



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Edward L. Roberge, PE, City Engineer

DATE: January 28, 2013

SUBJECT: Supplemental report on the status of the Sewalls Falls Bridge Replacement Project (CIP22)

Recommendation

Accept this report highlighting the discussions from the January 23, 2013 public meeting.

Background

On October 11, 2011, the City Council appropriated funds for project administration, design, permitting, and right-of-way acquisition required for the Sewalls Falls Bridge Replacement Project (CIP #22). Shortly thereafter, the City entered into a municipal managed project agreement with the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and began coordinating the completion of a detailed structural inspection and load rating analysis of the existing truss bridge, the first step required prior to advancing to the final design phase.

Based on the findings of the detailed structural inspection and load rating analysis, City Council authorized staff at its meeting on September 10, 2012 to review previous preliminary design alternatives with the appropriate reviewing authorities and agencies in order to evaluate those alternatives based upon results of the analysis and return to City Council with a final project recommendation.

Where this review includes consideration of alternatives in addition to the previously selected alternative, staff announced that in accordance to the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Federal agencies and recipients of federally funded projects are required to consider the effects of their projects on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on federally funded projects prior to their implementation. In that, staff scheduled a public review meeting on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 to update the public on the status of the project, report the findings of the analysis, and seek input on the design alternatives presented, as required in Section 106 of NHPA.

Discussion

The January 23, 2013 was attended by well over 90 residents, staff, officials, and parties interested in the project. The public review meeting included a presentation by the project design team on the three project alternatives considered. Those alternatives include the previously selected rehabilitation of the existing truss bridge and construction of a new one-lane bridge alternative (Alternative H), an off-line bridge replacement alternative consisting of constructing a new two-lane bridge upstream of the existing bridge and retaining the existing truss bridge for pedestrian or recreational use or abandoned as a static structure (Alternative 4), and an on-line bridge replacement alternative where a new two-lane bridge would be constructed on the same roadway alignment following the removal of the existing bridge (Alternative 8). The project design team reported that the replacement alternative offers the best opportunity to improve horizontal and vertical alignment, has the least impact to environmental resources, reduces the need for extensive right-of-way, and has the lowest construction and long-term life-cycle costs. However, this alternative would require the removal of the existing truss structure considered historic.

At the conclusion of the presentation, staff opened the meeting to public comment. See attached Public Information Meeting Questions and Comments. In summary, the well-attended meeting was positive with a broad exchange of questions and comments ranging from support for the replacement alternative to questions regarding the State and City's engagement of interested parties in the project. Some spoke of reducing impacts to abutting conservation and recreation properties while others suggested mitigation alternatives to consider. There were no negative comments related to the public process. Based on the crowd reaction of applause to a comment made by a resident in support of the replacement alternative, it would appear that the general consensus of the group was in support of the replacement alternative.

Therefore, it is recommended that City Council accept this report and the attached public information meeting notes and following the hearing where public comment is heard, accept the City Engineer's recommendation that Alternative 8 (Online Bridge Replacement) is the best project alternative in terms of its limited impacts to natural resources, limited need for additional public right-of-way, lowest capital and life-cycle maintenance costs, as well as its overall safety improvements, and authorize staff to advance Alternative 8 to final design.

/elr

attachments

cc: Tom Aspell, City Manager
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