

**New Castle-Rye Bridge Project  
Summary of Meeting  
Cultural Resources Coordination Meeting  
November 14, 2013**

**Attendees:**

Jill Edelmann, NHDOT  
Sheila Charles, NHDOT  
Victoria Chase, NHDOT  
Bob Landry, NHDOT  
Marc Laurin, NHDOT  
Cathy Goodmen, NHDOT  
Jamie Sikora, FHWA  
Laura Black, NHDHR  
Edna Feighner, NHDHR  
Jim Murphy, HDR  
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, FHI

The second coordination meeting with SHPO on the New Castle-Rye Bridge Project was held on November 14, 2013 at NHDOT. Attendees introduced themselves and a brief presentation was provided on the status of the project.

Bob Landry with NHDOT provided a brief summary of the project to date. He explained that an Inspection and Condition Report for the bridge was completed in 2011. In 2012, Project Team developed four potential alternatives for the rehabilitation or replacement of the bridge. Two of these alternatives, the rehabilitation of the bridge and the replacement of the bridge on the existing alignment with another bascule bridge, are still under consideration.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, a Planner and Cultural Resources Specialist with FHI, then provided a summary of the public involvement process to date. In early 2013, a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was established and two PAC meetings have occurred, one in January and one in July of 2013. A Public Information Meeting was held on August 14, 2013. All the residents of New Castle and more than 100 residents of Rye were notified of the meeting through a postcard. Through an interactive polling exercise at the meeting it was determined that: the majority of the public would prefer a bascule bridge, regardless of the alternative selected; the public would like the construction to occur in the winter to minimize impacts to the community including the Wentworth By the Sea Hotel; the majority of the public prefers a solid deck over an open deck; the public prefers locating the sidewalk on the east side of the bridge due to safety concerns; and an overwhelming majority supports the replacement of the bridge on the existing alignment.

Jim Murphy, a Project Manager with HDR, Inc., provided a brief summary of the condition of the bridge. He explained that a bridge inspection was undertaken in 2011 that determined the bridge has structural deficiencies including advanced section loss in the pier caps and piles, the stringers and bascule girders, and the approach span stringers. Additional deficiencies include the fact that the bascule machinery doesn't meet code, the sidewalks and shoulders are narrow, and the open deck is noisy and a hazard to bicyclists. Furthermore, there are safety issues as pedestrians must cross the road on the north roadway approach to use the bridge's sidewalk. Finally, the bridge does not meet current load requirements.

When the bridge was constructed in the 1940s, it was designed to handle trucks weighing up to 20 tons; modern standards require bridges support 36 ton trucks plus additional loads.

Murphy stated that, based on the analysis conducted to date, if the Rehabilitation Alternative were to be pursued nearly every member on the bridge would require replacement. This includes new piles, primary load bearing members, bridge rails, the trunnion pin and the electrical system. As such, the project would essentially be constructing a replica of the existing bridge, as only a handful of the piles supporting the piers would remain out of the entire structure. In addition, this alternative would not allow the relocation of the sidewalk to the east side of the bridge, a key concern of residents due to pedestrian safety. The Rehabilitation Alternative would not impact private properties or the large Amur Cork tree on the Rye side of the bridge. This alternative attempts to adhere as much as physically possible to the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) prepared for the Scammel Bridge, which committed to maintain the New Castle-Rye Bridge and to only replace it under exceptional circumstances as historic mitigation for the replacement of the Scammel Bridge. This alternative does not fully adhere to the MOA, however, and it would likely result in an adverse effect under Section 106. This Alternative would have a life cycle cost in the order of \$43 million over 75 years. Murphy also stated that the Rehabilitation Alternative would require a substantially longer bridge closure for construction. While details and staging are not finalized Murphy estimated that the closure could be as long as 9 months.

The Replacement Alternative would utilize a bascule span, thereby maintaining two bascule bridges within the state. The profile of the bridge would be similar to the existing profile and would thus preserve the existing aesthetic along with the sizing and massing of the existing structure. Furthermore, it would allow for the relocation of the sidewalk to the east side of the bridge, wider shoulders, and a scenic overlook. Different options for the Operator's House are being investigated, including a structure similar to the existing one and another that draws design features from the Wentworth by the Sea Hotel. Like the Rehabilitation Alternative, the Replacement Alternative would not impact the large Amur Cork Tree on the Rye side of the bridge, nor would it impact private properties. The bridge would have a life cycle cost in the order of \$27 million over its 75-year life span, substantially less than the Rehabilitation Alternative. Murphy stated that the Replacement Alternative would allow for accelerated construction techniques such as used on the Memorial Bridge by floating in the superstructure, minimizing bridge closure time. The closure is estimated to be 3 months for the Replacement Alternative and could be completed outside of the heavy tourist summer months.

Murphy shared that, based on the investigations to date, the potential costs, and the input received from the public, the Rehabilitation Alternative is not looking feasible or prudent. However, a final determination will be made following the completion of the Type, Size and Location Report in December. After completion of the December Report, a PAC meeting and a Public Information Meeting will be held early in 2014 and a Determination of Effect will be prepared and submitted to SHPO. NHDOT anticipates that the 30% design will be completed by July 2014.

Throughout the meeting, attendees asked questions and offered information or concerns. The comments and questions were as follows:

- SHPO stated that FHWA needs to address Stipulation 2 within the MOA for the Scammel Bridge. This stipulation states that FHWA and NHDOT committed to the long-term maintenance and preservation of the New Castle-Rye Bridge and that the bridge would only be replaced under

exceptional circumstances, including a natural disaster creating a severe safety hazard or other unforeseen circumstance. Similar language was included in the Vilas Bridge MOA. SHPO provided no indication whether Replacement was acceptable given the extensive nature of what Rehabilitation would require.

- NHDOT pointed out that the language is not consistent between the MOA for the Scammel Bridge and a June 24, 1994 letter from NHDOT Commissioner Charles O'Leary to NHDHR. In addition to replacement due to a natural disaster, the letter mentions prohibitive cost as a potential factor in determining whether the bridge would be maintained.
- SHPO stated that it is important to let the public know about the MOA for the Scammel Bridge. Bob Landry indicated that this had been done at the last public meeting during the discussion of the alternatives.
- SHPO indicated that FHWA/NHDOT should document how the bridge was maintained and why it needs to be replaced. If there is a Determination of Adverse Effect, FHWA will consult with ACHP to determine their involvement in the process.
- FHWA stated that they were not sure how much funding was used for repairs over the last 20 years. NHDOT indicated that substantial rehabilitation/repairs had been done over this time in an effort to maintain the bridge. NHDOT agreed to research what work was done on the bridge between 1994 and 2013 and share this with SHPO.
- FHWA asked whether NHDOT solicited consulting parties in the process. The project team indicated that a flyer was made available at the public meeting in August that explained how one could become a consulting party. In addition, the process was explained by the consultant team and the public was directed to members of the project team with any questions.
- NHDOT stated that the consultant team has undertaken substantial public outreach throughout the process. They further indicated that public comments focused on safety, the importance of a solid deck, and the need to avoid lengthy bridge closures especially during the summer months which are the busiest for the area. The public also requested a vote be taken to determine support for the various alternatives. The vast majority of the meeting attendees supported the replacement of the bridge on the same alignment. No attendees supported the rehabilitation of the bridge. A small minority supported the replacement offline to maintain access into New Castle at all times.
- SHPO asked how the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed. The project team indicated that they began with a core list of individuals, including a representative from the local historical society, adjacent property owners, local representatives, and the Wentworth by the Sea Hotel. The list was expanded through talking to these individuals.
- SHPO asked whether the Operator's House was original. The project team indicated that it was designed after the construction of the bridge. Further investigation determined that the Operator House was constructed in 1962. The bridge was constructed in 1942.
- Regarding the design of the Operator's House, SHPO stated that it should not mimic adjacent properties, as this contradicts the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Instead, it should be sensitive to the surrounding area and consistent with the overall design of the new bridge.
- The consultant team asked whether the proportions of the Operator's House needed to be maintained, as the necessary expansion of the footprint would require that the Operator's House be fairly tall. SHPO indicated that the proportions do not need to be maintained.
- SHPO asked that both the minutes from this meeting and the Powerpoint presentation be placed on the project website. NHDOT agreed to this request.
- The project team asked whether SHPO had any input on the design of the Northeast Extreme Tee beams (NEXT Beams - concrete tee beams). SHPO did not express an opinion.