

Subject: Wentworth 26903 - Br. No. 148/121 public safety issues - update

From: "Mark Richardson" <MRichardson@dot.state.nh.us>

Date: 11/24/2014 2:55 PM

To: "Catherine Stover" <wentworth2@roadrunner.com>

CC: "Bill Cass" <BCass@dot.state.nh.us>

Hi, Catherine and Selectmen –

I am writing to provide a brief update on the status of our efforts regarding this bridge and the need to address the public safety concerns associated with its severely deteriorated condition. We have had several discussions/meetings here at the DOT with assigned staff to continue our efforts regarding this bridge. The following list is a summary of some of those efforts:

- 1) It has been reported that people are still crossing the bridge, even with the "Bridge Closed" signs in place. As you know, the recently completed analysis of this bridge confirmed that it has no safe live load capacity remaining, meaning that the bridge must remain closed and should not be used.
 - a. Although the bridge may for now support occasional individuals that choose to cross it, this is not recommended and is clearly the primary concern for us regarding public safety. Due to its severely deteriorated condition, the bridge cannot be expected to support snow loads during the coming winter, let alone pedestrian loads in addition to that. In an effort to discourage those that would use the bridge in its current condition, our Traffic Bureau has already installed additional signs on each end of the bridge to emphasize that the bridge is closed and should not be used.
 - b. Full review of the project for impacts to environmental resources (natural and cultural/historic) will likely take several months to complete. Due to the public safety concerns and the anticipated project schedule, the Department is exploring other options on an interim basis. I will keep you informed as discussions are held regarding this issue.
- 2) As part of the environmental review process, the Department has engaged the services of professional firms, as outlined below:
 - a. Historic Documentation Company – Rich Casella will perform research to complete an Individual Inventory Form for this bridge to document its character defining features and its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This work was started on Friday, November 14, 2014, and I believe that he has already contacted the Town Offices as part of his research efforts. A draft of the Individual Inventory Form is anticipated during the week of December 1st.
 - b. Monadnock Archaeological Consulting – This firm will complete an initial archaeological survey in the SW quadrant of bridge due to the potential for archaeological sensitivity in this area. We have already contacted the property owners and have received their verbal approval for this work to occur. These efforts may include a review of the property and its history to determine the likelihood of any archaeological resources. Small test pits (hand dug, using only a shovel) may also be done at locations where artifacts might be present. The property will be restored to its previous condition upon completion of this survey and any test pits. A draft of this information will also be submitted within the next few weeks.
- 3) We hope to schedule a Public Informational Meeting in the near future, possibly on December 8th, 9th, or 10th, and will be contacting the Town to schedule the time and location for this meeting. At the meeting we will be explaining the need for the project (public safety concerns), the status of efforts to date, and the anticipated schedule for a project. Notices of this meeting will be posted in the Town Hall and other public places, and will be published in state and local newspapers. Other parties that are interested and/or involved with this bridge and project will be invited to attend, as well as the general public.

- 4) The Department has also contacted the Utility Companies that are responsible for the services provided in the area of the bridge. We will be coordinating with them as needed to ensure that any utilities are temporarily relocated (if needed) to be out of the way of any construction activities. If this project moves forward, it will likely result in the temporary removal of the street light at the south end of the bridge, which will be reinstalled upon completion of all construction work.

- 5) There will likely be other issues to discuss and resolve as the above tasks are being completed, such as the final ownership of the bridge and adjacent roadways upon completion of this effort. This bridge and the roadways in this area only serve a local purpose and do not significantly contribute to the overall state transportation network. Thus, the Department proposes to transfer ownership of the bridge and adjacent roadways to the Town of Wentworth once this project is completed. Based on discussions at previous Selectmen's meetings at which this bridge was discussed, it is my understanding that the Town might be agreeable to this transfer. This action would enable the Town to properly maintain this bridge for continued use by its residents, as the Department does not have sufficient funds for any future maintenance activities.

I'm sure we will discuss these items/issues further as our efforts continue, but I wanted to provide this information to keep the Town Officials and residents informed regarding our goal of addressing this public safety concern. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Regards, Mark R.

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