

BRUNSWICK-TOPSHAM BRIDGE DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Connecting Two Great Villages

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DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW BRUNSWICK-TOPSHAM BRIDGE

Re: The Design Advisory Committee's Preliminary Report on Design Suggestions

The Brunswick-Topsham Bridge Design Advisory Committee (DAC) appointed last year by the town governments of Topsham and Brunswick is recommending that the new bridge connecting the two village centers have a low-profile design that maximizes views of the Androscoggin River and that accommodates equally well people who drive, walk and cycle across the bridge.

“The recommended new bridge will fit the natural and historical setting of this inspiring Pejepscot Fall site, and will reopen some gorgeous views,” said Bruce Van Note, of Topsham, who chairs the DAC. “We want a bridge that is inviting, durable and cost effective,” added Mike Lyne of Brunswick, DAC vice chair.



The DAC recommends that the new bridge have sidewalks and bicycle lanes on both sides. The current bridge has a sidewalk on only one side. The committee also recommends that the new bridge should have bump outs and overlooks that provide views of the river on both sides. Connections with area trails are also recommended. Efforts should be made in the design to keep motor vehicle speeds on the new bridge appropriate to residential, recreational and commercial activities in the two villages.

The bridge design should incorporate visual elements from the two historic mills at either end of the bridge. In addition, efforts should be made on both sides of the river to memorialize and celebrate the beauty and history of the river crossing and the several previous bridges that have connected the two towns.

The Design Advisory Committee's report is an interim report for submission to the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), which is developing this state bridge, and to the two town governments. A copy of the full report, and additional imagery, is can be viewed and downloaded at <https://app.box.com/s/fh2q0aa2xwrhkkm5lm6vjrhw03scox1>. The DAC intends to provide further opportunities for public input as it continues to refine design recommendations to MaineDOT in the coming months.

The DAC was charged to work with MaineDOT as it readies its plans for replacing the Frank J. Wood Bridge that was constructed in 1932. The seventeen-member committee was appointed by the Brunswick Town Council and the Topsham Board of Selectmen in June 2016.

The Frank J. Wood Bridge is currently posted at a 25-Ton Limit as a result of recent inspections that showed deterioration of structural steel.

In the first months of its work, the Design Advisory Committee invited public comment from those who live near the bridge, local businesses, officials of the two towns, and others with concerns about the design and purpose of a new bridge.

The Design Advisory Committee has been doing its work at the same time that MDOT has considered whether it should renovate the current bridge or replace it altogether. In June 2017, the Federal Highway Administration and the Maine Department of Transportation announced that a replacement option was the "preferred alternative" regarding the project. The announcement followed a year-long public process of analysis, public comment and review of rehabilitation and replacement options. The proposed new bridge will be built slightly upstream and adjacent to the existing bridge.

In releasing the draft report, Van Note and Lyne thanked MDOT officials, representatives of the towns, the DAC team members, and the many citizens who offered suggestions.

Construction on the new bridge is expected to begin in 2019.