

Connecticut Department of Transportation

**State Project No. 0097-0102
Federal-Aid Project No. 6097(009)
Replacement of Bridge No. 05971 – Smith Road over Hall Meadow Brook
Town of Norfolk**

**August 06, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar and YouTube Live**

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

In Attendance:

There were 11 people in attendance (11 on Zoom and 0 on YouTube), not including the project team. The meeting participants included 2 residents, the First Selectman of the Town of Norfolk, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and CHA Consulting, Inc.

Presentation:

The virtual meeting, using Zoom Webinar and YouTube Live, was started at 7:00 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, Mr. Marc Byrnes, stating the goals for the meeting and that 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. He provided details of how participants could interact with the project team during the meeting and then outlined the Design Managed by State (DMS) program and the subject project goals. Mr. Byrnes then introduced Mr. Matthew Riiska, Town of Norfolk First Selectman, who provided introductory remarks. Mr. Byrnes then continued by introducing the representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and CHA Consulting, Inc. (CHA), the Consultant Liaison Engineer (CLE). Mr. Byrnes then gave a general overview of bridge elements and explained how the element conditions are rated on a scale from 1-9.

Mr. Quezada from CHA continued with the technical portion of the presentation. He explained the existing bridge condition, provided an overview of the project site, and described the purpose of the project. Mr. Quezada presented the proposed project plans to replace Bridge No. 05971. Mr. Quezada described the roadway, environmental and right-of-way impacts associated with the project and noted that overhead utilities will be temporarily relocated during construction. Mr. Zach Guarino from CTDOT Division of Rights of Way continued the presentation with an explanation of the right-of-way acquisition process. Mr. Quezada then finished the presentation with the proposed project schedule and estimated cost.

Key Points Regarding the Existing Bridge:

- The existing bridge was built in 1999 and consisted of (3) 6'-0" diameter corrugated steel pipe culverts with no headwalls or retaining walls.
- The existing roadway width on the bridge was 20-feet, and the roadway is classified as a Rural Local Road.
- A traffic count taken in May 2024 determined the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on the bridge to be approximately 44 vehicles per day.

- The existing clear span of the bridge, measured from outside face of the fascia culverts, is 18-feet. The clear span is less than 1.2 times Bankfull Width (BFW) of the channel. The clear span required to meet the criterion of 1.2 times BFW is 19.2-feet.
- Following a rainstorm event on July 13, 2023, the roadway at the project location overtopped resulting in a washout and failure of all three culverts as a result of which the roadway over the bridge is currently closed to vehicular traffic.
- The residents currently use Old Goshen Road onto Bruey Road to access Route 272.
- Overhead utilities are present along the north side of Smith Road.
- Subsequent to the washout, the Culvert is currently rated a "1" which is considered failed.

Key Points Regarding the Proposed Bridge:

- The proposed 26'-6" long single span structure will be comprised of prestressed concrete deck units with a cast-in-place topping slab supported by concrete abutments and flared wingwalls with micropile foundations designed for scour. The proposed bridge will carry a 24'-5" wide roadway meeting FHWA and State standards and the existing roadway profile over the bridge will be maintained.
- The proposed structure with a 22'-0" wide hydraulic opening will meet 1.2 times the Bankfull Width of Channel.
- The project includes installation of new bridge and approach rail system meeting current safety standards and approximately 360' of full depth roadway reconstruction.
- The structure will include simulated stone masonry form liner on the concrete end blocks and exposed portions of wingwalls and a metalized open bridge rail that is metalized to a color of Town's choice for improved aesthetics.
- The roadway gradient at the bridge will match similar existing grades. The roadway at the west approach will be raised by approximately 1 foot to improve intersection alignment with Route 272. The roadway grade at the east approach will remain similar to existing grades.
- The proposed replacement structure will provide 1.1-feet underclearance for the design 100-Year storm (1.0-foot minimum std.).
- The proposed replacement structure will meet the 1.0-foot minimum freeboard criterion by providing 2.6-feet of freeboard.
- The proposed replacement structure will not change the backwater elevation compared to natural condition, meeting the 1.0 foot maximum criterion.
- The new bridge will provide a service life of 75 years and is anticipated to require minimal maintenance.
- The proposed open bridge rail system and approach guiderail systems will meet current safety standards.
- The proposed maintenance and protection of traffic plan involves using the existing 2.4-mile detour for 1 construction season for a total of 8 months.
- Environmental permits will be required from federal, state and Town of Norfolk permitting agencies for the project and best management practices will be used to minimize impacts to the wetlands and watercourse, during construction.
- A partial takes for the future maintenance of proposed wingwalls, a permanent slope easement and a temporary construction easement will be required from 1 property to accomplish the construction.

- Construction is currently anticipated to start in Spring 2026, subject to approval of environmental permits and ROW acquisitions. Construction is anticipated to last one season.
- The project Design, Construction, and ROW acquisition costs will be funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds (0% Town Funds). The construction cost is currently estimated to be \$3,000,000.

Public Comments and Questions:

There was (11) question asked during the Q&A session on Zoom that focused on the following:

Q1: What exactly is NDDB?

R1: Mr. Marc Byrnes explained that NDDB stands for the National Diversity Data Base. It tracks species of concern, such as endangered species, and helps CTDOT plan to address potential impacts on these species' habitats near project areas.

Q2: How many property owners are required to allow easements for construction activities?

R2: Mr. Zach Guarino stated that currently easements and partial takes are required from only one property owner. However, this could change as the design plans progress.

Q3: If private property owners do not agree to easements, could that delay the construction of this project?

R3: Mr. Zach Guarino mentioned that the schedule accounts for such delays. Sometimes, eminent domain can expedite the process, but it depends on the situation. The actual design schedule of this project aligns with the average timeframe required to acquire the necessary ROW.

Q4: If the Town decides to pursue a temporary bridge, how would that affect the schedule? Will the Old Goshen Road project happen sooner? What is the timeframe for that project?

R4: Mr. Marc Byrnes said that the design for both projects started simultaneously. However, Smith Road bridge took priority and was accelerated, and it is currently ahead of Old Goshen Road. Old Goshen Road is in early design stage and a few months behind Smith Road. If a temporary bridge is installed on Smith Road, Old Goshen Road schedule could be accelerated, but a clear direction on which project will proceed first will be defined this fall based on Town's input.

Q5: Will there be a debris cleanup within the brook from the washed-up bridge?

R5: Mr. Marc Byrnes stated that debris within the project limits will be cleaned up as part of the project during construction within the limits set by approved environmental permits.

Q6: Is not having a temporary bridge a safety concern for residents in emergencies? A Temporary Bridge is important and should be considered for this project.

R6: Mr. Marc Byrnes confirmed that there is an existing detour route currently available for residents. Regulations prevent using federal or state funds for participating in costs associated with a temporary bridge if detour routes are available. Although

CTDOT cannot fund a temporary bridge, the Town can choose to install one independently. Mr. Riiska stated that the town is exploring options for installing a temporary bridge due to response time associated with responding to emergencies and will provide updates soon.

Q7: If a tree falls on the road, there are no alternate routes. In case of structure fires, what will be done about emergency water supply without a bridge?

R7: Marc Byrnes reiterated that the Town is working on a temporary bridge to address these concerns and mutual aid with neighboring towns is another option available for the town to address emergency responses. Matt Riiska stated that the town is developing a plan for a temporary bridge to be installed before winter.

Q8: There was a recent incident involving emergency response time for elderly residents. The response had to use the detour route, adding 7 minutes to travel time, which could be critical. How will these safety concerns be addressed?

R8: Mr. Marc Byrnes acknowledged the concern and assured that efforts will be made within the regulation restrictions of federal and state funds to address the project's needs. The State does not impede the Town of Norfolk from constructing their own temporary bridge and that the Town was working to address this.

Q9: Since the storm in July 2023, we've been trying to update Google Maps to show that vehicles cannot access Smith Road or Old Goshen Road. Can CTDOT help redirect GPS traffic to the detour routes?

R9: Mr. Marc Byrnes stated that he will work with highway officials within CTDOT to update the state map and try to see if they could coordinate with Google Maps to reflect the bridge closures in the maps and suggest traffic to use the detour route.

Q10: NDDB maps and other permit do follow the Hall Meadow Brook. Have you evaluated the current situation regarding environmental impacts?

R10: Mr. Marc Byrnes stated that the design team is coordinating with the permitting agencies to ensure compliance with NDDB regulations and other environmental regulations, and all impacts will be addressed accordingly.

Q11: If the Town installs a temporary bridge at Smith Road, is this location more appropriate than Old Goshen Road? If so, can Old Goshen Road design be prioritized? How quickly could CTDOT move forward with Old Goshen Road?

R11: Mr. Marc Byrnes stated that Smith Road is an easier project site for a temporary bridge installation. The preliminary design for this project is almost complete. Old Goshen Road bridge design is intentionally slightly behind in the design process since an effort was made to accelerate Smith Road bridge first. If the Town installs a temporary bridge at Smith Road, CTDOT will try to prioritize Old Goshen Road's design and construction before Smith Road. However, depending on responses from regulatory agencies due to outstanding Environmental Review Request (ERR), prioritizing Old Goshen Road may not reduce the schedule design duration significantly for that project.

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 voluntary survey and that any additional comments can be submitted until August 16th, 2024.

The presentation was well received, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

No additional questions were received during the two-week comment period following the Virtual Public Information Meeting.