

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT --- February 8, 2008

Last month several members of Town staff and I attended a meeting in Poughkeepsie called by the NYS Dep't of Transportation to discuss the status of the reconstruction of the Bridge over the MetroNorth railroad tracks. Mr. Faiella, Ms. Paderewski, our Commissioner of the Dep't of Public Works and his deputy, as well as Chief of Police, Provisional, Jim Baynes and two members of his department were present for the meeting--- It is important for everyone to realize the DOT has had our bridge on its radar for major repair since before the year 2000 --- the Town objected to piecemeal repair, because removing and replacing pieces of the bridge one at a time would have left the Town with a single lane bridge for the anticipated 24 months of the project. The decision was made to reconstruct the bridge in its entirety to ensure two-way traffic at all times.

In the interim 8 years the bridge has continued to deteriorate ----- at this point it is described as "Structurally deficient" --- not, of course, at a dangerous level --- but no one is going to wait for the condition to go from structurally deficient to dangerous condition --- the DOT would be forced to close the bridge ---

The bridge was built in 1930 for then specifications --- remembering that New Castle's population at the time according to the Census Bureau was 6,792 residents --- as opposed to our current 17,800 --- and the number of vehicles has at least tripled if not quadrupled in those 78 years ---

The most-recent estimate for vehicular traffic over the bridge is **approximately 14,000 a day!**

As many of you know, the traffic consultants had recommended a series of 3 traffic lights to aid in the flow of traffic in and out of the hamlet ---

When that suggestion was presented to the public 2 things were very clear:

1. no one wanted to have traffic lights in the hamlet, and
2. no one wanted to lose the Town triangle.

Given those design constraints, as well as the shifting focus in the entire community to pedestrian amenities and safety, two years of re-design were done to arrive at a safe, attractive alternative, that in addition offers several additional feet on the bridge as one enters the hamlet --- allowing for clearer direction, better sight lines, and hopefully reduced backup over the bridge. One thing we know for certain, without the traffic lights, if the bridge were rebuilt at the exact same width, we would have the exact same problems that currently exist.

The current plans provide for 3 travel lanes of 12 feet each --- the current design standard --- 2 entering and 1 exiting the hamlet. The sidewalks on both sides of the bridge will also be replaced ---

The state also provided the Town with the option of four different guide rail treatments to meet today's design standards. The Board did not find any of the "four rail **galvanized steel**" designs or the use of pre-cast concrete barriers to be attractive ---

instead the Town opted for **granite walls** with a **coping stone**, similar to the treatment found on the bridge's separate but companion bridge over the Saw Mill River Parkway.

The State also agreed to tier the retaining wall on the south side of the project to provide a landscaping opportunities for shrubs and trees. They will also install granite curbing throughout the project site and install the historic decorative lighting to replicate the look of the original structure.

In the northerly direction, they will increase the turning radius at the intersection of Rte 120 with Hunts Lane to allow busses to make the right

turn back to the bus depot without traveling north and then south to make the left-hand turn which blocks the flow of southbound traffic.

To summarize, the bridge has been classified as “structurally deficient” meaning it needs to be replaced **now**; funding for the project is in place, and yes, the bridge is wider, but it will also be safe, should help ease the morning traffic flow, and during construction, traffic will be moving in both directions.

Accordingly, the DOT opened bids on January 24th, and anticipates awarding the contract on or about March 6, 2008, with construction to start approximately two weeks thereafter.

The Town will be monitoring the State’s progress and will keep our residents informed.