



*Preserving America's Heritage*

December 19, 2011

Ms. Pamela S. Stephenson  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
Massachusetts Division  
55 Broadway, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02142

REF: Proposed Replacement of the Mitchell River Drawbridge  
Mass DOT Project File No. 603390  
Chatham, Massachusetts

Dear Ms. Stephenson:

On November 10, 2011, we received your letter proposing construction of Alternative 3 for replacement of the Mitchell River Bridge, and requesting the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) review and comment on FHWA's Finding of Adverse Effect and draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). We apologize for the delay in responding, however, we wanted be sure that the views of all consulting parties were submitted before commenting on your request to move forward and to conclude the Section 106 review process.

Based upon our review of the background documentation supporting the selected alternative, we recommend that FHWA schedule a teleconference or meeting to respond to questions raised by the Indiana Historic SPANs Task Force, the Historic Bridge Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (jointly referred to as the "IHN"), and the Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge regarding the selection of Alternative 3. Since several consulting parties expressed concern about FHWA's decision not to select Alternative 1B, it would be productive to discuss with the signatories to the MOA and the Section 106 consulting parties whether the recommendations of IHN for modifying alternative 1B can be accommodated.

While Section 106 f does not require the concurrence of all consulting parties in the outcome, it does require that FHWA have an administrative record of its efforts to consult with other parties in matters that arise in the Section 106 process. As such, the ACHP would be remiss not to utilize the Section 106 process to try, one last time, to resolve concerns regarding the design of the replacement bridge. Further, the IHN has expressed to us that it believes the consultation process would appear truncated without this additional meeting now that FHWA has a selected a preferred option.

We appreciate the hard work of FHWA and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to develop and consider alternatives that would address the interests and concerns of all consulting

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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parties. FHWA's selection of Alternative 3 rather than 1B has raised concerns related to the Town of Chatham's ability to maintain the continuous line of wooden drawbridges that have spanned the river crossing for over 150 years. This continuity of material and function was determined to be an important aspect of the history of the Mitchell River span. Accordingly, if consulting parties can discuss the factors that made one replacement preferable to another, it would allow the ACHP to move forward in making a decision.

We would like to suggest that the teleconference or meeting be scheduled for the week of January 3<sup>rd</sup>. This schedule will enable FHWA to proceed with concluding its environmental reviews without protracted delays. Further, it will enable the other consulting parties to review their position based upon additional information. If you have any questions or require further assistance, feel free to contact me at 202-606-8533 or Carol Legard, our FHWA Liaison, at 202-606-8503 or [clegard@achp.gov](mailto:clegard@achp.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlene Dwin Vaughn". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Charlene Dwin Vaughn, AICP  
Assistant Director  
Federal Permitting, Licensing, and Assistance  
Office of Federal Agency Programs