

From: Mark Richardson [mailto:MRichardson@dot.state.nh.us]
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2014 8:33 AM
To: 'wentworth2@roadrunner.com'
Cc: Bill Cass
Subject: Wentworth 148/121 - Village Common Bridge (Closed/Bypassed)

Hello, Catherine and Selectmen –

This email is a follow up to my telephone conversation Monday afternoon with Catherine regarding the (so called) Village Bridge over the Baker River, which has been discussed many times over the past couple of years.

As you know from the Bridge Inspection Report, recently completed by the NHDOT and sent to the Town, this bridge is in very poor/critical condition and was closed to all traffic in November 2013. The analysis of the inspection results determined that the bridge can no longer safely support any “live” loading, including pedestrians. The deterioration of the bridge, specifically the bottom chord steel members, has reached the point where we are concerned about the ability of the bridge to even support the snow load that will occur during this coming winter.

Based on the inspection/analysis results, the Department is very concerned with the safety of the public, both now and in the future, should this bridge remain in place in its current condition. It has been reported that pedestrians occasionally still climb over the existing concrete barriers and travel across this bridge, further increasing our concerns regarding public safety.

Given the extremely deteriorated bridge condition, and to address this safety concern, the Department believes the bridge needs to be removed, perhaps within the next few months. There are many steps to be followed in the process to prepare contract documents and bid forms before this type of project would proceed. As part of this process, discussions with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) need to occur to review alternatives, costs, historic issues, and related items to determine the most feasible and prudent option to pursue. The Town of Wentworth will also be involved and meetings with the public will be held to gather input for consideration as we work toward a solution. In the meantime, the bridge will remain closed to all traffic. Additional signs may also be installed.

If this bridge is removed, as preferred by the NHDOT, the Department is also evaluating the best way to re-establish a pedestrian crossing at this location. One option being considered is for Bridge Maintenance to install some steel beams (cleaned & painted) onto the existing abutments (modified slightly) and construct a timber plank deck/walkway and railing on the steel beams. It is felt that this type of structure would serve as a suitable crossing to reconnect pedestrians on East Side Road to the Town Common area. It could be used by snowmobiles as well.

We have had many discussions here at the NHDOT on this issue and I wanted to keep you and the Selectmen up-to-date on the information being discussed and the direction that the Department believes must be pursued. I am sure that we will have further discussions as we work collectively to find a solution to this public safety issue.

Feel free to contact me should you/the Selectmen have any questions or if you need additional information.

Regards, Mark R.

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