

Questions & Answers for 04/18/2024 VDPH

Q - When will we expect construction to start on the bridge and how long will construction last?

We plan to advertise the project in September of this year which would equate to an April 2025 start of construction. The Contractor will need to relocate utilities before work begins and this will likely start near the very beginning of 2025 but the bridge should still be open during this time. We are allowing for a full construction season to complete the project, so November 2025 would be end of construction.

Q – When will the bridge be closed for traffic and how long will the closure last?

As mentioned there will be some preliminary work that the contractor will need to perform prior to the actual bridge closure such as preparing and submitting drawings and utility relocation and this will likely happen very early in 2025 but will not require the bridge to be closed. Once the utilities are relocated the Contractor will close the bridge and install the detour signage which will probably occur in April 2025 and will remain closed for the duration of the construction of the new bridge.

Q – How will the bridge closure affect residents on Church Street and Highland Avenue?

Residents on Church Street and Highland Ave. will still be able to travel to/from their homes like they do now from Route 2. The only difference is that access from North Street will not be available since the bridge will be closed to all traffic.

Q – How long is the detour?

The detour route which is currently in place now is intended for trucks because the bridge is closed for traffic traveling north on Church Street and as an alternative trucks cannot make the turn up North Street from Route 2 because of the tight radius. The length of the detour is approximately 20 miles (measured from one side of bridge to the other side) and has trucks using Northfield Road (Rt. 63) to Maple Street to Gulf Road back to North Street. Cars currently traveling across the bridge south on North Street to Church Street can just continue down North Street to Route 2 to access Church.

Q – What will the new bridge look like?

The replacement structure will be a precast concrete three-sided rigid frame bridge constructed behind the existing bridge abutments. The new bridge will be wider to accommodate a 4 ft. shoulder and 10 ft. travel lane in each direction with a 5'-6" sidewalk on the south side of the bridge. The mid-block crosswalk that currently crosses North Street will be replaced and updated to comply with current ADA standards. The new bridge railings or parapets will need to meet crash test level 2 (TL-2) but we have different options of what the railing can look like that meets TL-2 and is aesthetically pleasing to the residents.

Q – During the relocation of the utilities prior to construction of the new bridge will how long will I be without service?

The aerial utilities that will need to be relocated are National Grid (power), Comcast, and Verizon. We are also relocating a sewer line that crosses Church Street that will be in the way of the new bridge. The new aerial lines and new sewer line will be constructed first so that the path of the existing utilities can be switched over with very minimal interruption to the residents. All residents affected will be notified at least 24 hours prior to this taking place.

Q - How will access to/from Highland Avenue be affected during construction?

Highland Avenue residents will have access to/from their homes during construction however it's likely that Highland Avenue where it intersects with Church Street at the bridge will only one lane of alternating traffic due to space constraints. There will likely be a short period of time that access to/from Highland Avenue will be prohibited while the Contractor constructs the approach slab on the south side of the bridge. We anticipate this interruption to be very short, likely no more than a day, and the Contractor will be able to stop work and allow traffic to/from Highland in an emergency situation.

Q – How will pedestrians cross Keyup Brook while the bridge is closed and under construction?

There is no plan to construct a temporary crossing for pedestrians while the bridge is closed. Pedestrians will have to walk down Church to Route 2 and back up North as a walking detour. The walking distance is approximately ½ mile.

Q - During construction will there be heavy machinery that could cause vibrations that may damage foundations or basements of nearby resident's homes?

Most of the foundation of the existing bridge will remain in place as the new bridge will be constructed behind the existing foundation walls. The superstructure (concrete deck, sidewalk, and railings) of the existing bridge and a small portion of the existing foundation will be removed and this will likely involve some saw cutting and jackhammering of the existing concrete. The new structure is entirely precast concrete and will be constructed like an erector set with the pieces of the new bridge set in place. One side of the new bridge foundation will have mini-piles which are drilled and not hammered so there should be no vibration from them. Sheet piling may be used to support the excavation and it is a high vibration activity when driving the sheets. However, because bedrock is shallow we expect the Contractor may use other means to support the excavation which may produce less vibration. With that said we can still perform a pre-construction and after-construction survey of nearby homes (200'-300' radius from bridge) if residents are concerned about damage from construction activity.

Q - Will there be any work done to the masonry walls next to the stream upstream and downstream of the bridge?

This project is only replacing the deficient bridge and the scope does not include repairing or replacing the walls except as required to construct the new bridge. Constructing the new bridge behind the existing bridge foundation walls would allow future work on the stream and masonry walls to take place without having to remove the new structure.