

Stakeholder Workshops – Executive Summary

Watertown-Jefferson County Area Transportation Council
Brownville Bridge Planning Study
January 31, 2018
American Legion, Brownville
2:30 – 4:00 pm and 6:00 – 7:30 pm



Overview

On Wednesday, January 31st, 2018 the Watertown-Jefferson County Area Transportation Council (WJCTC), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, hosted two stakeholder workshops at the Village of Brownville American Legion. The purpose of the workshop was to share information about the planning study and obtain community feedback about the replacement and possible relocation of the bridge over the Black River in Brownville, NY.

This document contains a summary of feedback received at both workshops. Detailed summaries of each workshop can be found at <http://www.wjctc.org>.

Workshop Format

Representatives of the MPO and the consultant team provided a brief presentation about the project background, scope, and timeline. Attendees were then engaged in a discussion of the following questions:

- What do you like most about the Brownville bridge in its current location? What do you like least?
- What are your biggest concerns about this project?
- What are the greatest opportunities?
- What should we avoid?
- What are the most important factors the planning and design team should consider when identifying and evaluating potential new locations for a river crossing?

A copy of the presentation slides can be found on the project website. Below is a summary of feedback received during the discussion.

Summary of Feedback

A summary of the feedback received at both workshops is below. Detailed summaries of each workshop can be found at <http://www.wjctc.org>.

Positive aspects of the existing bridge:

- Relatively central location of the crossing
- Scenic views from the bridge;
- Historic character

Negative aspects of the existing bridge:

- Proximity to the Neenah paper mill and associated traffic problems with tractor trailers backing out near or across the bridge;



- Additionally, the Neenah representatives indicated that approximately 7 – 10 industrial forklifts cross NY 12E per hour on a daily basis which presents a serious concern for worker safety
- Challenges with visibility and curves;
- Steep grades in the approach on the south side of the bridge;
- Increased wait times due to traffic signals;
- Perceptions that the bridge is structurally unsound despite assurances of safety.

Concerns about the project:

- The disruption caused by replacement or reconstruction of the bridge in the current location or the length of time it would take to complete construction of a bridge in a new location;
- Impacts to private property owners if a new location is selected;
- Protection of the eastern small-footed and northern long-eared bats;
- Removal of properties from the tax rolls if a new location for the crossing is selected.

Opportunities:

- Enhanced opportunities for commerce including recreational activities and tourism;
- Potential utility connections;
- Enhanced tourism and better views of the river gorge;
- Improved pedestrian and cycling connections.

Other considerations:

- Traffic associated with pick-ups and drop-offs at the General Brown Elementary School;
- Consider bicycle/pedestrian access and links to future trails;
- Negative impacts on commerce in the Village center if a new crossing is sited too far east or west of the current site;
- New location should align with existing streets;
- Consider maintenance obligations of the new bridge.