STATE OF MAINE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

IN RE BLUE HILL FALLS BRIDGE

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Public Meeting At The Blue Hill Town Office

Reported by Robin J. Dostie, a Notary Public and court reporter in and for the State of Maine, on August 8, 2017, at the Blue Hill Town Office, Blue Hill, Maine, commencing at 6:00 p.m.

REPRESENTING THE STATE:	ANDREW LATHE
FROM HNTB:	TIM COTE
	KEVIN BRAYLEY
FROM FEDERAL HIGHWAY:	CASSIE CHASE

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) I believe we're ready to begin. As you may know, there was an announcement in one of the papers, I won't mention which one, these was going to be a marijuana meeting tonight as well. So I think we've diverted a few people, but if you are here and wanting to be at that meeting just stay and take the high road actually.

(Laughter.)

I won't go any further with that sort of thing. But I first of all I want to welcome all of you this evening and I think we have a good representation. Basically, there will be four parts to this meeting. First, will be an introduction. I will introduce the Bridge Advisory Committee and then we'll introduce our DOT team and then there will be a presentation by our engineer that will be kind of a sample of what we have as a committee been -- has been given to us over a period of time. So a lot of the content has been condensed, but you'll see in review what we have absorbed and what we are working with. And then finally, will be -- the meeting will be turned over to all of you and so we'll encourage your questions, your statements, your opinions and whatever you feel comfortable giving at this meeting.

And then later at the end of the -- I mean, before we get into the last part, I'll give you some housekeeping instructions since tonight's meeting will be recorded by this wonderful person on my right who is moving those fingers so wonderfully, so we need to speak loudly and maybe not so quickly as we're used to so you can catch everything. And before you do ask a question or say anything, please say your name so she can capture that and then we'll have a publication that will be in print at some level and so that will be exciting and we'll get the residuals.

Anyway, that said, I would like to introduce our committee. Last spring we were tasked to organize a committee of up to nine people who would have the interest, the ability and the passion and patience to work on this project to come up with a rehabilitation or replacement plan for the Falls Bridge. So the nine people I'm going to introduce were willing to put forth that effort and I will do it alphabetically because otherwise one gets in trouble. And I do know the alphabet, so if you bear with me.

Anyway, Michael Astbury right here is a long time resident, former road commissioner and a

wonderful person. I've known him for all of the years that I've been here and of course his knowledge both in terms of his businesses and the offices that he's held go very deep into our fabric.

Then I have Deborah Brewster behind me here. Deborah is a select person on the board in Brooklin and is very not only intelligent, but I know she serves her constituents with passion and she brings a good deal of that knowledge and passion to our table, so we're very fortunate to have her as a member.

Then we have John Chapman over here. John is not only a resident of South Blue Hill but is deeply engaged in things that pertain to the harbor and the fire company and fire department, so he brings those experiences to the table as well and very important to our view of what might happen in the future.

Then Lynn Clark. And Lynn, again, has deep roots in Blue Hill, been associated with the historic society and with the cemetery committee for years and she's a go to person if you want any old pictures. She has a little portfolio that she carries around I think. I'm not sure, but I bet you do.

Bill Cousins is our road commissioner, a good friend, a colleague and talk about a go to

person, he's on the spot and with many things that come up I personally trust him to take on any task with short notice. So it's good to have somebody with those capabilities, his knowledge, not only as road commissioner, he has all of the plowing experience he would ever want to have and probably more, so he brings that to our table.

An Vaughn, Vaughn Leach, my friend and colleague is a selectman. It's an honor and privilege to serve with him on that board and he too with his business -- he started a business here in town, spun it off and also has a business that's related. He's very familiar with the capacity and limitations and challenges of our road system, so he also along with his governing expertise brings very much important things to our table.

And then we have Steve Rappaport, who is right behind me. Oh, no, he's over there. No, don't get behind me. Anyway, Steve is a reporter for the Ellsworth American and literally covers the waterfront. He lives in East Blue Hill and is a good voice and gives context to a lot of things that we've been talking about, so it's not only exciting to have his input but very comfortable to have him as a member of our committee.

And then we have Lori Sitzabee, who Lori is our director of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Lori is a more recent -- she came here more recently, but she hit the ground running and is an incredible advocate for our visiting community and for our business community and I really appreciate her perception and that she can bring to this whole effort.

And then finally, but not least, Karen Wyatt. Karen, a resident of South Blue Hill, very, very -- she networks very well. If you need a petition over night of hundreds of people, Karen can make that happen and so -- and I've seen it in work. But her knowledge and her contact with the constituent base over there is so incredibly useful to us and it's greatly appreciated.

So that's our committee and I thank them and, again, it's an honor to be part of this as the facilitator. So that said, I will introduce Andrew Lathe, who is the administrator, I would guess, or the engineer -- how do you phrase your --

MR. LATHE: Project manager.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Yeah. Okay. Well, he's in charge of all things that pertain to DOT and he's our go to person and provides

tremendous support. I've been very impressed with the expertise and the follow through that DOT has given us. Andrew is -- well, how would you characterize yourself, obsessive compulsive, which is really a good thing to have somebody working with you.

MR. LATHE: And now I'm nervous.

(Laughter.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) So that, again, has brought so much support to us that I don't think we have ever had before, so I thank Andrew. Andrew will introduce his team and then we'll move forward with the program.

MR. LATHE: Great. Well, thank you very much, Jim. With me tonight I have two consultants from HNTB, the designing consultant that we have for this project, and with me is Tim Cote and Kevin Brayley. I, myself, will give a brief introduction for a few slides. Tim will give the bulk of the presentation and then we will move on to more of a question and comment period, sort of a dialogue between the community and the Bridge Advisory Committee as well as myself and HNTB. And we also have a representative from Federal Highway, Cassie Chase is here somewhere in the back from Federal

Highway.

I do have a couple of housekeeping items if you folks are interested. On the way in you may have seen -- hopefully you all picked up this handout. It kind of provides information on the specifics or the terminology for bridge parts and components. As Tim goes through his presentation he'll be referring to these items, so they're available on either side of the door in the entryway. Also, and I bring these to all public meetings, we have our State of Maine Landowners' Property Acquisition Process for any right of way process. If anybody has any questions about it, we bring this to all public meetings whether we have any right of way concerns or not. I have also Civil Rights Title VI Program information from the Department of Transportation. Again, that's available to pick up. And also some people don't like to speak in public or ask questions in public, so if you want there are envelopes in either entryway if you want to take them with you, it's addressed directly to me. There is a question or a comment card in there, you fill that out, put it in the envelope and it will come directly to the Bridge Program and we'll get your comment from there. There are other public outreach opportunities and I'll

present those in one of our slides coming up. Also, there are notices that people might have seen in the newspaper or may have gotten in the mail if you're an abutting property owner or a local official you may have gotten one of these in the mail. The benefit to this is this is just the meeting announcement information, but it has my contact information as well as the bridge project information number on it. We have sort of a project identification number and a bridge number and I also have my business cards back there. So I just wanted to show you all that if you'd like to take some of that with you when you go.

And I'll go ahead and start with the presentation. So the intent for the meeting from the Department's standpoint really is to update the public on the project activity since the last public meeting, which we had two in 2015. We also want to kind of explain the creation and goals for the Bridge Advisory Committee. And also, Tim will be going through and identifying the rehabilitation and replacement options that are currently being considered. It's not a finite list, it's just our starting position. I would also want to really provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and make comments for further consideration

for the Bridge Advisory Committee and the Department. What we won't be doing at this meeting though is going into very much for specifics on rehabilitation or replacement design, so you won't get a lot of red meat out of this meeting with respect to that because we want to try to provide as much opportunity to have a dialogue between the community and the bridge advisory group.

So a little bit of the project update. As I stated, we had two meetings back in 2015, one was in August and one was in November. Mike Wight was in attendance with me at both of those meetings and we found from the first meeting in August there was a strong sense of preservation and that rehabilitation of the structure was a very important aspect to the community, a very important goal. We came back in the November time frame and it was a different temperature in the room. There was a lot of focus on safety concerns. As you know, it's a narrow bridge and there is a lot of pedestrian activity in the area, so there was a lot of -- a lot of emphasis on trying to improve site safety whether that was a rehabilitation or replacement option was arguable from the sense that we get from that meeting.

Now, since 2015 there has been two

archeological investigations. One was done in the summer of 2015 and that was to try to determine the extent of a 1936 excavation done on the Nevin site and really kind of identify where the outer limits of that site is located. Then they came back in the summer of 2016 to test the other two corners, which would be the northwest corner of the bridge and the southwest corner of the bridge to see if there were any evidence of habitation over there and of course they did find a few things. Tim will go into more detail, but of interest on the northwest corner was an old wigwam foundation and the foundation potentially for the Roundy homestead.

So we took a look at what we got for responses from the two public meetings. It was kind of mixed. And then we took the information that we got from MHPC, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and decided that we really kind of needed to reboot this public process. We had already had two public meetings, but we thought with the environmental or historical and archeological implications and really not having our pulse on the direction from the community we thought we'd open it up and have a more controlled Bridge Advisory Committee process where these folks can represent the

community, we can query them with questions and they can give us ideas and we'll get more of a -- of a flavor from the community standpoint on the needs at this location. So essentially that's why we wanted to form the Bridge Advisory Committee to -- instead of coming back in a big public process like we're doing today, have a more in-depth focus discussion with a smaller group.

So these are essentially the Bridge Advisory Committee goals. These are the kind of goals that I put together back at the onset back in the March or April time frame and it's really to have these folks identify all of the project constraints as best we can, help us to identify the community problems and needs at the site and also to understand, this is important, to understand the National Environmental Policy Act decision-making process, which Tim will go into much more detail on, but there is federal money involved in this project, so we need to take serious consideration of all options and their impacts to the community and to any historic properties that might be out there, so we definitely wanted to walk through with a slow and methodical approach to come into a final conclusion or final alternative. Also, we want to challenge the design team to bring us all

reasonable options and I think they can speak on my behalf that we certainly do want to hear all options out there and make sure when we come back with a preferred alternative that is selected from the Department or Federal Highway's standpoint that we haven't missed something, that there is not an idea in the community that got overlooked, so we really want to get all ideas out on the table.

Let's see. Also, they're going to assist us in the creation of an alternative design matrix, so we're not going to go into too much detail about that tonight, but an alternative design matrix essentially is a spreadsheet of options across the top and impacts along the side and we populate it based upon what we know from engineering standards and from impacts and it will lead us to a path of which is the most or least harmful option. So they're going to help us -- assist us in putting together that design matrix. Also, to support the broader public outreach, which is something we're doing today and maybe help us participate in and then should they be willing to continue this advisory process right through preliminary and final design, which is going to be the stages of the design for the rehabilitation or replacement option once we've come to a preferred

alternative.

I mentioned earlier there is other opportunities for public process and public outreach. Our public -- our Bridge Advisory Committee meetings, they are open to the public. There has been a pretty decent turnout that we've had. If you're interested in attending any of these, please refer to the Blue Hill town website, which should give you the most current meeting dates as well as the meeting minutes are posted on the town website. And also on the town website is a link should you decide to leave a comment, you can click on that link, it will ask you for a little bit of information and it will send your comment directly to me and to Michael Wight, who is in the Bridge Program as well. I then take those comments and bring them to the Bridge Advisory Committee. They're anonymous when they go to the Bridge Advisory Committee and they can be shared with the community, also anonymous, but it's another avenue for you to provide an opinion, comment electronically if you so wish.

Let's see. Also, the Bridge Advisory Committee, they're up here today, but they're also available able in the public. They're around, so if you see one in the grocery store getting groceries by

all means feel free to give them your opinion. And I do promise the Department will -- we'll hold future public meetings especially when we come back to discuss a selected preferred alternative.

So with that, I am going to hand the controls over to Tim Cote, who is going to talk about the existing conditions of the Falls Bridge.

MR. COTE: Thank you, Andy. Thank you, everybody. It's great to see a nice turnout tonight. I'm excited to see the participation here in this project. It's a really interesting bridge and project to be part of and we're appreciative of that.

I really want to cover a couple of things in my part of the presentation. The first is to provide a little bit of background on the bridge itself and primarily its condition because that really provides the foundation for why are we here completing this project, what is it that brought this project forward in MaineDOT's program to have something done. I want to talk a little bit about the site condition, the features that we need to be aware of as we develop this project. We want to talk about the federal laws and regulations that this project needs to be developed in consideration of and then move into some potential options that we'll be evaluating as part of

the project and what that process may look like moving forward.

So I'm going to start here with the discussion of the load rating that our firm is currently working on and I start with this slide and this topic only because it provides an opportunity to talk about the tied arch and its components, which is going to be helpful as we talk about the bridge condition slide later on. So in this slide here you can see that there are several primary components that are part of the tied arch bridge. This bridge is a tied arch and several primary components make up the structural system of tied arches. That primarily includes the orange highlighted arch rail, right. This is one of the main carrying components. And then highlighted in blue is the tie girder. This is sort of like the bow in the bow string, that really holds the arch together and makes the structural system. Additionally, we have these hangers that come down vertically highlighted in yellow that support the bridge deck underneath and the floor beams that generally run underneath the bridge between those hangers, right. So these primary elements, these arch ribs, the tie girders, the hangers and then the floor beams are the primary

structural components of this bridge and they're the ones that we really want to understand the condition of and the load capacity. So that's why as part of this project we're taking into consideration the inspection data available, but we're also looking at the capacity of these elements because if we find that the bridge does need to be strengthened we would need to work that into any type of bridge rehabilitation options to evaluate. So we're currently working on that load rating analysis now. We're going to see how much capacity, how heavy a vehicle can this bridge take. It's important to know and we'll know that. We're not there yet. This is a fairly detailed evaluation that we're working through and we should have the results in the next few months. So that's part one of understanding the existing bridge.

The second part is looking at existing conditions and every other year or every two years MaineDOT completes a bridge inspection for all of the bridges in the state's inventory and they look at several primary components of the bridge. They look at the superstructure, right. In this case, that's the tied arch component. They look at what we call the substructure or the foundation supporting the

bridge. And they also look at the bridge deck, which is the roadway surface that vehicles drive on. And all of those receive a condition rating that helps us engineers understand the condition of that, right. So when we look at the superstructure for this bridge the last inspection that was completed in 2016 rated the superstructure as being in fair condition, right. So that's a mediocre type condition. It's somewhere between poor and satisfactory condition, right. So that's the middle of the road rating-wise. And that's some of the reasons why the superstructure received this rating is there is a number of cracks in the concrete. They don't show up too well in this particular picture, but you can see the cracking and the staining on the surface is indicative of the fact that this concrete is deteriorating and is in need of some repairs.

As we look at other portions of the tied arches and another photo of the arch rib down at the roadway surface and as you can see the blowup here on the right-hand side there are some rather large cracks that go right through the top of that arch rib. The reason for that is we believe the reinforcing steel that's encased within that concrete has corroded. When reinforcing steel corrodes it

expands significantly and those forces actually push the concrete apart and what we're seeing here is actually cracking develop just from those forces pushing the concrete apart from the inside out. So those are some things to be aware of. And also when we look at the tie girder, this is the west side of the bridge, we see what we call spalling or the areas of the surface of the concrete is falling away. And we also see some pretty extensive cracking and moisture throughout. So this tells us that the superstructure certainly is in need of some repair and is what led to the fair rating that it received.

Perhaps the part that most people are familiar with is the roadway deck, right, what you drive across every day if you go across this bridge. The deck is rated in poor condition. This is the lower end of the condition spectrum and that is because we see there is large areas of cracking along the bridge deck primarily along the center line of the roadway and also near the abutments. When we go underneath the bridge though it's even more pronounced. So the view that most people don't get often is this view from underneath and you can see that there is extensive cracking. The reinforcing steel has actually been completely exposed and is

corroding. This puts the bridge deck in the poor condition category.

The third and final component that I want to talk about the bridge condition rating on is the substructure and there are several parts of the substructure I want to talk about this evening. The first is this retaining wall system that supports the roadway. One of the things we know is there is large tidal variations at this bridge and we actually see that water actually goes right through this abutment or, excuse me, right through the roadway underneath the roadway on the north approach of the bridge and literally squirts out the stones on the other side. And this is because over time those tidal forces have penetrated through those materials, they've washed the fine grain materials out of the fill and has basically left a series of voids that allows this water to pass through. This can eventually lead to movement of the stones that make up the retaining wall, can cause settlement of the roadway. It's something that would need to be addressed as part of the project. There is ways to do that, we just need to understand that.

Additionally, on the substructure if we move towards the parts that actually support the bridge,

right, so these are the foundations that support the bridge roadway. We have the stonework underneath and then we have these concrete caps. So this concrete cap here is the top portion over the granite and you can see the top is heavily cracked. This is the tied arch up here that rests right on top of it. There is extensive cracking and deterioration of this concrete cap and it needs some significant repair as well. And then when we look at the stonework, we actually see there are these large gaps that started developing in the stones because they're actually beginning to shift. And the reason we believe that that is occurring is this particular abutment, this is the south abutment here, is not entirely founded on bedrock. So there is a layer of soil between the bedrock and the stone foundation that over time these currents have washed that material away and led to movement of the abutments. So these findings here put the substructure for the bridge in a poor condition as well. So these are all things that the team needs to be aware of and thinking of as any type of bridge rehabilitation is considered. We'll have to work those into the scope of work. Also, on the top of the abutment here, this is the roadway side, you can see the extensive cracking at the top of the

concrete, so this portion here that we were just looking at is also -- this is the top of that concrete and you can see there is some significant deterioration. All of these are things that could be, you know, resolved as part of a rehabilitation project, but we just need to understand what the process would be, how that would be constructed and what that might mean in terms of construction and time frame, costs, impacts to the natural environment, et cetera. So that's a little bit about the bridge.

Let's talk about the site because there is a lot of interesting things going on at this particular site and let's start with archeology. There are two or actually three archeological sites at this location. So the first is in the northeast quadrant, what we refer to as the Nevin site, and this is the most significant site in the project area. This is a prehistoric site dating back about 4,200 years. And a lot of these coastal sites over time because sea levels have risen over the course of hundreds of years have been washed away due to that sea level rise, so this is actually one of the very few remaining coastal sites of this type in -- certainly of the type in the State of Maine and for that reason

this site is really significant. It's eligible for National Historic Register. And this site was actually discovered shortly after the bridge was built in 1936-1937. It was a fairly significant archeological excavation that was completed here to assess what's there, but as part of that excavation they did not take all of the materials out and bring it somewhere else, you know, a lot of those artifacts remain there today and for that reason major impacts to this site really aren't permissible. And we use the term major, but in this particular case adding anything more than several inches to a foot of fill, you know, within a couple of feet within the existing toe of embankment is probably not acceptable in this particular case. So what that informs us as the project team is that any significant work beyond the existing toe of the embankment here in the northeast quadrant is probably not permissible.

On the other side of the roadway we have two sites of significance, the Luskey site and the Roundy site. The Luskey site is a prehistoric site. There was the wigwam foundation that was discovered last summer that Andy referred to. This dates back about 2,000 years. So there is a wigwam foundation and a hearth there. In addition to that, nearby, just a

little bit further to the west is the Roundy site. And the Roundy site is the old homestead of John Roundy, who was believed to be the first settler of Blue Hill, which dates back to about 1762 to 1771. So these sites are also significant. They're not quite as significant or sensitive as the Nevin site and for that reason we can actually do a little bit of work on the west side of the roadway, it would just mean that any disturbance there would require either an archeological excavation and recovery of those artifacts or protection and covering those over so they're not damaged and disturbed if the work is temporary in nature such as a temporary detour. So we have a little bit more flexibility on what could happen on the west side of the roadway, but it is certainly something that we would need to be aware of as we work through this project.

There is also historic conditions here. The Blue Hill Falls Bridge is part of a historic district and to have a historic district you need three historic properties. And in this particular location the historic properties are the Wakonda residence, the Arcady residence and the Falls Bridge itself. All three of these are historic structures that are eligible for the National Register and the three of

them comprise the historic district on this project. So if we change the Falls Bridge and we alter its historic nature that is something that would need to be mitigated because now it affects the entire historic district and it's something we need to be aware of as we advance this project.

There is a number of environmental site constraints. We have natural resources including coastal wetlands, so the area between the high tide and low tide lines, that's called the coastal wetland area, impact or disturbance of that will need to be addressed. We have a number of fish species, several of which are endangered species, so Atlantic salmon, alewives, eels, elvers all could potentially be traveling through the bridge opening and swimming in and out of Salt Pond. They haven't identified all of those species at present, but there is the possibility they could be in this area so they need to be treated as though they are. Shellfish and waterfowl, scallops, soft shell clams, over wintering eider duck population, a number of species use this area. It's really a biologically diverse area. Marine mammals, there is a number of seal haul-outs nearby that we are aware of as well as the Northern Long-Eared Bat, which is a threatened species that

affects when tree clearing can occur as part of the project. So all of these are environmental considerations that need to be taken into consideration.

In addition to the archeological, historic, environmental aspects there is also some things just about the structure itself that's interesting. The first we want to talk about is hydraulics. A couple of interesting points here, the freeboard, what we call freeboard on the structure is the distance from the bottom of the structure to the highest water level. In this particular case, that's about 6 feet and that's okay for today. I'll jump to the bottom of the slide here, but we recognize that, you know, sea levels may rise over time and as we develop this project we want to be cognizant of that and if we're looking for a long-term solution here, if we can raise the existing bridge or raise a new bridge higher, provide more freeboard that's something that the project would look to do or see if it's practical to do that. But the thought is at a minimum the existing freeboard would be maintained at 6 feet, all right, we wouldn't want to decrease that or go any lower than that. We also notice with the existing bridge opening that it's only about 100 feet wide and

about 6 feet deep at low tide and we know that's a really large impoundment. Salt Pond is a fairly large body of water. It's about a mile -- one square mile in area and when we have that volume of water coming in and out with the tide it creates this hydraulic feature that I think folks are very familiar with, right. We have high flow velocity being passed through a very tight constricted opening and it creates these rapids through the area that really generate a lot of interest. It's good for the biologic diversity of the ocean. It's very poor feeding eider ducks and things of that nature. But it also draws people that are sight seers, recreational users such as kayakers and other water sports and it really becomes a draw for the community and you folks certainly know this. In addition to those water sports there is bird watching, there is sight seeing and then there is bicyclists and pedestrians that just walk across the bridge on a daily basis, so this particular feature brings a lot of interest to the project.

I want to touch briefly on subsurface soil conditions. As part of the project earlier on this spring they completed some geotechnical investigations. They actually drilled down through

the roadway through the fill on the approaches and went down to bedrock and that helps us as engineers to understand the characteristics of the soil that support the roadway, where the bedrock is, how deep it is, the competency of the bedrock, but it also tells us things and confirms our beliefs with respect to the washed out fill on the north side of the roadway that's allowing the water just to pass underneath, right, those samples confirm that, yes, in fact, there is -- there are voids. It also confirmed that on the south abutment we have a layer of soil between at least a portion of that south abutment and the bedrock and when you take high flow velocities and soil that leads to what we call scour or just the washing away of the materials from beneath the structure and that is important information that we will take into consideration.

Right of way and utilities. There is a 66 foot wide right of way on this project and the roadway actually meanders within the right of way. And what I mean by that is that the roadway and bridge is not always centered within the right of way, right. So depending on where you are along the roadway, you might be a little bit to the right or a little bit to the left of the center line of the

state's right of way here. Sometimes in some locations that may work to our advantage and in some locations that may not. Our goal will be to try to stay within the state's right of way to the extent practical whatever the solution may be. That's not always possible, but the state does have a defined right of way process for dealing with those situations. Additionally, there are aerial utility lines that cross over from the east side on the north end of the bridge to the west side and you can see they actually go overhead about 10 to 15 feet west of the existing bridge. Those utilities will likely need to be adjusted or changed in some manner as part of the project because they are very close to the bridge and whether the bridge is replaced or rehabilitated having construction workers and equipment in very close proximity to electrical lines is not desirable. So some utility adjustments will likely be required and, again, the Department does have a defined utility coordination process to make sure that is worked through thoughtfully and we minimize the disturbance as a result of that work.

A couple of facts about the bridge. It's 100 feet long from abutment to abutment, so the main span, the tied arch itself is about 100 feet long and

we've got 100 feet of approach structure or approach causeway on the north side and about 30 feet on the south side. And the curb-to-curb width here is about 20 feet and I think most folks recognize it's a fairly narrow bridge. It actually matches pretty well into the roadway, which is actually a little bit more narrow. The roadway pavement is about 20 feet wide, so it's pretty consistent across the corridor. We do recognize that the bridge width is more narrow than current state standards. So current state standards would say that the roadway -- a new structure might be 24 feet wide for roadway width, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the existing bridge can't stay 20 feet long -- 20 feet wide, rather. And the reason for that is we look at the crash history and the traffic at the site is about 1,730 vehicles per day and we look at the crash data and this is a database of reported accidents that occurred at the site and we don't see a significant history of accidents over the last three year period that would indicate that the narrow bridge is creating a condition that at least has resulted in accidents at the project site. So, you know, as engineers and working with the Department we have the ability to rationalize and take a judgement-based

approach and say, okay, this bridge is more narrow than modern standards but perhaps that's acceptable and, right, and that's something we would evaluate as part of the project.

A few miscellaneous features. So here we've got the right of way line shown in red. The green represents the existing embankment for the roadway and the brown areas here represent some wide gravel shoulders. So on the north side we have these wide gravel shoulders on both sides which is used as an informal parking area. Additionally, we've got some granite steps that go down to the west side of the bridge at the north abutment and also a more informal footpath to the water on the northeast side. We'll be working with the Bridge Advisory Committee to understand if these features should be maintained, perpetuated, modified in some manner as part of the project.

So what does all of this information mean, the bridge condition, the historic, archeological, all of those things, those are all things that need to be evaluated and considered and worked together with a couple federal regulations and processes that dictate advancing these projects, right, and then regulatory constraints that we need to work with.

These all fall under the National Environmental Policy Act or what we commonly refer to as NEPA. And NEPA is essentially an umbrella policy meant to ensure that all of these individual federal regulations are properly adhered to as part of project. And the ones that apply to this particular project are highlighted in green and we'll talk about those as part of the -- as part this presentation. But essentially, NEPA requires that we develop and analyze a reasonable range of alternatives, so it means that we can't come in and say we just want to do X and evaluate just that. It means we need to come in and evaluate X, Y, and Z and then evaluate those against the range of environmental effects, right, and the effects that those have on archeological, environmental, historical, et cetera, and we analyze each of those options and what the impacts are. And then where we find that there are impacts the team works to minimize those impacts and if they can't be minimized, the team would have to mitigate the adverse impacts, right, and we can minimize them by minimizing or just avoiding the impacts all together. In some cases, we may -- that may dictate that we repair or preserve the bridge. In some cases, if that's not possible compensation

may be required and compensation is not necessarily monetary, it could be recording and documenting the existing bridge if it were to be replaced and putting up some signs and placards to document the history of site. So there is a process and we're working through this and we'll talk about that a bit more. In addition, there is a requirement for a public involvement process that's part of the meeting here tonight, the involvement of the Bridge Advisory Committee is part of the NEPA process. And then there is also there compensation with various agencies including the Maine Historic Preservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and other parties that regulate the resources at this particular site and then the document -- we have to document the outcomes. And what this means is when we follow through this process, this process and the requirement that we adhere to this can influence the outcome of the project and this is one case where that may be so.

So let's talk about the individual regulations that NEPA is covering in this particular case. So the first is Section 4(f). And forgive me, but I am going to read this because I don't memorize it, but 4(f) essentially stipulates that the Federal

Highway Administration and other DOT agencies cannot approve the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges or public and private historical sites unless the following conditions apply. And I'm going to pause there to say the historical site in this particular case is the Falls Bridge, which kicks us into the 4(f) category. So they apply -- the following conditions apply: There is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of land and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use or the Administration determines that the use of property will have a de minimis or a trivial or minor impact. So that's a requirement that we need to adhere to and we need to work through that as part of this project, right, and understand what are the ways that we could -- what are the feasible and prudent measures to preserving the existing bridge, do these prudent, feasible measures exist and can those be built in a, you know, are they reasonable alternatives and that needs to be evaluated as part of this.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. As part of the historic nature of this bridge FHWA with MaineDOT will be working with

the Maine State Historic Preservation Office and others to understand any changes to the bridge and whether they create any adverse effect on the project. And that could be rehabilitation to the bridge, changing the railing system, now you've made the bridge look a little different, that's an adverse effect, and the parties would need to get together to determine, you know, is that, in fact, an adverse effect and, if so, you know, how should that be mitigated, how should that be addressed, is that reasonable, is that acceptable? Examples of adverse effects are takes, removal, demolition and these can also include atmospheric, audible and visual elements as well. If you change the appearance of it, you know, that can affect it. And then obviously change if you -- if you take a bridge from a highway structure and convert it into something completely different, you know, that may be considered a change of use. So where adverse effects cannot be reasonably avoided mitigation of the effects is negotiated by MaineDOT, FHWA, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers in order to determine, you know, what's the right path forward in that particular case.

And the last one is natural resources. There is a number of federal laws that regulate natural resources including Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal and then the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. These are really geared towards protecting habitats for those species and not doing activities, either permanent impacts or temporary impacts, and activities that might damage the habitat or actually injure the species, the fish, the seals, et cetera, themselves. And it essentially requires that those impacts be avoided and if they can't be avoided that they be minimized. So an example of this is if there is a temporary bridge that's built here and there is fish going through the waterway, we know there are certain times of year that fish spawn and they just may require that that in-water work to construct a temporary bridge occur during a certain time of year when we know the fish are less likely to be there and they're less sensitive to the disturbances, so that's an example of how those impacts could be avoided or mitigated.

So in understanding that we need to evaluate the range of alternatives, we've been working with the Bridge Advisory Committee to understand what is

that range of options, what should be on the table. Right now, there are three primary alternatives that we are evaluating. We have actually not started them because it was just the last Bridge Advisory Committee two or three weeks ago that we actually talked about this. You know, up to now we've been talking about a lot of the background information that we've just shared up until this point, but the three options that have been identified thus far is bridge rehabilitation, right. So we're looking at ways to preserve the existing bridge in a similar fashion how it is today. And then bridge replacement with either a traditional girder bridge similar to a lot of the modern highway bridges that you would see where you have a concrete girder or a steel girder supporting the concrete roadway deck. That particular option would have esthetic enhancement. We recognize the, you know, the esthetic value that the tied arch has and the thought is that any girder bridge we have would have esthetic enhancements to have it reflect the nature of the community that it's within. And then thirdly, a tied -- excuse me, secondly, for the bridge rehabilitation a tied arch bridge, a modern version of what's there today either constructed with steel or concrete, you know, that

may be, you know, a reasonable alternative here. And then thirdly, looking at some other alternatives such as what if we rerouted 175, Route 175, so that instead of going across the Falls Bridge it cut to the west, crossed over Salt Pond where Salt Pond is much more narrow and connected back into 172 and then perhaps the Falls Bridge could be repurposed into some other use. And these things are obviously not fully developed yet, but that's a concept that the Bridge Advisory Committee, the Department and HNTB will be evaluating together.

On all of these we're working with the Bridge Advisory Committee to help develop them, talking about the esthetics and the particular features that would be incorporated and all of the options as we develop them would be advanced through that NEPA process. So we'll be looking at for each given option how can we minimize impacts, avoid them where possible and how does that pan out to the entire option as a whole as we evaluate it. And then at the conclusion of this process once we've worked through the evaluation of the alternatives, the iteration of the various options, at the conclusion of the process a preferred alternative will be developed and presented back here to the public.

So as part of the evaluation, what are we going to be looking at? Well, certainly we'll be looking at all of the things we talked about this evening, the existing condition of the bridge, archeological, historical, impacting the existing hydraulic opening, the goal is not to change that. We recognize that the draw brings value to the community, so the goal will be to maintain that hydraulic feature that exists today. And certainly looking at cost and engineering needs, right. MaineDOT has a budget. They've got lots of bridges to maintain. Cost is a factor. Engineering need is a factor. So if we put a bridge in there there needs to be an engineering need for the type of bridge that's put in, right. So it would be perhaps great to put in a large suspension bridge to span across this whole opening, but that's not really engineering -- is not necessary from an engineering need, there is other ways that that could be accomplished like, you know, a smaller tied arch, right. So that's part of the fact, that's part of the equation we need to be evaluating, you know, the reasonable range of alternatives in this particular case and so that's what's meant by engineering need here.

And the last thing we're working with the Bridge Advisory Committee on is traffic management. You know, for some period of time the bridge will be closed whether it's a rehab or a replacement and thought needs to be given to how we maintain connectivity for the community. So there are two options here that are being evaluated. The first is an on-site temporary bridge and in this particular case it would be a one-lane bridge most likely because we want to really minimize impacts. It would be a one-lane bridge with a traffic signal at either end and the bridge would have to be on the west side of the bridge because we know that we can't impact the Nevin site on the east side, but we recognize that there are temporary impacts associated with that. It's going to require tree clearing. It's going to have property impacts. Those things need to be evaluated and discussed, you know, with the Bridge Advisory Committee and receive input from the community. The other option is to close the bridge during construction and have an off-site detour. And I recognize this may be a little hard for folks in the back to read, but the potential detour route that we're looking at currently we'd use state routes. There has been some discussion about possibly putting

a detour on town roads, but that would need to be coordinated with towns and agreements established. We're not there yet. So at this point, we're showing you a detour that shows traveling on state routes. So if you're coming from Brooklin at the bottom of the map here and going to the intersection of Route 172 and Route 175 your original travel time is about 14 minutes, about 9 miles. If you detour onto Route 172, you know, that's a fairly similar travel time. It's 3 minutes longer and about 2 miles longer. It's a little bit more of a challenge if you want to go from the very south abutment of the Falls Bridge and for whatever reason you want to come back up to the north end and you have to make the full loop, you know, that's where the travel times become a little bit longer. It's about 31 minutes to go from abutment to abutment driving this loop. So we're still very early in this process in evaluating what the right solution is. Certainly part of the equation is how long would this be in place for, right. Are we talking two months? Are we talking a year? Are we talking two years? The team is not there yet. We haven't even determined exactly what the options are. So these are part of the evaluations that we'll be completing and working with

the Bridge Advisory Committee to understand a little bit better because that will certainly affect the decision on this, but we at least wanted to share the current thinking to perhaps get a little bit of feedback here this evening. Emergency responders are also something to be aware of as is school bussing routes and things of that nature. All of these are coordinated in detail with the communities that are most affected.

So with that, that concludes my part of the presentation. I'm going to hand it back over to Andrew.

MR. LATHE: Thank you, Tim.

MR. COTE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. LATHE: The only smart thing I did was hiring him on the project. I want to talk a little bit briefly about what we did before, but I just wanted to make note that I see people taking pictures, but we'll make this presentation available and get it posted on the Blue Hill website, the town website, so if your pictures don't come out great, I can get you a PDF copy of it. We'll give it to Jim in the next day or two here, so if you want to grab a copy of it.

I just want to talk about what we'll be doing moving forward. As you probably heard from Tim, we're now entering the really involved engineering stage of this project in this process and it will take -- it will take months of looking at options and looking at constructability concerns, traffic concerns and to finally come to a conclusion as to what the best alternative is moving forward, so it's likely this process will carry on well into the fall and perhaps even into the early winter of 2018. As part of that process, I mentioned earlier we're going to create a design matrix for all of the different alternatives and from that design matrix Federal Highway and the Department of Transportation will assess the rehabilitation of the existing bridge and the other alternatives to determine whether it meets the purpose and need of the project and if the alternatives create an impact or an adverse affect on the bridge's historic integrity. Also, Federal Highway and MDOT will select an alternative from that design matrix that will best balance the environmental, cultural, social and it's written behind here, I'm sure. Social, economic impacts, transportation needs, also considering cost, constructability, traffic, utilities and public

input. And then we'll return at a minimum to present to the town the selected alternative likely to be sometime in early 2018.

At this time, I'm going to hit it back over to Jim and we're going to open it up to public comment. As Jim had said earlier, lots of you, lots of them, only one of her, so if you get an opportunity Jim and I will call on you and if you could state your name at first, please. And if you didn't get a chance, if you could put your name on the sign-in sheet so that she's got the correct spelling for the record it would be great. And I also ask the Bridge Advisory Committee too for her sake if you have a comment to tell her your name as well. And I don't mean to be rude, but I might interrupt people at times just to get that information again because I sometimes forget. So with that, Jim, I'll hand it back to you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Sure. Just for a brief moment, the rest of the meeting is all yours, so please make your comments along the guidelines that Andrew just gave you. And also I would ask the committee as the conversation moves on you may have questions to fire back to some of our constituents that would help clarify some of the

conversation, so feel free to do that. So that said, the rest of the meeting is open to you and it will only end when you're exhausted or the questions are exhausted. So it's yours. Yes, in the back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Charlotte Weir. I'm here with her Ann Luskey and she probably signed us on the paper, but I am a resident of the Wakonda House and I remember last year when they did the archeological dig. We actually helped dig it too. We actually helped a little bit. And I'm just a little bit concerned about the environmental impact and the archeological impact of the option of a temporary bridge. And I'm aware and I understand that there aren't really any great options. We're kind of in a kind of a hole here that we can't really dig ourselves out of, but I'm very concerned about how it will affect the habitat of the species and endangered fish and birds and everything that live in the Salt Pond. So are there going to be measures like if we do a temporary bridge, are there going to be rules that you can't, you know, harm any of the species that live in the Salt Pond or that you can't litter or you have to be very careful about the waste that you put out when you're possibly building a temporary bridge or doing any of the reconstruction?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Maybe I can give just one response and then others who have been asking that same question. The idea is to minimize the adverse impact and my understanding does not mean that we can necessarily eliminate all adverse impact, so I guess having the sensitivity brought to, you know, coming out of our planning process is at least the best thing we can do initially and then it will come out at the public -- in the public as to whether those mitigations are good enough and what kind of harm, if any, would take place.

MR. LATHE: And there are very specific federal regulations as to what can occur in the water itself and in the watershed and the environment around it that we adhere to. In particular, this is an environment for Atlantic salmon, short-nose/long-nose sturgeon, so there are certain seasons that we can be in the water or not be in the water. Inland it's more you can't be in the water until -- you can only be in the water from July 15 to September 30. On the coast it's a bit different, it's like from November to early April. Also in regards to other environmental impacts, Tim talked briefly about the bat issue where clearing would have to take place at a specific time of year. Also like

with marine mammals, a lot of times when there is construction that's going to be in the water they actually have marine mammal observers to make sure that there is nothing in the area when there is activity going on, so there are a number of different measures that's set up by the federal agencies to protect those resources.

Now, specifically the archeological resources that are there, there are -- Tim mentioned that we're looking at two different possibilities, which I think MHPC will probably agree with both of them, MHPC is the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and that is if there is any disturbance out there the potentiality of covering those resources so that they're not damaged, but there may be concern about crushing, you know, if something is not buried deep enough, so they would be even on board with a complete removal of those resources, a cataloging and removal of those resources so they're not there any longer or completely avoid it entirely. So those are issues that we as a group are trying to navigate in addition to HNTB. So I don't have an answer for you as of yet, but they certainly will be part of our analysis as we're looking at it. And I didn't get your last name.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Um, Luskey.
MR. LATHE: Luskey.
THE REPORTER: What was your first name?
AUDIENCE MEMBER: My first name is Charlotte.
THE REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.
MR. LATHE: Thank you.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Yes, right here.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Steve Wright, Falls Bridge Road. I sent you some information on the Wickford Bridge -- Hussey Bridge in Rhode Island. Its restoration has taken about a year. It's cost about 3 million. It's roughly twice the size of our bridge. Have you looked into that at all?
MR. LATHE: We've looked at the photographs and we contacted the DOT agency itself. Very different set of dynamics there with regards to the location and the resources that are there. I think this group would admit that there are a lot of hurdles here to try to get around with all of the archeological, historical and environmental concerns. So to look at that particular project and compare it directly with this one is not necessarily a fair appraisal. We certainly are looking at

rehabilitation similar to what they did. I think they draped and did one whole side first and they maintained traffic on the bridge and then they draped another whole side and maintained traffic, so there wasn't a --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) No, there were periods in which it was completely closed.

MR. LATHE: It was completely closed?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) At least two periods where it was completely closed.

MR. LATHE: I thought they had maintained for some duration traffic on the bridge itself.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) For some duration, yes.

MR. LATHE: So with this particular project one of the things we have kind of looked at is we wouldn't be able to maintain traffic on the bridge whether it was a rehabilitation project because the deck itself would likely have to be removed entirely and there is no more driving surface. I do have your information and I did reach out to that DOT. I haven't spent -- I'll be honest with you, I haven't spent a lot of time on that particular topic, but, yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) There was

a lot of concrete deterioration on that bridge and there were additional features such as electric lighting, which were native to the original installation.

MR. LATHE: Right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) And so there were considerations on that bridge that you don't have on this bridge that probably would have added to the expense and won't be accruing to this project.

MR. LATHE: There were, I think, more reasonable detour routes around that detour location as well. That's down in a marine area as I recall.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Steve Wright.) Yeah, the detour was -- we experienced the detour and it was interesting. It wasn't really very well signed. But in any event, it was not a short detour.

MR. LATHE: Yup. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Donna Constantinople and I am listening to the presentation and it occurred to me I live on the Mill Pond, which I found out from my tax assessment is the Salt Pond and I face the causeway bridge, which is the other bridge which has never been mentioned in any of the presentations or notes that at least I've been able

to follow. And it all of a sudden occurred to me that any work that will be done on the bridge is going to have to use the causeway bridge for you to bring in heavy equipment, et cetera, and as I gaze at that almost on a daily basis I note it too doesn't look great.

MR. LATHE: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Donna Constantinople.) I don't know whether you've assessed it and it struck me that once this project is completed a lot is going to be coming over that very narrow somewhat crumbling causeway bridge, so I wanted to bring up that issue because it seemed to me even going over to Deer Isle where you see now that that causeway bridge has been redone because they did all of that work to buttress the Deer Isle Bridge, so that little causeway bridge is a pretty important piece of this project and I just have not heard anyone address it.

MR. LATHE: No, that's a fair point. And to explain how projects come into Project Development in the Bridge Program, Tim had gone over the condition ratings of the bridge, more of the higher -- the higher view have talked about specifics about the substructure and the superstructure and the deck being in failed or poor condition. It's done on a

rating system of 0 to 9 and when the inspectors who go over there every two years to look at a bridge sometimes -- we have some bridges that are a yearly inspections, but different elements of the bridge get rated from 0 to 9, 0 being closed, 9 being brand new, and as those inspection numbers start to drop then the bridges come into our Work Plan. So it's likely that the condition of the causeway bridge hasn't deteriorated to the point that they were put into our Work Plan and our Work Plan usually tries to take a look at something that needs attention in the next 10 years. So --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Donna Constantinople.) Well, it may not now, but are you looking to bring equipment, trucks, all of your construction employees, et cetera, over the causeway bridge to get to the next bridge?

MR. LATHE: Well, it's likely. There are two access points, obviously there is the north and southbound side, and it's a very valid point. We certainly can take a look at that bridge and have some comfort level, whether the wearing surface needs to be improved or improved when the project is done as well because, you know, it will take some beating as construction activity is going across it, but it's

a very good point. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Back there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you. Christopher Marks. I live off the Falls Bridge Road adjacent to the Salt Pond. Repurposing I think is the verb used of the bridge as one of the alternatives. What does that mean and what are examples of that?

MR. LATHE: We're not sure what repurposing means yet, but and I'll tell you what my explanation of repurposing would be. If the Department were to put a new bridge in in a new location to reconnect 175 to 172 it would not want to be in possession of the Falls Bridge likely any longer. We would want to take it out of our inventory so that we're not maintaining that bridge. So we would want there to be an entity out there that would want to take on the responsibility of that bridge. The Department would still by its mandate inspect that bridge every two years, but repurposing could be no longer any motor vehicle traffic going over it. It could be an observation platform. It could be a bike path. It could be any number of things, but they would want there to be to a willing entity to take over responsibility of maintaining that bridge because once the Department of Transportation decided that it

was in a condition that was dire and needs to be removed it's really no longer the responsibility of the Department's, it would be the responsibility of whoever wanted to take over that structure. So repurposing can be any number of things providing there is an interested party that wants to maintain it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Christopher Marks.) So I guess as part of that alternative of repurposing there is a fairly significant potential burden placed on the local political community and fiscal community to pay for such a reployment as well; is that a fair -- I think all of the implications of that alternative.

MR. LATHE: Correct.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Christopher Marks.) As attractive as it may be, someone has to, as you said, needs to carry the cost and the rehabilitation so that is serves its purpose safely.

MR. LATHE: Yeah. And if there is an opportunity that -- because the Department really wants to try to connect all forms of modes of transport and transfer and transportation and so we look at all sorts of intermodal opportunities whether it's rail or bussing or ferry services, so if there

something that's advantageous there for a travel corridor for bikes or pedestrians, the Department may be willing to go a certain distance, but I don't know what that is. We have not gone that far into this process, but my understanding is the Department would not want to be the owner of the bridge if we've replaced it with a new alternative.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Christopher Marks.) Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Noel Stookey and I live with my wife Betty in Blue Hill Falls. And as many of you know, I was the -- I am an advocate for building a new bridge in a new location preserving the value both historically and environmentally of the current bridge recognizing that, in fact, it would have to have new ownership, as Andrew suggested, but also understanding that governments have many different ways in which they can contribute to communities from the historic society to preservation to -- I think that that is one area that could be explored for the possible support -- financial support and maintenance of what we consider to be a very valuable part of this community. However, that said, I am a pragmatist and while we hear numbers ranging somewhere between 4.5

and 7 million dollars for either the repair or the replacement of the bridge at its current location, the third alternative sort of begs the question, well, what kind of price tag do we have for a third alternative. You did mention X, Y and Z, so consider that the alternative bridge location might be Z, how do we achieve an understanding of what the comparative cost would be? And then it seems to me that we have to weigh its emotional attraction as well as just the practical aspect of who is going to pay for it. And then there of course are the issues of the abutting neighbors who would be not necessarily persuaded to contribute their property for a relocated bridge. However, all of those issues seem to be unimportant unless we know how much it's going to cost. If we have 4.5 for the rehabilitation and we have 7 for a brand new bridge and we don't know what the third one is how can we make an effective choice?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Well, I think it is, at least as I understand it, the task before us is to look at that alternative and put some prices to it ultimately. So it's not like we're going to kind of hold that out as a fail safe or anything like that, so I think anything that we're

exploring as an option will be assessed along the same lines, apples and apples.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) Great.

MR. LATHE: Yeah, we'll put together, you know, a comparative cost analysis. And just so you know, it's not just X, Y and Z, we look at A through W as well if there are viable options. If there is anything out there for an option that we -- we'd like to hear from the community and have the Bridge Advisory and the DOT consider.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) Well, you did mention ferry.

MR. LATHE: I did mention ferry. I did.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Ruth.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Ruth Miller.) What's your plan to take the --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Name.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, sorry, Ruth Miller, South Blue Hill. For the other option, I mean, unless you plan to take the land by eminent domain, you know, maybe it would be wise to speak with the abutters to see how they feel about that before you even bother looking at the cost.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) The red shirt. The gentleman in the red shirt, did you have

your hand up?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Greg Bush.) I did before. I am a new resident of South Blue Hill and --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Could you speak up, please?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sure. My name is Greg Bush. I'm a new resident of South Blue Hill and I come from Miami where I struggled with public waterfront for a number of years. And I come here and I see a lot of potential out of this area, but I'm also looking at the large context and I see, for example, the roadways are unsafe for bikers and walkers and I think that's an important issue that needs to be brought to your attention and I'm sure you're aware of it. And I also see -- I'm very much in favor of the possibility of another roadway and preserving that bridge as a recreational bridge. Chattanooga, as you may know, does something like that and it did a lot for the area. But I'm curious because there is so little access to the Salt Pond by the public as I understand, there was a lot that was foreclosed if I'm not mistaken by the city and I'd like to know if there is more information about that in that part of the plan.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Well, I could brief you a little bit on that. You're right about those properties being available. We haven't organized a plan around that nor is it necessarily part of a feature of this alternative route. Obviously, when those considerations go before the engineers and it goes on the table, but there is no -- nothing happening right now in that regard.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Greg Bush.) I guess I'm just urging that there be more attention to those kind of issues when you're planning.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Scott.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Scott Miller, South Blue Hill. I have a process question, which is in April I think MaineDOT showed kind of a matrix -- was talking to the committee about a matrix that had all of the evaluation criteria and alternatives in columns and my understanding at the time was that that was something you were encouraging the Bridge Advisory Committee to come up with. I thought it made a lot of sense to sort of lay out what all of the evaluation criteria would be, cost, time, you know, the impacts on all of the environmental history, et cetera, but it doesn't seem like that's happened yet and I think I saw in your last slide that you guys

were going to do that. So I guess my process question is where does that stand, you know, has it been done, when are we going to have an opportunity to see it and have input on it? Or, again, your last slide sort of suggested the next public meeting is when you select an alternative and you're going to unveil it, which strikes me as being kind of the end of the process rather than -- instead of the point at which public can have input.

MR. LATHE: Publicly --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) No, I don't I think that's our -- our understanding is really that we're really at the cusp of the -- of kind of construction that matrix around the various options that are evolving, so I think Tim mentioned that as part of the process just a little while ago. So you're right, it hasn't surfaced as a tool yet, but once we get evaluations on the options then he said we would set those in that context -- that matrix context and I'm certain that that will be available during this next phase of Bridge Advisory Committee meetings not at the end alone; is that right?

MR. LATHE: Yeah. It will -- to get some context, we've had about seven meetings, six or seven meetings --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Eight all together.

MR. LATHE: Eight. I think six of them were all very focused on specific information that we force fed this poor group up here and so we haven't -- we didn't spend much time yet on design and filling out that matrix, which they're going to help us to populate and as a group we'll take a look at how those issues weigh across the different options. And to be fair, this meeting is a little bit ahead of where we wanted to be in that we wanted to make sure that we reached out to the community before, you know, the end of the summer and when I said that there will be one more meeting in which we show a preferred alternative there will be at least one more meeting when we unveil an alternative. What I've said to this group as well is if there is a need for additional public meetings during this process, we're more than happy to do that. So I don't want to leave you the impression that this is the only opportunity for the public to hear or speak out. I indicated that there are a number of options for you to actually reach the Bridge Advisory Committee as well, but at the very least there will be an additional public meeting or more as is warranted by

the Bridge Advisory Committee. Yes, that tool for the design matrix hasn't been, you know, really released. It will be available to the public. There is nothing that we're doing behind doors here, so that information will be provided. We're just not in the position to give it to put it out yet, so.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm Gary Loft, South Blue Hill. You were talking earlier about pedestrian traffic on the bridge and around the bridge, are you going to be -- well, where does the bridge start and stop? Are you going to be addressing the area on the south side up to the top of the hill where Arcady is and on the hill the other way, the north side? And how wide because there is no shoulders there and people that are walking now or riding bikes have to ride in the roadway or walk on the road.

MR. LATHE: We have some limitations as to how much of that roadway, especially on the north end because of the northeast corner the impacts to the Nevin site. Tim mentioned earlier that we'll look at trying to raise that bridge profile as much as practicable, whether it's a rehabilitation or a replacement. But at a minimum, we won't make the freeboard appearance any worse than the existing

conditions, but what happens is as soon as you raise something a foot you have to chase that all the way out to the extents of the approaches. Typically in a bridge project we don't go much more than 100 feet or so beyond the end of the bridges to tie into the existing approaches. That's pretty standard for a lot of our bridge projects. We don't want to make a highway project on 175 out of this bridge project, so we'll correct as much deficiency as we can, but it's likely we won't go to the very tops of either of the hills unless we want to put in some signage whether it's, you know, for safety, you know, whether it's advance warning signage that might be further along on Route 175 on the approaches to the bridge, but it's likely that we'll try to keep the roadway elevation changes as much at the minimum as we can so that we don't -- every time you raise the road you increase the slopes and you keep encroaching out further and further and with all of the historic and archeological stuff that's going on there we want to minimize it as much as possible.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Gary Loft.) So you aren't going to be addressing the shoulders on either side?

MR. LATHE: Well, no, I -- that will be

certainly part of our scope, but it probably won't be going more than 100 feet or so from the end of each approach of the bridge, so where the abutments stop on either end, one of the abutments is 100 feet long and the other one is 30 feet.

MR. COTE: Yes, that's correct.

MR. LATHE: So it's likely within 100 feet at the end of the road the project extents will stop with the exception of, you know, and I'm just trying to think out loud here, if we -- if there was a direction to put in a temporary bridge then maybe those impacts go further out because we'll have to tie it back into the original roadway. So I don't -- if the bridge were to be rehabilitated and stay 20 foot 4 inches wide, it's likely the approaches wouldn't be much different than they are today, maybe a foot shoulder on either side, but it wouldn't be a dramatic increase. If the bridge were replaced, the bridge would likely be made wider and we'd try to accommodate the approaches as best we can, but it may not be as wide as 24 or 28 feet just because we don't want to have those environmental impacts and archeological and historical impacts as the road gets wider and sheds the shoulders out.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Gary Loft.) And just a

quick follow-up. Do you have a time frame for when the load limits will be determined on the bridge?

MR. COTE: I'm sorry, when will the load rating analysis be completed?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Gary Loft.) Yes.

MR. COTE: We're working on that now. Probably two months. By the end of the year, I would expect that we have something complete and ready for distribution.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Gary Loft.) All right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) I just wondered in connection with that how long a life span do we have for the old bridge? How long can we reasonably plan to travel on it before it's absolutely condemned and we have to...

MR. LATHE: In its current condition or --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) Yes. Yeah, no, I mean, right now. I mean, how long do we have?

MR. LATHE: Well, it's in our Work Plan to be rehabilitated or replaced. I mean, I would think the bridge is inspected every two years, it's safe to the traveling public and it's monitored by Bridge Maintenance, so we can probably maintain the structure by small repairs indefinitely, I mean,

for -- I shouldn't say indefinitely.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) Yeah, come on now.

(Laughter.)

MR. COTE: Do you mind if I jump in?

MR. LATHE: Yes, please, please jump in now. Throw me a line. Phone a friend.

(Laughter.)

MR. COTE: So typically what happens when a bridge reaches what I'll say is the end of its service life, and I'm not saying this bridge is bad, but that deterioration is there, so when the bridge reaches a point where the deterioration is advanced to the point where we are now what typically starts to happen is unless work is performed that bridge continues to deteriorate and the load rating evaluations that are done shows that that bridge because of its deterioration can carry less and less weight. So typically what we would see is that over time if work were not done this bridge may start to be posted per load. So perhaps it starts at 30 tons, a couple years later it goes to 20 tons then it goes down to 10 tons.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) But we'd have six years?

MR. COTE: It's hard to say until the load rating is done. Again, at this point, I'm not worried that the bridge is at risk of eminent closure.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) Okay.

MR. COTE: So that's what typically happens, those bridge postings happen progressively over time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) I see.

MR. COTE: It's okay for passenger vehicles, but large heavy trucks would probably need to find an alternate route. But the goal is that's why this project is in the Department's Work Plan now so that we can avoid being in that position, right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) I see.

MR. COTE: We want to do the work now while the bridge is still safe and while it can safely carry loads so that we don't end up in a situation where the bridge needs to be posted because we recognize that's an impact to the community.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Back in the pink you had a question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, I just wanted them to speak up.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Joe Schatz.) Okay. Yes, please speak up because your back is to the audience.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Joe Schatz.) Over here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Robin Wilder, South Blue Hill. I was wondering, you were talking about all these mitigation measure for the environmental impacts on the bridge, now we know we have a census pretty much for the traffic and of course it's a roadway, do we have any sort of idea besides anecdotal about kayaks being loaded into the Salt Pond or how many viewers there are, cars stopping on the bridge to view the change of current, walkers, bicycle riders? Do we know kind of what we're talking about except anecdotally? And I understand with kayakers if there is a place for them to debark from a side of the Salt Pond if there is available land there they could use that, so that would mitigate some of the traffic stoppage on the bridge and people getting in and out of kayaks. And I was wondering what do we know about pedestrian traffic, bike traffic, viewership?

MR. LATHE: Did you guys get that in the back about the -- okay. We don't have -- we haven't done a pedestrian count down there specifically to identify bikers or pedestrians and certainly haven't done anything to identify day use such as --

PARTICIPANT: (Noel Stookey.) Kayakers.

MR. LATHE: -- kayakers or arborists or bird watchers or whoever might be going down there to enjoy the location, but I will defer to the Bridge Advisory Committee because I'm getting from them their sense of use and activity at that site, so that's a resource that I'm leaning more on them. They'll tell me, I think, if it's worth having someone go down there and do a count. It's probably a viable consideration. There's going to be a seasonal flux obviously. I'm relying on the Bridge Advisory Committee and making that better as to the local use and the frequency of it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Robin Wilder.) Because make it available and they will come. So but what are we going to make available or not available is part it seems to me of what we do with the bridge.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) John.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: John Miller, Blue Hill. A comment. I would like to hear a little more from the committee and is there a chance of turning the lights up so we can see all the way up back here?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Yeah, we're going to turn them on.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (John Miller.) Can you

recognize Mark Astbury and call on him? He's had his hand up. He and Steve, I'd like to hear what they have to say.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Stephen Rappaport.) I just wanted to address John's remark. All of us here react like hell and we have all plenty to say and some of it may even be of some value, but really the purpose of this meeting, I think, is for us to hear what the people in Blue Hill and the surrounding communities who are affected by this project, whatever the project is going to be, have to say to us. I mean, I have all kinds of opinions about all kinds of issues that some of you have raised and some have not been raised. I don't think -- and obviously I'm not speaking for my colleagues, but I really want to hear you. I've heard all of these guys and I've heard Andrew and, you know, and it would be tremendously helpful, but you haven't been here and this is a great chance for us to hear the concerns that the community has and I'd really rather focus on that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (John Miller.) I'm not interested in your personal opinion, but what the committee has done, so where the committee is at.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Stephen Rappaport.) And

I think that the, you know, the committee's opinion right now is that we are gathering information and this is part of an information gathering process and I would assume there are nine of us and there are probably nine opinions about -- at least nine opinions about every issue, but I would hope that the one opinion that we share is that the real function of this committee is to represent the community and the only way we can really do that is if we listen when we get the chance to what people in the community have to say. What your concerns are. What should we be thinking about that we haven't already thought about. I'm sure that list is as long as my arm and then some. So, I mean, I think that's really the purpose.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Mindy. I didn't catch your arm before.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you. Mindy Marshuetz, full-time resident, South Blue Hill. I have gone to many of these meetings since this all started and one of the -- and I'm very sensitive to this historical and the wildlife issues, but one of the things that stands out to me and putting off of what you just said is I don't see any information of how this is going to impact the people of the

community, economically, emergency services, whether the bridge is closed, whether there is a temporary bridge. This is -- this will impact people who are making a living here, who through the winter months or through any of the months, how is that all going to impact the people that live here year-round who are trying to make a living and I have a real concern over that because I don't see any evaluation. There were multiple slides about, you know, historical people from 4,000 years ago, but I don't see any information about how this will impact economically the community and what this will do to people during the months that the bridge is either closed or have a detour or if there is a temporary bridge how that would impact it. As well as emergency services, and I do know you're going to look into it, however, when you put that up on the board that's in the summer. How will this impact the condition of the road in the winter? If emergency services have to get to your house it is not going to take the same amount of time it will take in the summer months. It would be nice, but any of us who are here when it's snowing or when the roads are full of ice how will that impact the safety and well-being of the people of the community which is my -- I guess I'm asking as much -- almost

as much attention to how this will impact everybody living here, young, old, school children, safety, emergency services, you name it, but especially the economy. It will hurt people who live here who have to clean houses, go lobstering, whatever it is to make a living and rerouting 30 minutes is going to impact their bottom line because of the cost of that. So I would just ask -- I'm giving my input to ask to see some kind of a study done on how this will impact to not just Blue Hill, but all of the surrounding towns which their livelihood is getting on and off the island.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) I would just suggest that it would be a mistake to think that we're not making those considerations and are not aware of them. And as Stephen just said, we would like to hear those articulated specifically from our constituents as well, but we have looked at the various challenges to whether it be a renovation or replacement and dealing with time and isolation of population and the economic people, so those have been topics of our meeting. So we, again, this is to further that discussion, so you brought up several of those areas of concerns which we have noted and will continue to focus on.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mindy Marshuetz.) Just respectfully, it wasn't part of your presentation and it was about everything else other than the year-round community and that was my concern.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Deborah Brewster.) I think for me that's why we're having this meeting is to get the human reactions, response, concerns. You know, what you saw tonight in this presentation was just a shortened version of a lot of detail about all of the same subjects that have been presented to us. Tonight is the human face of the issue and it's really important.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Vaughn Leach.) In reference to Scott Miller's question on the design matrix, five slides back it gave a description of a couple of types of bridges, a bridge replacement and a repurpose, that was the start of the headline so to speak --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Scott Miller.) Columns.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Vaughn Leach.) -- the columns for our bridge matrix and in order to complete this matrix we need to find out the information like Miss Marshuetz is bringing and John Miller or anybody else in this room. That's why we're looking them because all of that stuff applies

to this matrix for every bridge choice and the environmental and the marine life. If you can't work from November to April that affects the time of year when there might be closures or might not. It's complex. Every time you add another factor that matrix is going to keep changing. And we apologize we haven't moved completely where we wanted to be before this meeting, but like Andrew said, we wanted to catch people who were just here seasonally and get their thoughts.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mike Astbury.) Can I follow-up, Jim?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Sure. Go ahead.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mike Astbury.) I've forgotten what I wanted to say before, but I think one thing that would help this advisory board and probably the MDOT is to hear where this alternative bridge location might happen because we can talk about an alternative bridge location for a long, long time, but until somebody presents us with an actual place where it could happen -- thank you. We'd love to see it because how can we evaluate it if we don't know about it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) But

notwithstanding the crude sketch that I've made to present, Andrew himself or Tim, I can't remember which one, said that there is a narrow gap between the Salt Pond and 172; is that right? Which is even narrower than the one that's currently bridged?

MR. COTE: It's about the same.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Noel Stookey.) I think it's about the same. And so I did a little -- kind of a little Google map showing it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mike Astbury.) So that's one of the purposes of this meeting is to get information like this. And when I hear that this advisory committee is going to work until we come to a conclusion, I'd like it to be sooner rather than later. So we definitely -- I think what we have heard, I will reiterate, almost everything that's been talked about here tonight we have talked about and we are glad to get the input from you people and we need more of it, so please hit us up at the grocery store and tell us your thoughts.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Go ahead.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thom McLaughlin, full-time resident of South Blue Hill and I'd like to speak very much again for repurposing of the bridge. That bridge, it serves an economic purpose and it

also has a great cultural value and it's not just the bridge. It's that whole area that's there. It's about framing. It's about how we view our area. As you come down -- in the wintertime, you come down that hill by Arcady and Blue Hill Mountain stretches before you. And there used to be a sign and I think there is still part of it there on a telephone pole that said hope and in the dark of winter I feel a great deal of hope coming down that bridge and seeing the landscape. Coming back the other way across that causeway past the cove it is so picturesque. And, yes, I know it's picturesque I am sure over this alternative site, but it's not the grand history that's there. So I -- as a committee, I really encourage you to think about the whole totality of that landscape, not just the bridge.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Dick Marshuetz and we didn't really mean to double-team. I think I've been to every -- a majority of the meetings and I've read all of the reports and I'd like to make two points specific about the potential of saving or rehabilitating the bridge that we already have. The first requires a little bit of imagination. Suppose you live in South Blue Hill, which is pretty easy for

us to imagine, and you have a little bit of a household emergency, maybe a kitchen fire, and you got it out, but as you get it out you feel a numbness on one side of your face, people notice you're slurring your words and recognize the potential symptoms of a stroke and now you're in an ambulance headed towards the bridge. As you get right toward the bridge, the ambulance stops and the attendant says, oh, summertime, there is a bunch of photographers and some people watching kayakers and a couple of bikers, but don't worry about it, they're getting off. Well, just as he finishes, you hear another siren. Now, this guy is maybe a -- he's an excellent medical technician but maybe not much of a diplomat and he says, are you sure that fire was out because there is a fire engine coming the other way. I think two questions go through your mind at this point, one is you know that the bridge was designed in 1926 for Model T Fords, which were 3 feet narrower than the current vehicles. So you know an ambulance and a fire truck can't cross each other at the speed limit, which one has the right of way on that bridge and why should we even have such a choice? The second question I think is if the bridge is -- if the new bridge is -- if we rehabilitated that bridge,

what in the world were we thinking of to get ourselves a bridge that doesn't meet our needs out of a bridge that didn't meet our needs and spent 6 or 7 million dollars doing it.

The second point is if we don't put in a temporary bridge, I've heard numbers like 14 minutes and things like that. I've clocked it. Remembering that an ambulance has to go round trip, it's a half an hour longer across Hales Woods and Hales Hill Road. Half an hour. If you have to go through Brooklin it's an hour. This in a situation in an emergency vehicle where minutes can make the difference between being paralyzed for life or getting away unscathed or in the case of a cardiac event die. In a society that will spend 17 or 18 percent of GEP on healthcare is that where we want to economize?

The second point I make involves respect. And I do think we should respect wildlife, we should respect those who came before us, we should respect property owners, those who are here today and those who are coming tomorrow and those yet unborn. With respect to wildlife and those were here before us, one thing is for sure, they're not going to be using that bridge to get from one side to the other. With

respect to the people here today and those as yet unborn, I think we can divide them for purposes of the bridge consideration into two groups, the summer people and the people who are year-round. Remembering that the summer people and the vacationers we invite here. We wear it on our license plate. We call it Vacationland. And I can't think of a way that we could make that area less hospitable than it is. You can't really stand safely and walk on the bridge. There are places to put a car, but, you know, you don't really want to park there and if you open the door you take your life in your hands. As far as the beauty of the area, I don't know, maybe this gentleman enjoys the beauty of the area. I think if you're thinking about the beauty of the area, and I cross that bridge twice a day, four times a day, six times a day, if you think about the beauty of the area when you're going across that bridge, I don't think you're operating the vehicle in a very safe way with school busses coming toward you, snowplows in the wintertime, slippery roadways, there is all kinds of problems to that. With respect to the people who are here year-round all of us need that bridge. As I say two, four, six times a day, school busses are needed, everybody sees

the UPS truck, the EBS truck, the oil truck. Mindy and I needed a new septic field, we needed Mike's -- Mike Astbury has very sophisticated and bulky and heavy equipment to get it done well and to get it done fast and I think it came across that bridge, but that bridge wasn't built for that purpose, so why on earth would we saddle especially future generations with a bridge that doesn't fit our needs. And I think -- and Mindy and I own both sides of the road, we're quite prepared for that road to be widened for bikers, for walkers and, you know, we would sort of welcome that. The point is that road isn't going to -- I don't think you can argue that that road is going to get any narrower than it is, so the bridge is going to become even more of a concern. And we have a template -- I'm almost finished. We have a template in front of us, I think, in the case of the Verona Island Bridge where we replaced a beautiful, graceful suspension bridge that didn't suit our needs anymore with a robust, well-engineered, I think it's a beautiful cable stay bridge that fits everybody's needs including people who want to enjoy the view and people who want to park. And I think if we don't do -- we obviously won't put a cable stay bridge in, but if we don't follow some formula like that people

in the future are going to say to us what in the world were they thinking about?

With respect to the wildlife and the archeological sites and the property owners, I think it tells us to be very careful in the construction process. And for my money MaineDOT has been just terrific in their expertise and their caring and their listening and they've got to be careful during the construction process and then they have to restore the land to the best they can to the way it was beforehand. And just one more point, if you think about this land around here and you look at any of the art work that was done a century ago, you can see from where Tradewinds is today all the way up to top of Blue Hill Mountain. There weren't any trees. Trees grow back. So thank you very much.

MR. LATHE: Any follow-up questions or comments?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (John Miller.) Maybe -- you mentioned in some part or made previous mention I could have sworn on the first one or eluded to someone had suggested maybe option C. But the idea of having two bridges and each bridge being one-way keeping the current bridge and with the intent of answering a lot of the questions and concerns that

people had as far as the studies of the existing bridge and removal of the bridge or each bridge being one-way, obviously opposite directions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Scott.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Scott Miller still in South Blue Hill. One thing -- so I've done a lot of -- because I happen to live just across the bridge, just on the wrong side of the bridge so when you talk about the distance, you know, especially with a big detour there is only a handful of us that are there year-round, probably -- well, there is probably 10. Well, it depends on how close to the bridge you want to be, but anyway. So I have kind of a strong interest in terms of how the bridge unfolds. I've done some research and it seems to me that a lot of transportation departments, it may be a requirement, do effectively a user cost analysis and say, okay, how many cars are going across per average daily traffic volume, how far is the detour going to have to be, how long will it be and what's the value for that, you know, there are formulas for that attributing a comparative value. And really to Mindy's point, I'm kind of making the same one in a slightly different way, which is -- and a more narrower one, which is it seems to me that a basic

tenant in transportation work, highway work, is doing that cost analysis to say how much is a closure going to cost, how, you know, should we be considering accelerated techniques so that we can -- like this one in Rhode Island, you know, have the bridge closed for a total of whatever, four weeks. There is a big difference between four weeks and two years, an enormous difference. And so that's point one. And point two, and it will be my last one, is I've talked a little bit about process and what information we get back. I hear you saying, you know, give us your feedback, we want it now. Well, it's really -- you're getting unguided feedback because we don't actually know what you're seriously considering. We don't know what the relevant costs are. We don't know whether there is -- really, we don't know the evaluation criteria for whether, you know, is a temporary bridge realistic or not. You've said you don't know what a third alternative, you know, might be. You haven't really looked at it. So my point is before I can give you useful feedback, you've got to give me a little bit more guidance as to what you're seriously considering rather than coming and saying, oh, well, you didn't mention it back in August, you know, you're, you know, I understand we'll have more

time for feedback, but I think everybody here, including the summer folks, you know, it should be much more of an interactive process. And so from my perspective just asking us for feedback now saying, hey, the bridge is going to fall down at some point, give us your feedback as to what he we should do is not really a constructive way to get useful feedback, so. And you'll certainly hear more from me as time goes on and I think the community should as well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Well, some of the committee members have said this was rushed, so to get part of the population, the seasonal population involved and I think we have talked -- we talked earlier about wanting to have more of what you just outlined available. So we made a choice, and I'm not sure we all agreed with that choice, but made a choice to enter into this discussion now may be prematurely, so I think you have to give a little bit of a pass on that, but I do understand what you're saying. That said, but, Andy, did you --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mindy Marshuetz.) I have a question. This has been going on for a year-and-a-half. When was the first meeting, two years ago? Do you have a plan of what -- when you're going to land the plane on this? I'm sorry.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I can't hear you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mindy Marshuetz.) I'm asking do you have a plan -- I went to the first meeting, which was two summers ago, I think.

MR. LATHE: Mmm.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Mindy Marshuetz.) The way it sounds, do you have a plan on when you're going to land this plane and make a decision and come up with a date to decide when you're going to have some information? We can't keep going on another two years before you decide, so I was just wondering do you have a plan as a committee when you're going to come to terms about landing the plane? I don't know how else to put it.

MR. LATHE: Sure. As I indicated earlier, we're really to going to exhaust the engineering process and it can be months as we work through this process, so it's not likely that we'll have a selected preferred alternative until sometime until 2018. From that point in time, it takes I would say probably six months to produce a preliminary design and then probably another additional year once the preliminary design is complete to do a final design. If there is any need for any sort of right of way acquisition for an easement needed for

constructability that process is going to take 8 to 10 months as well. So it could be, you know, a couple more years before you see boots on the ground there. And I'm sorry, I'm almost done, and I know Mr. Astbury indicated earlier that the sooner the better and I agree, but we want to make sure that we're very thorough in this process, so we don't want to skip any steps and Federal Highway is on board with us. There is laws that we simply can't plow through and they'll take time, so. And what's transpired since our last meetings in 2015 with the archeological exploration really kind of changed our window of view on this project in the process moving forward. Typically, we don't go through an involved process like this. It's very easy for us to come in as bridge engineers or designers and run rough shot through here and say this is what we're going to do, this is the cheapest, it's the best, it's going to last 100 years. We want to make sure we do due diligence and really reach out and really we have one chance to do this right and a lot of ways to do it wrong, so I'd like to say that we'll have more clear direction to give to the community in 2018 as early as we possibly can, but, yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Gary Loft. I was going to

ask about where we are at the in queue. I mean, once the design is settled, are there hundreds possibly of bridges in the same condition as Falls Bridge across the State of Maine, so, you know, we have to come up with -- the state has to come up with the money somehow.

MR. LATHE: This project is fully funded for construction now --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Gary Loft.) It is?

MR. LATHE: -- but to be fair, again, the numbers have been sort of banding around a little bit from our original 2015 presentation. It's a very -- it's a slice in time, so as we look at more construction or rehabilitation alternatives and in the back mentioned about accelerated construction, accelerated construction opportunities, those estimates we're going to refine those. So we have an approved budget now for construction of this project, but it's likely that budget number will slide up or down depending on the most recent estimates, which the current estimates are about now two years old. And I'm sorry, there was a --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Ann.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So my name is Ann Luskey. I live in South Blue Hill. I live in Wakonda, one of

the properties that abuts the bridge with some of the significant archeological treasures in the property. And I -- Andrew, I think you just nailed it when you said we have one chance to do this right. I personally would love the committee and I know -- and I really want to commend the work that the committee has done. I've attended a lot of the meetings and feel like they're really examining all of the very complicated aspects of this bridge. It's incredibly complicated. What I leave -- what I take away is that there is not going to be one solution that pleases everyone in the room and there are -- we all are going to have to compromise in one way or another. I hope that the state will support and that the town will support a reconditioning, a reconstruction, a preservation of one of Blue Hill's most treasured things. I have -- I am a summer person. I have been visiting Blue Hill since I was 16. I've -- when I was 16, I fell in love with Wakonda and I thought to myself some day I want to live there and it magically worked out that the universe put me in that place looking at that bridge every day. It's a very spiritual place. The bridge is -- sorry. I am a steward of Wakonda and I want our town and our state to be a steward of this

magical place and this incredible bridge. I'm the lucky one who gets to the hear the kids screaming with joy as they jump off that bridge, as they play on my beach. I'm happy to have them play on my beach and climb on my dock and run around and jump off that bridge again. The kayakers are there every day. It's, you know, I love the idea that that is a beautiful bridge that I'm blessed to look at every day and I love driving over it and I love looking at it at night. I love all of these beautiful things about this bridge and I hope that we as a community can really look at the long-term of this decision that, you know, I'm going to be dead and gone, the trees will be repaired, they'll grow back, you know, all these things will right themselves, but if we take away that bridge we're taking away a central artery of our community and I think that we really need to think about that. We don't -- it's a big decision of replacing it, taking away something that's been a keystone to the Blue Hill town.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) This gentleman over there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, I'm Tom Morris. I live in North Brooklin. I wanted to thank you guys

for a great presentation. It was very thorough. It was very reassuring in terms of what you're looking at and I think the process you laid out looks great for evaluating all of the situations. I am also assistant chief of Brooklin fire and Matt Dennison is here and John Chapman from Blue Hill and Ben is here from Sedgwick. I'm a bigger mouth than they are. I want to tell you all that there are provisional agreements in place for Brooklin to cover South Blue Hill if the bridge is out including with our EMTs. And I spent some time looking at Google maps today and Brooklin can actually be at the bridge as quickly as Blue Hill can currently be at the camps. So there won't be a significant change in response time and we have EMTs that will respond. And for the series of situations that you mentioned we pull in LifeFlight and they can land in your field. So I think there is pretty good coverage in place for arrangements to be in place should be bridge be out.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) There was a hand in the way back first.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Ellen Best and I'm from Blue Hill and I have been a full-time resident in Blue Hill for more than 35 years now and I've worked in Blue Hill Village during all of that time, so I

have a lot of time going over that bridge. And I'll go with Ann's statement on how I feel about the bridge. I love the bridge, but if it comes to that we're going to replace the bridge I would really, really like that we not try to duplicate it and that we go for what is a new and appropriate and modern approach to it and not and try and replicate it because it won't be -- it won't be the same bridge. It won't feel the same. It won't be exact. It won't be the same patina. It's isn't the same concrete anymore, you know, it's all different. So let's, you know, if we're going to build that bridge let's look at it with a clear eye as to what's going to work for the future. And also I would really suggest that if you really think that's a super bad idea that you -- if you have any long-term association with this area and driven around that you go for a ride up Route 1 and go through over what used to be the Singing Bridge between Hancock and Sullivan and then keep going on to Milbridge and both places arch bridges -- concrete arch bridges, but arch bridges have been replaced with open bridges and when I recently drove over them a few months ago I was really struck because I was thinking about this about how I didn't miss those bridges. I really saw for the first time

the incredible landscape that the bridges obscured and that it was actually more beautiful when you drove over those -- what's now those modern bridges and were able to see the panoramic view. So, you know, that's just something to, you know, think about while you're making your decisions. But I'm also -- I'm really grateful for what Tom said because it has occurred to me that not everybody in Brooklin has dropped dead in the last few years, so I think we can probably work that out.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Matt.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Matt Dennison, fire chief in Blue Hill and I'm going to add a little bit to what Tom said. We may have agreements with Brooklin or Sedgwick or whoever may cover it if it comes to that. Ultimately, being responsible for fire protection service in this town makes me nervous. I don't like -- no offense to you, Tom, other people to be responsible for my stuff. Now, on the other hand, with a comment to that what if half your volunteers are in Blue Hill, where is our coverage then?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Tom Morris.) But you also have at least three officers that live in this town, right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Matt Dennison.) At

night.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Tom Morris.) At night.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Matt Dennison.) At day they're on this side of the bridge with no equipment. So it's going to be something to really think about other than just say, yeah, we'll be all set. There is going to be a lot of variables in it. And I think it really comes down to what decision is made on what bridge and where and how and I can't really answer those questions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Donna Constantinople.) And you're all coming over the causeway bridge. Don't forget my little causeway bridge, which is getting shakier every second here.

(Laughter.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Dick Marshuetz.) I would like to address the business of the ambulance service and the equation between that and the fire service. They're both of untold value, but they're different. You know, they may quack like a duck, but they're not ducks of the same kind. I am on the board of the ambulance board and chairman of the finance committee and the ambulance are professional people. I don't mean that the fire department isn't, that's not what I mean, it's the ambulance people are paid and

they're on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week around the calendar. When you call for an ambulance you can always find one unless of course it's out on another call. The notion of using EMTs from Brooklin, that would be some help maybe in sort of a first aid way but they cannot carry patients, so it doesn't help a lot. That the business of putting an ambulance -- an extra ambulance, we only have two on the other side of the bridge. We're in the process of buying a new ambulance. Stripped down they're 171,000 bucks and they reach the end of their life pretty quickly. It's hard on those vehicles. So the notion of keeping one on the other side of the bridge and then staffing and paying at least two more people and finding a place for them to stay warm over night is just -- it doesn't make any sense. So I don't believe there is an equation between the fire department and the ambulance. The ambulance has got to live where the ambulance is and it's going to have to get to the other side of that bridge. And as I said over Hales Hill Road and Hales Woods Road that's an extra half an hour round trip.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Tom Morris.) Actually, just to follow-up, it's actually four minutes faster to get to the bridge going down through Hales Woods

than it is to get to the end of Naskeag and to think about all the calls they have in Castine. There is some delay, but we haven't lost any lives.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Dick Marshuetz.) So you choose to do that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Tom Morris.) You choose to live there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Are there more comments from the committee or more from the audience or are you ready to call it a night?

MR. LATHE: Any --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Rebecca Wentworth.) I would just like to say one thing about experiencing the Orland Bridge. Has anybody experienced the Orland Bridge when it was redone? No? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Name.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, Rebecca Wentworth from Blue Hill not South Blue Hill. And the bridge done in Orland was such a disappointment to me. It really tore out a lot of the environment and, I don't know, it just -- and it was an open bridge and it was flat and it just really disappointed me a lot. So I would hate to see that happen at this bridge. That's all I would like to say.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Jim Schatz.) Thank you

all very much. There will be another meeting. Hopefully you'll all be able to attend. Thank you so much.

(Meeting concluded at 8:36 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Robin J. Dostie, a Court Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of Maine, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the proceedings as taken by me by means of stenograph,

and I have signed:

__/s/ Robin J. Dostie_____

Court Reporter/Notary Public

My Commission Expires: February 6, 2019.

DATED: August 20, 2017

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MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

August 8, 2017 Informational Public Meeting

members of public who ✓ = Spoke at meeting

Blue Hill Falls Bridge, Blue Hill #5038

WIN #017712.00

Andrew Lathe, Project Manager

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