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Agency of Transportation

April 15, 2014

Raymond Eilers, Chair
c/o Amber Holland, Town Clerk
Town of Readsboro
P.O. Box 187
Readsboro, VT 05350

Matthew Mann, Transportation Planner
Windham Regional Commission
139 Main Street, Suite 505
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Re: Readsboro BF 0102(16) VT 100, Bridge 25 over the Deerfield River

Dear Mr. Eilers and Mr. Mann,

A Regional Concerns Meeting for the above-referenced project was held on December 10, 2013 to present several alternatives to the public (see attached attendance sheet). Representatives from the town of Readsboro attended the meeting as well as several adjacent property owners and other members of the public. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the decisions that have been made and how we will advance this project after receiving this public input.

At the Regional Concerns Meeting, VTrans made a recommendation to replace the deck and superstructure due to the deteriorated condition but leave the existing foundation (abutments and piers) since they are in satisfactory condition. A three week bridge closure was proposed while traffic was routed onto an off-site detour while the reconstruction was underway. A local bypass route to circumvent the bridge while it is being reconstructed is also available.

This scope of work and method of traffic maintenance was recommended primarily since the project development process could be expedited to allow construction to take place in approximately two years. Other options such as a complete bridge replacement or maintaining traffic on a temporary bridge would add years to the process and would delay the construction year. A short project delivery time was considered very important since it is impossible to anticipate when conditions will worsen and require an emergency closure in the event that public safety was compromised in any way. Additional details of the recommended scope of work and an evaluation of other alternatives considered is included in the Scoping Report which is available for viewing at:

<https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/vtrans/external/Projects/Structures/13C068>

There was a lot of good discussion and many valid comments made by the Town, abutters to the project and the general public at the meeting (see attached meeting notes). The general consensus was that the bridge closure was not acceptable to the attendees. The end-to-end distance on the State detour would be 32.2 miles which was considered too long even for this modest volume of traffic and relatively short closure duration. The local bypass route which local traffic or emergency vehicles could use to circumvent the bridge closure would have an end-to-end distance of 15 miles and was dependent on opening a bridge in Massachusetts that is currently closed.

Subsequent to this meeting, the Town provided us with two potential locations for a temporary bridge which were either located on Town land or were considered to be good locations from the Town's perspective. Neither location was considered acceptable since both would require all traffic (cars and trucks) to drive a considerable distance down locally owned roads to access the temporary bridge. The closest location proposed by the Town was approximately 0.5 miles from route 100.

A meeting was held with Structures management to discuss the comments received at this meeting and to decide on the best way to proceed. As a result of that meeting, the decision has been made to not continue with the bridge closure as originally proposed but to maintain traffic using a one lane temporary bridge adjacent to the existing bridge with alternating traffic controlled by traffic signals. After further review and consideration of the lengths of the State detour and local bypass routes, we agree that these are outside the usual limits we have used on past successful projects.

Since a temporary bridge will now be used to maintain traffic, we have decided that it is appropriate for the scope of the project to change as well. A considerable amount of time and money will be expended with this traffic maintenance method so it seems appropriate to replace the entire structure in order to get the best value from this investment.

In the near future we will be submitting Conceptual plans for a complete bridge replacement with traffic maintained on a temporary bridge. A public meeting will be held to review those plans when they are available.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact me at the above address or by email at chris.williams@state.vt.us or by phone at (802) 828-0051.

Sincerely,



Christopher P. Williams, P.E.
Structures Senior Project Manager

Attachments

cc: Rob Faley - DTA #1 (via email)
Jackie Cassino - VAOT Planning Coordinator (via email)
Danny Landry – Design Project Manager (via email)



ALTERNATIVES PRESENTATION MEETING - ATTENDANCE SHEET

Project: Readsboro BF 0102(16)	Meeting Date: Tuesday, December 10, 2013
Description: VT Route 100, Bridge 25 over the Deerfield River	Location: Readsboro Central School 301 Phelps Lane Readsboro, VT 05350

Name	Company	Phone	E-Mail
Christopher Williams	VTrans	828-0051	chris.williams@state.vt.us
Gary Sweeny	VTrans	828-0049	gary.sweeny@state.vt.us
Rodney Salamone		802 423-5265	RSALWA@HUGHES
Kim Thayer		802 423-7020	
Teddy Hopkins	Readsboro Selectbd.	802 423-7727	pokerfaced7@hotmail.com
David Marchegiani	Readsboro Selectboard	802-423 7033	david.marchegiani@yahoo.com
Raymond Eilers	Eilers Bros	802 423 5413	rdyeilers@myfairpoint.net
Omar Smith	TransCanada	413-424 2215	omar-smith@transcanada.com
Wendy Imbler	Eilers Bros	802-423- 5413	lotamase@myfairpoint.net
Regina Henriksen	WSSU	423 7066	regina@together.net
Helyn Strom Henrik	Readsboro school	423 5400	?
John Ransom		423- 0123	captainjohn99@gmail.com
Adam Codogni	Readsboro general	423-7510	Acodogni@yahoo.com
Rich Codogni		423-7512	_____
Carl Marchegiani		423-7674	

7. For option 1, the condition of the middle of the superstructure elements is better than that at the ends. **It's all going.**
8. How much effort will the State make to ease the handling of the water line? **We will design the new bridge elements for the pipe to go back on the bridge. The town will have considerable input on the re-attaching of the water line.**
9. What if the space for the temporary bridge was easily available? **Right of Way still comes into play.**
10. What about other locations for temporary bridge? There are other possibilities, such as at the old abutments that served the old bridge going from what is now Depot St to Tunnel St. past the first house on Tunnel St. (Rita Marchegiani). Also, way downstream by the treatment plant. The Town owns down Depot St. to the old abutments. There is also some Town ROW down near the treatment plant. What about upstream? Cross over onto Phelps Lane. **These are good comments that we will consider.**
11. Which contractor does the actual work on the water line? **The Town is responsible for the engineering and the cost of the construction. The State's contractor would do the work.**
12. Three weeks doesn't work – contractors are always late. The incentives don't help the townspeople. **The State of Vermont has done 30 rapid projects and has been successful on 29 of them. Chris was very upset about the one.**
13. The most important items are fire, police, businesses, ambulance, etc. **We do plan for this and we are getting better at it. There are a number of ways to mitigate these risks.**
14. People have to cross this bridge all the time. It's more of an impact than 5.1 miles added for people who want to go a short distance in a short time.
15. Where did this idea come from – closing the bridge? You wouldn't do this in Montpelier. **It is a nationwide movement. All states are striving to do projects faster and cheaper. It's not just Vermont and it's not just Readsboro. One item that is critical to this project is time of delivery – we can save 2 or more years if we can avoid a ROW process.**
16. The townspeople don't consider the traffic within the circles (A-B points on the detour map showing the detour). The 13 mile through route is meaningless. (This is a reference to our data that shows the impact to a traveler passing through the area. The point is that if you want to go a mile down the road, then it's a 32 mile increase, not a 5.1 mile increase).
17. If we are willing to pay a contractor \$200,000 as an incentive to finish earlier, why not spend an extra \$50,000 and just build the temporary bridge?
18. Instead of compensating the Town for repairs to local roads that get a beating due to increased traffic in a closure, can the State compensate in other ways, such as taking care of the water line handling during the project or a pedestrian crossing?
19. Does the temporary bridge fall under the 80% federal, 20% state split? **Yes.**
20. Then why does the State not want to spend the money for a temp. bridge if the feds are paying 80%? **It's real money. It's all taxpayer money. We are stewards of federal tax dollars given to us as we are for the state dollars.**
21. Half a mile down the road, a temporary bridge is much easier. There is some town ROW, and a "sliver" of Trans-Canada, but that should be okay.

22. Mass has done some projects where they put up signs off the route warning for local traffic only.
23. What choice does the town have in this issue? **There won't be a vote by the town, as this is a State bridge. We will certainly work with the town. We are here to hear concerns.**
24. Regarding Monroe, MA., the bridge across the Deerfield is closed. Mass highway has told Mr. Eilers that the contract will be let in 2014. A bypass through there when the bridge is completed will be 4 miles to Monroe, 15-18 miles end to end for the complete bypass. It is not an easy route for trucks.
25. Why not a temporary bridge for local traffic?
26. Will there be another meeting? **Yes.**
27. Better publicity is needed for the next meeting. (The implication was that if more people had known about the meeting and attended then we would see much more resistance to the closure). **Yes, there will be more meetings. It was noted in the local paper and on the town website, but not in the Valley News.**
28. If the bridge was a mile further away, it would not be such a problem. Don't spit the town.
29. What are the user costs for those who have to travel around the detour? What about people who walk? Some people don't have cars. 30 miles to go to church? **We have in the past provided a shuttle to take pedestrians and possibly bicyclists around the detour.**
30. One person owns two businesses, one on each side of the bridge.
31. When would this project start? **Earliest we can speculate would be a 2017 start. It's very early and hard to speculate on the schedule.**
32. Why does it take so long to get started? Why don't you start on the temporary bridge now? **We don't have the ROW we need to build a temporary bridge.**
33. The bridge on Tunnel St was just finished. Speaker observed some of the construction in passing. The work force worked hard during that project. There is no way this can be done in 3 weeks.
34. If this bridge is in such bad shape, why not just narrow down to one lane, or post it? **We are behind on the maintenance of our bridges. We have a large backlog with many projects. Our process slows us down.**
35. Given the opposition, does all this matter? The town is pretty unanimous against the closure. **Be careful what you wish for. A temporary bridge comes with its own irritations.**
36. No one believes this can be accomplished in 3 weeks.
37. What if there's a fire on the far side of the bridge? They-Are-Dead. What about somebody who needs an ambulance? Dead, in a case where a few minutes is the difference. **We think that house fires are down in the summer months. In addition, we've seen some creative solutions to this in the past. We've seen pumpers stationed on the far side of the bridge. Let's brainstorm some creative ways to minimize the risk.**
38. One person asked for the list of 30 bridges that have been done rapid.
39. Are there any other projects like this (closure and detour)? **Yes, but they usually have a better bypass.**
40. Why not a Bailey bridge near the treatment plant? **It's on the table.**
41. Matt Mann took some responsibility for meeting publicity not being ideal.

42. Can the town get compensated for engineering for the relocated water line? **Not even worth talking about at this stage. It's years away and there are bigger questions to address first.**
43. Referring to the condition of the bridge, what if it closes tomorrow? **Then we would take emergency measures to address it. It would take weeks to deal with it depending on the type of problem. A hole in the deck is a different magnitude than a structural member. We err on the side of safety.**
44. Do we know more than we are saying about the condition of this bridge and its level of safety? **No. We are talking hypothetically. We don't know if a hole or any other problem is going to develop and when. It is like the earlier analogy of the house fire. We don't know that it will definitely happen. Same as the bridge.**

Meeting ended at about 8:45pm.