

From: Pavao, Jr., Joseph (DOT) [mailto:joseph.pavao.jr@state.ma.us]
Sent: Tuesday, October 25, 2011 9:23 AM
To: Jill Goldsmith
Cc: 'Damaris.Santiago@dot.gov'; Boundy, Stephanie (DOT); Bastoni, Michael (DOT); Shrimpton, Jeffrey (DOT)
Subject: RE: MRB bridge update

Jill,

The following is a status of the project and summary of our conversation:

The Accelerated Bridge Program is an 8 year program where approximately \$3 Billion was allocated to repair, replace or rehabilitate structurally deficient bridges throughout the Commonwealth. The Mitchell River Bridge is currently on the ABP program and as I mention at previous Town meetings and during our phone conversation, MassDOT is committed to funding and completing this project within the confines of the ABP program. It is important to note that all projects programmed under this program must be fully constructed by the end of year 2016.

Regarding your question of available monies within the ABP program, all monies available under this program are currently allocated for projects throughout the Commonwealth. What this means is that if a new bridge were to be added, the scope of an existing programmed bridge would need to be reduced or a bridge dropped from the program in order to continue to be fiscally constrained.

Since the October 2010 determination by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places that the Mitchell River Drawbridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, MassDOT and FHWA have held 2 Mitchell River Bridge Project, Section 106 Consulting Parties meetings on January 25, 2011 and May 17, 2011. At the last meeting held on May 17th, seven design alternatives were alternatives presented. MassDOT accepted comments on the proposed designs until June 8, 2011. Further analysis of the alternatives will be evaluated in an Environmental Assessment (EA) under NEPA.

The next steps as part of the formal Section 106 process will be for MassDOT and FHWA to prepare an effect finding under Section 106 that will result from the preferred alternative. The demolition of the existing bridge is assumed to result in an adverse effect necessitating the execution of a MOA to be signed and concurred on by the Signatory Authorities. MassDOT is finalizing the draft Adverse Effect finding and the Memorandum of agreement and we anticipate submittal to FHWA by the end of next week. After FHWA reviews the documents, they will distribute to the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Officer) and the Consulting Parties for review. As I mentioned to you on the phone, the adverse effect finding will be the same regardless of the selected alternative as demolition of the existing structure is assumed to be an adverse effect. MassDOT will present a preferred alternative in the MOA that best mitigates the removal of the existing bridge and provides the greatest benefit to all users of the bridge.

MassDOT has requested an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the NEPA process and FHWA has concurred that this is the appropriate class of action for this project to fully evaluate the environmental, social and economic impacts of the action. Although we started preparing the NEPA document, it

is important to note that FHWA cannot make a determination on a preferred alternative until the Section 106 process is complete. We are striving to complete the EA and distribute for public comment as soon as the Section 106 MOA is complete. We anticipate that this can happen in the month of December. Once the EA is advertised to the public by FHWA, there will be a 30 day public review/comment period and also a public information meeting. As we discussed, it is critical to the schedule that we obtain a signed MOA in order to move forward with the design, NEPA and USCG permitting. The signatories of the MOA consist of FHWA, SHPO and the Advisory Council (MassDOT and the Town will be invited signatories)..

USCG permitting can often take anywhere between 7-17 months depending on the number of applications with the USCG. As this is the critical driver for the schedule, we need to get this application in by the end of the year in order to meet the current advertising date of Summer 2013. Currently we are anticipating a 3 year construction duration which puts us at the end of the program, but I believe that the duration is somewhat conservative.

As I mentioned to you, MassDOT will streamline the design process as much as possible in order to make the scheduled advertising. My intent is to go directly to a 75% design/bridge submission, unless the design changes substantially and we need to revise the 25% design.

At any time during the process, I would be happy to meet with you or brief the Board of Selectman on the status of the project. Thanks for your time and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

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