require coordination with the Towns and the Towns' post offices, emergency services, and schools to notify them when and where a project detour will occur. The Town added that coordination with the post office will take place to ensure residents on the north side of the bridge receive mail.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Can you please explain the detour again?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the detour is 6.8 miles long and will utilize State and Local roads including Route 6, Pucker street, South Street, and Bunker Hill Road. The Town added Hop River Road has gravel sections that are one to two lanes wide, and the gravel sections will be maintained throughout construction for all vehicles.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - How will EMS be coordinated?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating coordination with the Towns and Town agencies will be ongoing for the project. The Town added that coordination has begun with Coventry and Columbia emergency services and any issues will be identified prior to design being finalized. The Town also stated that the propose detour is the same detour that was used during the rehabilitation of Bridge No. 04446 approximately 31 years ago.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - Will it be possible to elevate the shoulders to make a sidewalk on which a fisherperson or sightseer can stand on the bridge safely?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the bridge will be widened and shoulders will be provided on the new structure. There are currently no plans to raise the shoulders or provide sidewalks. The Town added that fishing off of the bridge is not allowed.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - What loading is the bridge been designed to? Are the new steel members standard A992 steel? Coating?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the new bridge will meet the latest requirements of the CTDOT Bridge Design Manual and Load Rating Manual, and the new bridge will be able to handle HL-93 loading. The beams will have a galvanized coating to help prevent future corrosion.

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

- I have supplied to both towns insurance maps from 1870's and 80's which show an additional subsurface flume to the upstream side of the surface flume you have located. I have additionally supplied a history of the industries that were located at this crossing starting from 1715 on. Have these not reached your staff who did the "environmental review?"

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating the CTDOT Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) is going through the Environmental Review process that includes review of maps similar to the maps referenced in the question. A final determination has not been issued by OEP, so it is not clear if they received the maps and history referenced in the question. CJM stated that Towns will be contacted to ensure the information gets forwarded to OEP. The Town of Coventry stated they have not received anything yet. CTDOT then stated that any information can be sent in to the project email DOT-FLBP@ct.gov.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the phone voicemail feature:
 - Will there be a traffic study? This is important due to the recreational tourism and the new route proposed by the detour.

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating since the detour is not a permanent condition, a full traffic study was not performed. The Town added that residents using the unofficial parking lot on Hop River Road to access the trail can choose to access the trail from another location. The Town also stated that the historical, environmental, and cost impacts of a temporary bridge are unacceptable for the traffic volumes of the road.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the phone voicemail feature:
 - Will there be a weight limit on the proposed bridge?

Verbal Response: CJM responded to the question by stating there will not be a weight limit, and the proposed bridge will be designed in accordance with the latest CTDOT Bridge Design Manual and Load Rating Manual.

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 December 29, 2020.

The presentation was well received, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Post Meeting:

During the comment period, a representative of the Columbia Historical Society emailed CTDOT historical documents related to the project site. The historical documents were forwarded to the CTDOT's Office of Environmental Planning Cultural Resources & Environmental Documents Unit to assist in their review. Coordination between CTDOT and the Columbia Historical Society will continue throughout design of the project.