The purpose of the Public Advisory Committee meeting was to summarize the progress and status of new bridge design and to present a process for getting to consensus on commemoration of the historic bridge. Jim Boni, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Lake Champlain Bridge Project Manager welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting’s moderator, Ruth Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., NYSDOT consultant. Ruth outlined the agenda of the meeting and began with an update on the project’s status. A copy of the meeting presentation is available at https://www.nysdot.gov/regional-offices/region1/projects/lake-champlain-bridge/repository/PAC9_meeting_presentation_2-09-10.pdf

**Update on Project Status:** A temporary ferry at Crown Point began service on Monday, February 1 at 5 a.m. and will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and be free of charge. A second ferry slip on each side is anticipated to open in several weeks. The new ferry transported approximately 1700 vehicles on opening day and was completed “in record time,” considering approval processes and design/construction complexities.

Demolition of the old bridge continues. Contractors are removing the superstructure from the water and that work will continue for some time. Access causeways must be built to complete the land demolition and that work won’t begin for several weeks. Target date by which spans 6, 7, 8 and piers 6, 7 are to be removed is April 15, 2010; all remaining portions by June 1, 2010. Both dates have been established by the U.S. Coast Guard and are conditions of their permit. Steel removed from the bridge is being stored at the Port Henry marina. Most of the steel will be recycled though some will be kept for commemoration activities.

The Final Design Report was completed and approval was granted by FHWA on February 5, 2010. This allows work to begin on a final design. A tremendous amount of coordination has taken place with regulatory agencies, consulting parties and the general public, leading to many design refinements. In addition, a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement is now in place.

**Bridge Design Status and Discussion:** This portion of the meeting was led by Dale Gozalkowski, a consultant with Clough Harbour Associates and HNTB bridge designer, Ted Zoli. Dale outlined the proposed bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and touchdown points/issues where the bridge meets the roadway on each side of the lake. Ted discussed and sought input from the group on design elements. Ted Zoli spoke about the remarkable work and cooperation among the regulatory agencies that that had been accomplished in such a short amount of time. The bridge width was decreased and the
alignment was shifted in VT to prevent significant impacts to potential historic resources at Chimney Point.

The following is a summary of key points covered at the meeting.

**Bridge Elements: Cross Section and Touchdown Considerations**

- There will be a continuous sidewalk at least five feet wide on both sides of the bridge. The shoulder width will be five feet wide. It is anticipated bicyclists will use the shoulders. The original plan presented at the December 12, 2009 public meeting in Ti showed these features at a width of six feet. Subsequently these widths were reduced to five feet wide to reduce the impact on cultural resources on both sides of the lake. The proposed five foot width meets all existing state and federal standards. The travel lanes on the bridge will be 11 feet wide each (also reduced slightly from the 12 foot width presented at the Ti meetings).
- A bridge (barrier) rail will separate the shoulder from the sidewalk edge. The bridge rail will protect pedestrians and also protect the bridge cables from damage by errant vehicles.
- The longitudinal grade of the bridge will be 5 percent (the old bridge was 5 ½ percent) while maintaining a navigational channel height of 75 feet (for a 300 foot width at the water level). The longitudinal grade was lowered to stay within an ADA threshold that would require additional landing areas for pedestrians, therefore complicating the bridge design.
- The sidewalks will be located outside the bridge cables and arch, extending beyond the bridge deck by five feet. This will provide protection to the primary structural elements from sand and salt exposure and reduce corrosion from deicing materials - a problem on the old bridge.
- The sidewalk at the center span (arch) will be nearly 10 feet wide, although some of that space will be taken up by the arch and support cables.
- T-walls will be used at touchdown locations to avoid or minimize disturbance of the pre-1929 land contours and, thus, potential sensitive resources.
- T-walls will be installed using the smallest/lightest type of equipment to minimize compaction to historic soils.

**Discussion:**

Q. Is there any possibility for an occasional break in the guardrail separating the bike shoulder/travel lane and the sidewalk so that cyclists could move into a viewing area at the side of the bridge?

A. No. Breaks in the railing would undermine the integrity of the safety system.

**Bridge Touchdown – New York**

- Center line of proposed bridge is within one foot of the center line alignment of the old bridge.
- Roadway project limits end on Bridge Road (Rt. 185) just north of the entrance to the temporary ferry road. Restoration of pavement south of that point will occur after the ferry landing is removed and the area has been completely restored.
• T-walls will be used here to preserve grade and trees, limit soil disturbance and will have less impact than a conventional retaining wall.
• New sidewalks from the bridge are planned to connect to the parking area at the new kiosks south of the Toll House and also to the Crown Point Historic Site.
• Micropiles will be used in construction to limit vibration and footprint.

**Bridge Touchdown – Vermont**

• The center line alignment of the proposed design has shifted the bridge about seven feet in a northerly direction, away from the Chimney Point museum. Some tree removal will be needed on the west side of the road which may open up some views of the lake that don’t currently exist.
• The new alignment retains the existing grassy slope on the Chimney Point museum side.
• The densest area of cultural resources on the Vermont side is directly under the bridge. Archeological survey will be performed in the spring. An archeologist will also be on site during construction to monitor activities. This individual will have the authority to stop/pause construction if resources are encountered.
• A steel box beam guardrail will be installed on north side to prevent vehicles from going into the lake.
• The elevation of the proposed roadway near the museum will remain the same as currently exists to preserve the view shed.
• The existing parking/turnaround area along the road will be removed.
• Design of T-walls and construction work will need to be sensitive to migration of the Indiana bat. This mammal is expected in the area between the dates of April 1 and October 15. These bats travel along the shore and roost in tall trees.

**Discussion:**

Q. Do you see any barriers, such as cultural resource issues as a result of the re-alignment?
A. I think we’ll be in pretty good shape though the area still has to be tested for archeology.

Q. Do you expect to need to salvage [artifacts]?
A. It is not known until the other types of testing are completed. A Phase 3 archaeological survey will be done if needed. [This refers to the archeological process. Phase 1 is where you are looking to see if something might be there. Phase 2 is comprised of a more detailed investigation. Phase 3 involves documentation and recovery.]

Q. Several people have spoken to me about the need for a boat launch. Is it possible to use the ferry landing area once the ferry has been removed? It would be easier and safer there and should be kept in mind.
A. The boat launch under the bridge will be restored once work has been completed. The land used for the temporary ferry must be restored to its original condition. This was one of the conditions in the permits to allow this area to be used for the temporary ferry roadway.
Bridge Elements: Finish
Ted Zoli presented two options for the metal superstructure – weathering steel and metalized steel. A metalized sample was passed around. Both options have the advantage of corrosion resistance and no painting. Staining, lack of color choice and poor performance in continuously wet environments were a disadvantage to the weathering steel. Though metalized steel was most expensive initially, it also lasted longer (50 years and could be re-metalized at that time).

Discussion:
Q. What happens to metalizing in 50 years?
A. It can be re-metalized.

Using metalized steel will commemorate the old bridge as it will look similar in color.

Q. What is the cost difference in metalizing versus weathering?
A. Metalizing will cost an additional $1 million. But if the maintenance using metalizing is less, then we should look at the cost in relation to its life cycle.

Q. Is metalizing better for the environment?
A. If we use metalizing on the steel we would consider its environmental impacts. We don’t anticipate any environmental impacts.

Resolution: The PAC confirmed preference for using metalized steel in the new bridge by unanimous vote.

Bridge Elements: Lighting
Of the five types of lighting (navigational, aviation, roadway, sidewalk and aesthetic), only navigational lighting is required. Ted Zoli said data indicates there is no significant safety enhancement for lighting bridges. He suggested there be consideration of vandalism proof sidewalk lighting, perhaps building it into the pedestrian railing. Solar-powered lighting is not technically advanced yet but LED lighting is getting better every week. He also said feature lighting could be considered and utilized either all the time or on special occasions. It was noted that the old bridge had roadway lighting but today’s standards for roadway lighting would require a style and intensity that people may not want for the new bridge.

Discussion:
Q. Is aviation lighting blinking?
A. Some blink and some do not.

The lighting on the old bridge defined the bridge within the environment even though there wasn’t much lighting produced.

Insects will be attracted to the pedestrian lighting on the sidewalks.
Q. Is solar lighting being considered?
A. No. NYSDOT experimented with solar-powered pedestrian lights ten years ago in Greenwich, NY. The lighting was pretty good but the fixtures were not attractive. The Town has since asked for permission to remove the lighting.

[Zoli] We don’t have a place to put solar panels. We would be more interested in using LED lighting as it undergoes a generational change every six months. Improvements are so rapid we don’t even spec LED lighting when we first design a job. We wait until the final stages of design because we know LED technology will have advanced.

Resolution: The PAC affirmed the use of pedestrian lighting almost unanimously.

The PAC affirmed installation of feature lighting almost unanimously. Decisions as to when and how often to light the bridge will be made at a later date.

**Bridge Elements – Form liners**
Ted Zoli showed examples of form liners that have been used to cover the surface of bridge abutments. He said some type of form liner should be used and wanted to hear the group’s views. Ted said he may use some granite in the piers for ice protection but no more than was needed.

**Discussion:**

I’d like to see some texture on the bridge’s sidewalls.

**Bridge Elements – Commemoration**

Ted Zoli said that desires for commemoration features to be located on the bridge should be communicated to him as placeholders within the next 3-4 weeks. He needs to plan for it. The main span is an opportunity for interpretation. At a minimum he thinks the state line and historic plaques may be placed on the new bridge. Is a lookout desired? Perhaps it is not needed as the sidewalk width within the arch area will expand to a 10-foot width (which includes the arch and support cables). People will be able to walk in and around the arch’s cables and there will be room for interpretation displays.

**Bridge Commemoration**

Ruth Fitzgerald said hundreds of people have written in to the website, on the on-line survey, by letter and email on ways to commemorate the old bridge. Many specific suggestions have been made. Some ideas, such as Lake Champlain T-shirts, lectures or school projects are already happening “organically”.

To move forward on implementing a commemoration program a small, ad hoc Working Group for Commemoration will be formed with a few interested PAC members,
Consulting Parties, NYSDOT, VAOT and other interested parties. This group would sort through all the ideas, research options/costs/interest, develop specific ideas within parameters and recommend an implementation plan. This plan would be reviewed and comments will made by the PAC and NYSDOT/VAOT. Once this review has been completed, a commemoration plan will be submitted to FHWA for approval. PAC members were asked to indicate their interest in participating in this committee. Ann Cousins volunteered to serve (Steven Engelhart volunteered earlier in the day). Diane Lanpher recommended a representative from the Vermont Arts Council participate and that she would consult with the individual in Vergennes who manages arts programs.

It is expected the process will be iterative. There is no specific budget as yet. People have suggested ideas to NYSDOT that range significantly in cost, e.g. funding the cost of a photograph vs. commissioning an artist to do a sculpture.

**General Discussion:**

Q. Are there any plans to extend the sidewalks beyond the limits of this project?
A. No, not at this time. It would be considered another project.

Q. Is there any date when the weight limit will go up on the temporary ferry?
A. Weight limits will go up when the second ferry slip goes in. That will be in several weeks. We hope to be able to accommodate R-permit trucks.

Q. Would you consider weighing vehicles? Some vehicles over two-axle are under the 15 ton weight limit.
A. It is not practical to put in scales. We set a two-axle, 15 ton weight limit because it’s too hard for people staffing the entrance booths to the ferry to figure out weights.

Q. What are the plans for the Charlotte/Essex ferry for next winter?
A. The ferry is owned by a private company and it will be a business decision that company makes whether or not to operate. We understand a new boat is on order that may be delivered before next winter.

Diane Lanpher reported that the State of Vermont has its share of the money in hand to fix the bridge. She said Vermont will receive federal AARA (stimulus) grants that will be available to fund other transportation projects that may otherwise have been impacted by the Lake Champlain Bridge project.

Q. What’s next?
A. We anticipate the next public meeting will be held in mid-March in Vermont. The PAC will likely reconvene in April.
In attendance:
Rep. Diane Lanpher, VT (PAC Vice-Chair)
Keith Scherer, (alternate for Sen. Little, NY)
Fred Buck, Essex County, NY
Steve Torrey, Addison, VT Selectboard
Ann Cousins, VT – historic preservation
Steven Engelhart, NY – historic preservation
Robert Moulton, VT – Addison County TAC
Tim Kayhart, Addison, VT – agriculture
Bob Smith, Addison, VT – agriculture
Kim Provencher, Addison VT – residents
Meg Wood, NY (alternate for Rep. Sayward)
Kimball Provencher, Addison, VT Selectboard
Ivan Vamos, Bicycle/Pedestrian
Ed Aufuldish, business
Carole St. Pierre, business
Rick Kehne, Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Elsa Gilbertson, Chimney Point State Historic Site
Scott Newman, VAOT Historic Preservation Officer
Jim Boni, NYSDOT
Geoff Wood, NYSDOT
Dan Landry, VAOT
Ted Zoli, HNTB
Robin Lee, HNTB
Dale Gozalkowski, Clough Harbour & Associates
Ruth Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
Jill Barrett, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.