

**New Castle-Rye Bridge Project  
Summary of Meeting  
Public Advisory Committee (PAC)  
May 4, 2017, 4:30 p.m.**

**Attendees:**

**PAC members**

Dave McGuckin, Selectman, Town of New Castle  
Doug McDonald, Wentworth by the Sea Hotel  
Gary Rumph, Manager, Wentworth Homeowners Association  
Jim Cerny, Board Member, New Castle Historical Society  
Dennis McCarthy, Town of Rye Department of Public Works  
John Habig, Rye Abutter  
David Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission  
Nancy Stiles, former State Senator  
Michael O'Shaughnessy, Wentworth by the Sea Hotel

**New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)**

Victoria Chase, Project Manager  
Robert Landry, Bureau of Bridge Design  
Marc Laurin, Senior Environmental Manager  
Joe Adams, Deputy Project Manager  
Jennifer Reczek

**HDR Consultant Team**

Jim Murphy, Project Engineer  
Jill Barrett, Public Involvement  
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, Historic Resources

A meeting of the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) for the New Castle-Rye Bridge Project was held on Thursday, May 4, 2017 in the Macomber Room of the New Castle, NH, Library. Victoria Chase, NHDOT Project Manager for the bridge project welcomed the PAC, noting it had been over two years (December 2014) since the group met. The PAC met five times in 2013-14 but had been inactive since then while NHDOT was resolving how to proceed with the project.

Jim Murphy with HDR then provided a brief project history and update. He explained that a Replacement with Bascule Alternative was initially considered but in January 2014 the public raised concerns about the cost. NHDOT prepared a Benefit-Cost Analysis comparing the replacement with fixed and bascule bridge alternatives. In the winter of 2014, the fixed bridge was presented to the public and was selected by NHDOT as the preferred alternative. In June 2015, the design of a four-span fixed bridge was developed and navigational survey documents were submitted to the US Coast Guard (USCG). In September 2015, the USCG held a public comment period for users of the navigational channel. In March 2016, the USCG notified NHDOT that they'd concluded while a bridge that maintains 65' vertical clearance is optimal, they were unable to produce sufficient data to support it. They indicated that 16.52' of clearance will be required for a fixed bridge, an approximately 2.5' increase over the four-span fixed alternative. They also indicated that the submission of a USCG permit will be required for final

approval. In the summer and fall of 2016, the feasibility of a two-span fixed bridge was reviewed, and in April 2017 the preliminary design of a two-span fixed bridge with steel beams was completed.

Mr. Murphy described the two-span fixed alternative. He explained that as designed the two-span alternative is a steel girder bridge with a concrete deck, supported by a single central pier. The design maintains the roadway widths envisioned under the four-span design alternative, but that the scenic overlook has been reduced. The steel pipe piles will either be driven or pre-drilled. Mr. Murphy explained that the fixed design would allow for the installation of a new water line along Wentworth Road (NH1B). He said that a fixed bridge was supported by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) at the December 2014 meeting, primarily due to the water line and cost savings. Mr. Murphy explained that in the Two Span Alternative, the approach walls have increased in height and length but that they still sit behind the rock causeways. They will be detailed in the final design to minimize their visual impact. A drainage swale is being considered in the design to treat stormwater.

In the coming months, the project team will continue to refine the design and complete the Section 106 historic review process, various environmental assessments and permits by December 2017. NHDOT expects to advertise the project in January 2018 and complete it by late spring of 2019.

Throughout the meeting, PAC members asked questions and offered information or concerns. They are noted below in italics with responses made by NHDOT or the consultant team members.

*Q. Do you know about utility relocation?*

A. No. Relocation will be the responsibility of the utility companies.

*Q. Will there be any lighting on the new bridge?*

A. No. Like the current bridge, no lighting is planned.

*Q. Will the US Coast Guard take as long to approve a permit for the bridge as they took to offer guidance about bridge design?*

A. We do not know and NHDOT has no control over this process. For the bridge to be built in 2019, we will need to have a permit granted by December 2017.

*Q. Will the Town of Rye need to maintain the sidewalk?*

A. Each town, Rye and New Castle, will have to sign an agreement to maintain the sidewalk in their respective town for NHDOT to install sidewalks as part of this project.

*As a Rye abutter, creating a 200-yard sidewalk will create a big impact on my property. I ask you to consider using gravel as I believe it would work better than pavement.*

*Q. What is the material of the retaining wall? I have concerns about the aesthetics.*

A. Pre-cast concrete will be used. NHDOT will consider using a stain. We've found tinting during the building process works well.

*Q. Are there other sites we can look at that have retaining walls and drainage swales?*

A. Yes. We can identify other areas where these have been used.

*Q. Has any study been done about the amount of water that will be drained? I have a concern about over engineering of the site and the fate of an Amur cork tree.*

A. Further evaluation of drainage will be done as the bridge design is refined.

*Q. Will you be replanting the vegetation currently on State property that is removed during construction?*

A. No.

*Q. When will the bridge be closed?*

A. Our goal is to close the bridge for three months, January – March 2019. We are still working with construction specialists to understand how to construct the bridge during the desired winter schedule. We will use pre-cast bridge units with joints that are sealed together with grout. In November and December and in the period immediately after the new bridge is installed one-way alternating traffic will be needed during the day.

*Q. Where will the contractor stage and store materials?*

A. That will be up to the contractor.

NOTE: New Castle Selectman Dave McGuckin said the Town would be happy to lease space to the contractor.

*Q. Speed is a concern in the Town of Rye. Does the Department of Transportation determine where to use electronic speed signs on State roads?*

A. If residents have a concern about speeding, they should contact their town officials as local police would be responsible for speed enforcement.

*Q. Will timing of project delivery be part of the contract?*

A. Yes. The contract will include a financial incentive/disincentive for on-time delivery of the project.

*Q. Did raising the bridge feet add to the cost of the new bridge?*

A. Yes. There are additional costs associated with higher walls and additional fill.

*Q. What do you project the new fixed bridge will cost?*

A. The bridge will cost about \$8 million.

*Q. Is there potential construction might be delayed?*

A. We have several risks such as delay with getting permits as well as the historic review process and mitigation. January 2018 is the latest date to advertise the project for 2019 construction. A contractor would need several months in advance of bridge closure to obtain steel and other bridge parts. If the schedule slips and all the elements required for the project are not in place by December 2017, NHDOT will not replace the bridge until the following year, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.