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**Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee : Revised Meeting
Minutes, March 29, 2011**

Maine Department of Transportation

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Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee
Martin's Point Health Care Center
Minutes of March 29, 2011 Meeting
6 to 8 pm

Attendees:

Committee members

Roger Berle	Julie MacDonald
Patrick Costin	Paul Niehoff
Ann Tucker	Richard Weare
Cheri Juniewicz	Donald Hamilton
Don Gower	Alex Jaegerman
Mayer Fistal	Holly Winger
Hilary Bassett	Sue Ellen Bordwell
Suzanne Foley-Ferguson	Mike Bobinsky

Other attendees

Christine Cantwell, Observer
Leanne Timberlake, MaineDOT
Wayne Frankhauser, MaineDOT
Ben Condon, MaineDOT
Sally Oldham, Consultant to MaineDOT
Anthony Puntin, The Louis Berger Group
Paul DeStefano, The Louis Berger Group
Matt Hall, The Louis Berger Group
Jeff McEwen, Federal Highway Administration

Sally Oldham opened the meeting and explained that the goals for the meeting were to determine whether it was possible to reach consensus on a recommendation for the bridge cross section and then to continue the discussion about the Committee's preferences and recommendations for how to handle aesthetic issues in the RFQ and RFP processes. Sally asked for any comments on the minutes from the March 22, 2011 meeting. There were no comments and the minutes were approved.

Sally opened the floor for discussion of the B cross section (5' raised sidewalk, 5' bike, 12' auto, 12' auto, 5' bike, 10.5 to 11' multi-use path) and C2 (5' bike, 12' auto, 12' auto, 5' bike, detached (angling out from the abutments) 12' multi-use path. She asked whether the group could reach consensus on recommending the B cross section with the C2 cross section offered as an optional alternative. The B cross section had had considerable support from Advisory Committee members prior to the group's indicating their stronger preference for the C2 cross section that includes a partially detached multi-use path.

A number of questions and issues were raised. Richard Weare asked whether in B the 5' sidewalk on the upstream side could be flush with the pavement. MaineDOT staff responded

that raising a sidewalk of this size provides for separation from vehicular lanes to achieve a safer facility. It is a standard treatment used by MaineDOT. Holly Winger indicated her preference for a narrower multi-use path in order to provide additional width to the bike lanes. In response to a question, Jeff McEwen indicated that 4' or 5' with a curb is a standard width for bike lanes. A comment was made that the multi-use path needs to be wide enough to accommodate young or inexperienced bicyclists, strollers, pedestrians, etc. traveling in both directions. A question was asked as to whether Portland and/or Falmouth would plan to plow the multi-use path in the winter. Mike Bobinsky indicated he believes it would be the intention of the towns to plow this.

Sally asked for an indication of how many Advisory Committee members would recommend to MaineDOT that cross section B be required in the RFP with the option to specify C2. Jeff McEwen suggested that the RFP wording would accomplish the same end if it were worded that either B or C2 would be required. Nine members indicated a preference for B or C2; six indicated a preference for requiring B. It was pointed out that C2 as currently proposed does not allow for an upstream sidewalk and would rely on upstream fishing being done off the upstream side of the separated multi-use path.

Keeping in mind various questions raised, Leanne sketched a cross section with a 5' raised sidewalk, 5' bike, 12' auto, 12' auto, 5' bike and a multi-use path that could be either contiguous or detached from the main span of the bridge. The multi-use path could be wider if it was contiguous, slightly narrower if separated. If such a cross section were included in the RFP it could specify the minimum width between the main deck and the multi-use path. Sally suggested that given the amount of time spent on this topic, the desire to allow sufficient time for discussion of bridge aesthetics and the need for Leanne to consult Department officials about specifics of the proposed cross section, it seemed wise to move on and allow Leanne to come to the April meeting with information about a cross section responsive to the evening's discussion and acceptable to MaineDOT.

A question was raised about emergency vehicle access to the multi-use path if it is separated from the main deck and also if it is too narrow (less than 10' clear). A question was raised about the issue of 11' lanes vs 12' lanes. While the determination about this issues needs to come from an agreement among Portland, Falmouth and MaineDOT officials, Wayne indicated that the Department would likely go with either 5', 12', 12', 5' or 6', 11', 11', 6' so that either way, there would be enough room to handle a breakdown curb to curb.

Sally indicated that Tony Puntin had brought updated drawings of the alignment envelope responding to Advisory Committee comments and to research conducted by project team members. She indicated that MaineDOT had not yet had an opportunity to review these drawings but that Committee members with particular concerns were welcome to stay at the end of the meeting to look at the drawings and ask any questions.

The discussion then turned to areas of possible consensus for recommendations to MaineDOT based on the small group reports from the March 22 meeting. Advisory Committee members indicated they were in consensus supporting the following three statements:

- RFQ – require team to have architect or aesthetic design professional, engaged in team proposal and during the post-bid award period, in all aspects of final design addressing visual impact and in public involvement process.
A question was asked about what specific qualifications would be required. Leanne responded that she would share proposed language on this subject with Advisory Committee members when she is drafting the RFQ.
- RFP - Bridge aesthetic design should focus on the users’ experience in relation to the geographic/local community context (see Vision statement)
- RFP - Bridge aesthetic design should focus on views to the water by all modes and views to the bridge from all perspectives (see Vision statement). Railings should be open as should views below the bridge to the extent possible.

The next statement considered for consensus dealt with differentiating in some manner the Portland connection from the Falmouth connection. Sally suggested the small groups take this issue on. In discussing the fifth statement that addressed whether aesthetic design of bridge elements should reflect minimalist intent in terms of the bridge structure and put emphasis on the natural environment and scenic views, Sally brought attention to the Bridge Aesthetics Design Guidelines for New South Wales that had been referenced in an email to the Advisory Committee and sent to all members by Holly Winger. She noted the comments on page 17, “3.1.2 Bridges in the Landscape” that “among ways to approach bridge design in landscape settings” are “the following:

1. Make the bridge as invisible as possible to hide it in the landscape.
2. Make the bridge as distinctive as possible to contrast and stand out in the landscape.
3. Make the bridge as simple and elegant as possible to complement the landscape.”

Sally indicated from the prior meeting’s discussions, it was most likely that the Advisory Committee would prefer either the first or third approach and that this also would be a good item to discuss in the working groups.

Sally asked Cheri, Sue Ellen and Patrick to introduce the statement they had prepared about the physical context of the bridge. Cheri indicated the desire from the East Deering neighborhood perspective that the road have a sense of being more residential in scale, including reducing the sense of the road as a highway off or on-ramp. Sue Ellen indicated the desire of the Falmouth stakeholders to have a buffer from the road and to support the sense of residential scale. Patrick indicated the group sees the bridge as connecting two neighborhoods.

Sally asked members of the group to read paragraphs of the statement so that all could hear the words and ideas proposed. In the discussion that followed, several members indicated that they liked the concepts of the statement very much and found that it captures many aspects of the context that might otherwise not be known to design-build teams. It handles the environmental context and the physical character of the area around the bridge particularly well and establishes an understanding of how the bridge will be used by local stakeholders and will be seen from multiple vantage points.

There was comment, however, that this statement focuses on the neighborhood connections and aspirations related to the bridge but that as a description of physical context it needs other

elements added, such as describing how the bridge is used by all types of users, its importance for the access it provides to businesses, its use by commuters, concerns about lack of parking in the immediate area for those who use the bridge, etc. Another point raised was that signage is lacking on the Falmouth side, for example, signage that would indicate how one gets to Mackworth Island. The sense of the group was that this is an excellent statement and should be used in close to this form but that additional information about other contextual elements such as use, kinds of traffic, etc. should be included in the RFP as well.

Language Describing Various Physical Contexts of the Martin's Point Bridge

Martins Point Bridge is an extension of two neighborhoods: East Deering, Portland and the Falmouth Flats in Falmouth. Residents and local businesses use the bridge when moving from one neighborhood to another.

On the Falmouth side, the bridge comes to land over a long causeway. Open marshy grass sloping gently down to the water is visible along the shore on both sides of the road. The neighborhood on the downstream side is a popular place to walk. There are no houses built along the water side of the road offering beautiful views of Casco Bay all the way to Portland Headlight as well as views of the Martin's Point Bridge, Martin's Point and Mackworth Island. Along the shore on the upstream Falmouth side several homes have small docks along the water's edge. There are small unobtrusive floating docks for canoes, kayaks, rowboats etc. Route 1 on the Falmouth side is traffic calmed by center traffic islands and narrow lanes approaching the bridge, with houses on both sides.

The Portland side is physically different. The bridge comes into Portland at a higher elevation. Rocky bluffs (dark gray stone) topped with big oaks and birches offer a beautiful naturalized setting. Martin's Point Health Care Center sits on the Southeast side on top of a hill that creates a natural stone bluff along the road and sidewalk on the downstream side. There is a walking trail along the edge of the water around most of Martin's Point. Along the trail there are two stone lookout areas as well as several benches and a picnic table. The trail is nestled in among old oaks and birches and offers beautiful sheltered areas to view Casco Bay. Along this trail is a veterans memorial, (easily accessible for everyone). Martin's Point Health Care recently renovated the original Veterans Hospital buildings. The renovation was beautifully done true to the historic nature of the buildings while respecting the natural beauty of the site.

Coming upon the bridge from upstream is the Presumpscot River Estuary. There is a magnificent view of the estuary, Martin's Point Bridge and Casco Bay from Route 295. As you approach the bridge from the upstream side there are small residential seaside neighborhood homes on both sides. There are posted bird nesting areas and depending on the time of year it's common to see all types of gulls, terns, great blue herons, egrets, buffleheads, kingfishers, eiders, ducks, geese, hawks and eagles. Bald eagles and osprey nest and hunt in the estuary. There is a small sheltered cove on the Portland upstream side where the bluffs with oaks and birches steeply slope down to the water. This protected water seems to be a favorite haven for many of the birds mentioned above. This bluff continues around under the bridge unobstructed and is a

connecting corridor for wildlife to walk under the bridge to Martin's Point, keeping some of the raccoons, possums, foxes and coyotes off of the road.

Recently there have been 2 or 3 small motorboats moored in the river channel on the upstream side of the bridge. Navigating the river is a challenge. There is a narrow channel with shifting sediment. Fishing is popular near the bridge and from the bridge. Tide changes and river currents make for challenging boating and constantly changing beauty. On both the Casco Bay side of the bridge and the Presumpscot Estuary side this is a tidal area. At low tide the only water left is the river flowing through a channel located towards the Portland end of the bridge. This area should be left unobstructed. The river empties out to mussel beds in the middle and mud flats on both sides, giving the area the nickname "the flats".

From the bay side Martin's Point Bridge is highly visible by thousands of recreational boaters, Casco Bay Ferry passengers, lobstermen, fisherman and visitors to Mackworth Island.

From all viewpoints of Martin's Point Bridge there is a feeling of openness, unobstructed views, and ever-changing light reflecting off the water.

Sally asked Committee members to break into four working groups and in addition to the two issues outlined above, to discuss style-related issues, theme-related issues, lighting and how to address design elements through the RFP. Following these discussions, the groups reported out on these issues as follows:

1. Style-related issues. Should the bridge differentiate in some manner the Portland connection from the Falmouth connection? What overall approach should be taken to bridge aesthetics: a minimalist approach to make the bridge as invisible as possible in the landscape, a simple and elegant approach so that the aesthetics of the bridge complement the landscape, or another approach?

- Not looking for a specific style.
- Make the bridge as simple and elegant as possible to complement the landscape (3rd choice from pg. 17 of Bridge Aesthetics Guidebook of NSW).
- No preference for color at this time.
- Bridge aesthetics should be treated as a holistic and complete package. It should result from a partnering of civil engineering design with architectural/aesthetic design from the very beginning of the design effort.
- The design elements should recognize the different scale of Portland and Falmouth and make some differentiation between the treatments on either end of the bridge.
- The design should be fully "integrated" with its context and itself. Conceptually the bridge design should be based on a compelling generative idea that guides the design from the largest to the smallest detail. The bridge should be slender, elegant and refined

with graceful proportions. Each part should contribute to the whole with no extraneous or superficial elements.

- Don't choose a style. Reflect the immediate local area (not Southern Maine). Reflect the environment. The bridge should blend in with the environment. Facilitate observing the beautiful views. Be compatible.

2. Theme-related issues.

- The gateway concept is not especially important. What is important is the sense of connecting the two communities and being complementary to the natural environment.
- There could be an environmental focus.
- No specific thematic elements. The bridge design should simply honor the physical setting by enhancing it with its presence.
- No gateway concept, no theme. Colors – This is important. It needs further talk. Perhaps soft earthy colors, perhaps allow a patina. Reflect colors in the local area.

3. Lighting issues

- Don't want lighting.
- Have some lighting perhaps built into the railing (not necessarily cobra style lights). Lighting should be integrated into the design but functional. Maybe the bridge should be lit from underneath.
- Artificial lighting should be used, low key and functional to illuminate the pedestrian pathway and create an inviting ambience along the length of the bridge. No vehicular lighting.
- No lighting generally on the bridge. Maybe lighting on the multi-use path – dim lighting. There wasn't consensus in the group.

4. Suggestions on how to handle choices about design elements in the RFP.

- Would like to see one or more bump outs required in the RFP to provide a refuge for resting, fishing, or viewing scenery out of the flow of traffic.
- The design should accommodate cross walks or a separate crossing, for example, provide an under bridge passage, on both sides of the bridge.
- The bridge design should provide for connectivity with existing and planned trails.
- The alignment should be such that it provides minimal impact on adjacent properties.

- When the selection process for a D-B team has been made, does the public involvement effort conclude or does it continue?
- Yes, include a fair amount of guidance and some specifications. This is a larger conversation than we have time to engage today. Members of this group want to “own the final design.”

Sally concluded the meeting with mention of future meeting dates that have now been established for April, May and June (see below). She thanked Sue Ellen Bordwell for bringing homemade fudge for the group and called on Hilary Bassett who wanted to bring to the group’s attention the publication by Greater Portland Landmarks of a new book about Deering that includes information about the development of the Martin’s Point area and historical photos of the bridge and its surroundings. Leanne explained she expects to schedule a public information meeting before the RFQ is issued (currently projected to be issued July 20) and would likely schedule an Advisory Committee meeting between the public meeting and the RFQ issue date. Leanne said she is getting questions from prospective Design-Build teams about the project. To date she has not made public the project website address, but she may do this in the near future. She warned Advisory Committee members that individuals from D-B teams may possibly call them, but that it is important that they not engage in discussions with specific team members because all D-B teams should receive the same information to maintain fairness and integrity in the selection process. In case someone does receive a call they should refer the party to Leanne for information (207 624-3422). In response to a question, Leanne indicated she expects to have a draft of the RFP completed by September 7. Sally thanked everyone for their excellent input and adjourned the meeting. Individuals were invited to talk with MaineDOT staff about alignment issues at the conclusion of the meeting.

Action Items:

- Sally will send an agenda and background information prior to the next meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 26, 2011
 Time: 6:00-8:00 pm
 Location: Martin’s Point Health Care center, 331 Veranda Street, Marine Hospital Building

Future meetings: Tuesday, May 10, 2011
 Tuesday, June 14, 2011