




DateDecember 10, 2007

Meeting Notes

ToFile P-K 13678 and 34437-DS-003-001

FromAddie Kim 

Subject

Memorial Bridge Rehabilitation, Portsmouth-Kittery
December 10, 2007—9:30 a.m.
Portsmouth DPW Offices, 680 Peverly Hill Road

Present:

Jon Carter, Kittery Town Manager
Richard Rossiter, Kittery Department of Public Works
Steve Parkinson, Portsmouth DPW
Deborah Finnigan, Portsmouth DPW
Jon Frederick, Portsmouth Parking Manager
Suzanne Woodland, Portsmouth DPW
Bob Landry, NHDOT
Bob Juliano, NHDOT
Eugene Sawyer, NHDOT Construction
Nickie Hunter, NHDOT Construction
Gene McCarthy, McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Jim Fisher, HNTB Corporation
Addie Kim, HNTB Corporation

Bob Landry indicated that the NHDOT would like to go to bid with the project in the spring of 2008, which would allow on-site work to begin in 2009-2010. This bid date is contingent on obtaining agreement with MaineDOT that their portion of the funding would be delayed to 2010 (when funding is scheduled). A STIP Amendment is also required to allow the project to proceed to construction. Bob Landry indicated that the project includes strengthening 50% of the tower members and raising the tower by 3 feet. On the truss fixed spans, 45% of the members will be strengthened. Public input will be obtained on the painting of the bridge. Bob Landry indicated that the plan is to paint the bridge all green, although consideration will be given to painting the railing black. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$48 to \$49 million.

Bob Landry indicated that the project did not originally include painting, but it is recommended that painting be included as part of the project. Input from the public and agencies during meetings held in 2005-2006 also indicated support for minimizing closures by combining painting activities with the Memorial Bridge rehabilitation.

Jim Fisher presented the construction phasing options (Options 1, 2, and 3) that are being considered to accommodate painting activities. A copy of the presentation is attached, along with the alternative construction schedules.

Option 1 would involve a one-lane traffic detour. Options that were considered included alternating one-way traffic with work on ½ of the fixed spans at a time or 300-foot closures, which was estimated to yield traffic level of service C without consideration of bridge lifts. Under the one-lane closure, one direction of traffic would be maintained on the bridge. Southbound traffic into Portsmouth has heavier peaks in the P.M., and this may be the lane maintained. This option would keep one sidewalk open, and assumes that a 6-day work week, with construction occurring from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The one-way traffic operation would be required over 9 months in 2009 (mid-February to November) to complete painting and above deck repairs on the fixed truss spans, plus install the control house. The control house closures have not yet been fully evaluated. The issue of steel crossing both lanes of traffic was raised, and Jim Fisher indicated that this could be erected with falsework under the south tower. Deborah Finnigan inquired how much additional cost would be associated with this option, and Bob Landry indicated that there will be some cost increases, which have not yet been assessed. Under this option, the lift span replacement, work below the deck on the Memorial Bridge, and replacement of the Scott Avenue Bridge would occur over 5 ½ months (mid-February to August) in 2010. Potential issues include pedestrian safety with lead paint containment on the opposing travel lane on the bridge. A shuttle for pedestrians and bicycles would be operated during full roadway closures.

Steve Parkinson inquired how work on the Memorial Bridge fixed truss span deck would be done when both the Scott Avenue Bridge and the lift span is out. Bob Landry indicated that materials needed would be floated in on barges.

Richard Rossiter indicated that if you are a Kittery resident, it would be harder to go from Portsmouth to Kittery (northbound) via a detour on the Route 1 bypass than the other way (southbound). He indicated that access through the submarine park is currently closed off, but is opened up when the bridge is closed. Because this access is not signalized and does not allow left-turns, it is circuitous to head northbound from Market Street. Gene McCarthy indicated that signalizing this location would allow access from the Albacore park onto the Sarah Long Bridge. The same issue applies to the Maplewood Avenue intersection along the Route 1 Bypass, and access to the Route 1 Bypass from Dennett Street is available through the gas station property. There is a no left-turn sign on Maplewood Avenue westbound at the northbound on-ramp. Deborah Finnigan indicated that this is due to a sight distance issue. Addie Kim inquired what the schedule was for the Route 1 Bypass project, since these locations are proposed to be improved as part of the project. Gene McCarthy indicated that the pavement is already in place to provide a signalized intersection at this location. Deborah Finnigan indicated that funding is available in 2012. It was discussed that the official detour for through travelers would be I-95, but local traffic would prefer to use the Route 1 Bypass. Bob Landry indicated that he would follow up with the NHDOT project manager as to whether it would be possible to expedite construction on

Route 1 Bypass improvements at this location and Maplewood Avenue to accommodate detour traffic.

Steve Parkinson indicated that in June of 2008, there is a \$40 million commercial project, the Portwalk at the Parade Mall, that will break ground on the Deer Street/Hanover Street section of Maplewood Avenue, a potential detour route. Bob Landry inquired about the timing of the city's sewer separation project. Deborah Finnigan indicated that Peter Rice is scheduling this to coincide with Memorial Bridge construction.

Jim Fisher discussed Option 2. Deborah Finnigan inquired whether the end date was the same, and Jim Fisher indicated that all three Options cover two construction seasons. Under Option 2, a complete closure would be scheduled in 2009 that would open the bridge back up between Memorial Day and Labor Day. It was discussed the Portsmouth's Market Square Day is the second Saturday in June. During the 2009 closures, everything from the deck up would be repaired on the fixed truss spans. Bob Landry inquired about the validity of this construction scenario as an option. Steve Parkinson indicated that this was preferable to the third option that would close the bridge two summers (between February and July) in a row. Bob Landry asked how the Kittery representatives viewed Option 2. Jon Carter indicated that he favored Option 1, then Option 2, then Option 3. Bob Landry indicated that Option 3 will be dismissed from further consideration. Jim Fisher inquired whether there was any benefit in moving Scott Avenue Bridge construction further up in time (Option 3). Steve Parkinson indicated that the funding for this is budgeted for 2010.

Option 4 was briefly described, which would involve a full continuous bridge closure from February/March in 2010 extending to mid-July of 2011. Steve Parkinson indicated the businesses would lose from the first summer season, plus the Christmas season. He indicating that splitting up closures gives the businesses a better chance of survival.

Jon Carter inquired whether these construction schedules have been tested with contractors. Bob Landry indicated that consulting with contractors takes them out of the bidding, but he is examining ways to make this happen. He indicated that an independent firm, EC Driver, could be asked to review the construction schedule.

Jon Carter inquired about the cable repairs and duration of closures for this on both the Sarah Long and Memorial Bridges. Gene Sawyer indicated that there are three counterweight ropes on the Memorial Bridge that must be replaced ahead of construction, which will require a 5 day closure to be scheduled between April 1st and April 25th. The navigational closure will not be that long, the bridge will be down when they take the ropes out, so the bridge will be closed to cars, and work will be finished in 5 days. Work on the Sarah Long Bridge is scheduled for September, but the funding may not be available in time. The dissolution of the Maine-New Hampshire Interstate Bridge Authority that controls the Sarah Long Bridge would require that the New Hampshire legislature take over funding.

Bob Landry indicated that the other issue that will be discussed with MaineDOT at the end of January is their commitment to funding half (\$23 million) of the Memorial Bridge project cost, plus \$1 million for the Kittery approach span. Richard Rossiter inquired why Scott Avenue was not a separate project in itself. Bob Landry indicated that breaking this out as a separate project would require another complete closure over another year.

Steve Parkinson indicated that a southbound detour of Memorial Bridge traffic was better than the alternative detours, given the difficulty for local traffic to access the Route 1 Bypass northbound from downtown Portsmouth. Traffic from Kittery on the Route 1 Bypass southbound could access the downtown area from the Maplewood Avenue exit off the bypass, which turns into Middle Street in the downtown area. Steve Parkinson also indicated that the city would favor Option 1, as it maintains pedestrian access. He indicated that there are varied types of businesses, and maintaining traffic would be more palatable to them, although detours will need to be explored further.

Gene Sawyer inquired what the peak hour was in and out of Kittery. Gene McCarthy indicated that for the day that hourly counts were taken (September 2006), in the p.m. peak southbound flows were heavier than northbound in every hour. Bob Landry inquired about the a.m. peak hour. Gene McCarthy indicated that from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m., slightly higher volumes were recorded for northbound traffic, then from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m., southbound traffic predominates over the majority of the day. Bob Landry indicated that daily closures during peak hours were considered, but didn't work either. It was agreed that it would be easier to bring traffic from Kittery to Portsmouth across the I-95/Sarah Long Bridges, and to maintain Route 1 northbound traffic on the Memorial Bridge. Southbound local traffic could detour along the Sarah Long Bridge.

Deborah Finnigan inquired about how the pedestrian/bicycle shuttle would be operated and how schedules would be posted. Bob Landry indicated that there is heavy pedestrian/bicycle traffic on the bridge and commuter traffic. He raised the possibility of a shuttle operating on the hour, leaving on the ½ hour from Portsmouth and on the hour from Kittery. He indicated that the shuttle would be operated during any traffic closure. During the first year, under Option 1, bikes could be walked across the bridge.

Deborah Finnigan inquired whether this would be operated 24 hours a day. Bob Landry indicated that it could be operated 24 hours a day, and inquired whether it should be operated less frequently during nighttime hours. He asked whether there was a window when it would not be needed (e.g., 12 a.m. to 4 a.m. or 1 a.m. to 4 a.m.). Gene McCarthy indicated that pedestrian/bicycle counts last year occurred on a Friday night from 4/5 p.m. to 9/10 p.m. Gene Sawyer indicated that they counted 30 pedestrians in the peak hour. Gene McCarthy indicated that the less frequent the service, the larger the shuttle that would be needed.

Jon Carter indicated that the pickup locations should be carefully selected. He indicated that there is a vacant lot on Walker Street that is scheduled for construction in 2008-2009. The possibility of a ferry was discussed, but the obstacles to this option are strong currents in the Piscataqua River. Bob Landry indicated that the contractor will not be directed as to which way

pedestrians/bicycles will be transported or how often. Deborah Finnigan indicated that these spots should be well lit and well marked.

Bob Landry inquired whether bus service between Portsmouth and Kittery was available in the area, and Deborah Finnigan and Jon Carter indicated that there was no current service between the two communities.

Bob Landry brought up the issue of scheduling a public meeting to present construction options to the public. Deborah Finnigan indicated that certain nights are not good, e.g., Mondays are City Council meetings and Thursdays are Planning Board meetings. She suggested contacting Kelly to schedule this, and that dates get booked up well in advance. The city has the ability to televise the meeting in council chambers.

Jim Fisher requested specifications for the light fixture that the city would prefer to be used on the Memorial/Scott Avenue Bridges. The city had indicated that a flat globe bulb should be used. Deborah Finnigan indicated that she would provide the information.

Gene McCarthy reviewed plans for the proposed emergency generator under the Scott Avenue Bridge. The plan includes a location east of the bridge, which would require placing replacement of riprap at the top of the seawall, and fencing (for security purposes) around the enclosure for the generator. Susan Woodland indicated that the plan (both the location of the generator and the fencing) may not accommodate riverfront access that is part of the plan for the Riverwalk in this area. Gene McCarthy indicated that relocating the emergency generator to the west side of the bridge would require locating utility pads on the island adjoining the Scott Avenue Bridge. It was agreed that the design plan would be presented to the City Council for their input and approval.

We believe these minutes accurately reflect what transpired at the meeting. If these minutes are not in accordance with your understanding, please contact the undersigned promptly; otherwise, we will assume that you concur with the accuracy of the above.

Encl. Copy of Powerpoint Presentation
Construction Schedules for Options 1, 2, and 3