STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

IN RE REPLACEMENT OF THE FRANK J. WOOD BRIDGE

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Public Meeting At The SMCC Mid-Coast Campus

Reported by Robin J. Dostie, a Notary Public and court reporter in and for the State of Maine, on April 5, 2017, at the SMCC Mid-Coast Campus, LL Bean Learning Commons and Health Science Center, 29 Sewall Street, Brunswick, Maine, commencing at 6:00 p.m.

REPRESENTING THE STATE: JOEL KITTREDGE
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION: CHERYL MARTIN
CASSIE CHASE

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MS. MARTIN: Okay. It's 6 o'clock, so I think we will get started. Good evening and welcome to the open house public meeting for the Frank J. Wood Bridge project. Before we get started, I did want to point out that there are restrooms down this hall here and the exits are very well marked at various locations around the room.

My name is Cheryl Martin and I'm the Assistant Division Administrator from the Federal Highway Administration Division located in Augusta. The Federal Highway Administration is the lead federal agency for this project and we use the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA process to inform our decision concerning identification of a preferred alternative. As part of this process, we have compiled information concerning various alternatives for both rehabilitation and replacement of the structure. This information, which is available on MaineDOT's website and as handouts tonight, includes engineering costs and the environmental impacts for each alternative.

The purpose of this meeting is to obtain your input, comments, concerns and thoughts regarding all aspects of the project as we contemplate the
preferred alternative. Examples of subjects that we want your input on include environmental impacts to natural resources and historic properties, bicycle and pedestrian access, design and cost consideration. However, again, we are accepting comments on any aspect of the project.

The format of this meeting is an open house and I would like to invite Cassie Chase, Maine Division Environmental Engineer, to explain the meeting format and how you can submit comments on the project.

MS. CHASE: Good evening everybody and welcome to the Frank J. Wood public meeting. My name is Cassie Chase and I'm an Environmental Engineer with Federal Highway Administration's Maine Division office. As Cheryl just mentioned, we believe the best way to hear your comments and get your input on the Frank J. Wood Bridge project is to have this public meeting beginning with a brief presentation followed by an open house. The presentation, which Joel will be giving in just a moment, will go over the alternatives currently being analyzed by MaineDOT and Federal Highway. Instead of answering questions immediately following the presentation the presentation will be followed by an open house and
tonight we have stations organized by theme, which
you probably or maybe saw when you came in tonight,
which provides you all with an opportunity to engage
in one-on-one discussions with MaineDOT and Federal
Highway team members. So some of the stations that
we have here tonight are Historic Resources, Natural
Resources to talk about the fish and wildlife
impacts. We have a Design station and there are
folks there that can also help answer questions on
existing bridge conditions. And we have a Bicycle
and Pedestrian station. So technical MaineDOT,
Federal Highway and consultant staff are at each of
those tables. You can recognize them because they
all should have a name tag and just after the
presentation feel free to float around and ask
questions at that time.

We also have a Comment station, which I'll
be standing at with David after this, and we invite
you to provide comment. We have comment sheets here
tonight, you can fill them out and we have a comment
box that you can drop them in. You can also go to
MaineDOT's website. We have that link up. There are
various areas in this room tonight that have that
link, so you can go and provide those there. We have
a court reporter here, so if you would prefer to
voice your comments in a verbal format you can
provide those to her. She'll be sitting right over
here and those comments will become part of the
project record. And we're accepting comments until
April 19. All comments that we receive, we're going
to post on MaineDOT's website and responses to
substantive comments will also be posted there.

Lastly, before handing over the presentation
to Joel, if you haven't signed-in, we encourage you
to sign-in. There is a sign-in table right up front
there, that way we can get an estimate of how many
people are attending and so, Joel, I will turn it
over to you now. Thanks.

MR. KITTREDGE: Thank you, Cassie, Cheryl.
Good evening everybody. My name is Joel Kittredge.
I'm a Project Manager with the Maine Department of
Transportation out of the Augusta office. As Cassie
said, this will be a short presentation --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can't hear you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Speak up.

MR. KITTREDGE: As Cassie said, this will be
a short presentation. The goal is just to revisit
the project overall and to highlight what we've done,
where we're at with our analysis, all of the work
that's been done to date.
So with that, this first slide is just showing us the general location overall. You can see obviously Bowdoin on one side — excuse me, Topsham on one side, Brunswick on the other, Fort Andross, Brookfield Power generating station, Sea Dog, Cabot Mill, et cetera, et cetera. Frank J. Wood Bridge, everybody here — that's familiar to everybody in this room, I've got to believe. It's a three span truss roughly 800 feet in total length.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you speak up, please?

MR. KITTREDGE: Three span truss roughly 800 feet in total length. The project bridge was built in 1931. 86 years of age.

This evening both now for this presentation right now that I am going through and then after this presentation and as you walk around the room, especially the Design Station in the back, it will be key, we have some terms here that I'd just like to go over. If you look at the graphic here the nomenclature of the superstructure is everything we'll just call it. The superstructure is above the piers and the abutments, so it's this green area in total here. The floor system and the deck system are highlighted here, which is part of the superstructure, if you will, for our purposes this
evening. And then the concrete items here and the pier, the abutments, and they are below -- they are below the truss. The overall green structural portion of the bridge itself.

More nomenclature. This is key, again, drilling down at the station in the back of the room there. Existing structural condition, we'll talk about the stringers. These longitudinal members here. The needle beams are transverse members here. Lateral bracing. X-cross frames here. Floor beams or transverse members. And the sidewalk truss itself -- excuse me, no, that's the -- yeah, the sidewalk truss, I'm sorry. The sidewalk truss itself with the -- as part of the truss itself. These are all structural members here that are key to evaluating the existing bridge and what we're trying to achieve here with a replacement or a rehabilitation. Again, this is a side view looking at the truss itself. Utility brackets. This is the roadway truss. The floor. The grid. The needle beams. So, again, this is just another way to look at this up close and personal from the profile that I showed you earlier.

Project background information. The existing configuration, the geometry of the existing
structure is two 11 foot travel lanes with 4 foot shoulders. The shoulders consist of a 2 foot paved section with a 2 foot open grid portion. Also, the 5 foot sidewalk, which is on the upstream side. And, again, for the purposes of this here just remember as you're looking at this, transverse, this is the floor beam. The stringers are running into and out of the paving and the sidewalk brackets and stringers on this side, the Brookfield side.

Just backing up here, MaineDOT inspects our bridges every two years. On a bridge of this particular nature, it's a truss type structure, we call this a non-redundant structure. It's got fracture critical details, which we're especially concerned with. In 2012 and 2014, we did a routine and fracture critical inspection of the bridge and at that point in time the deck and superstructure were rated fair. In June of 2016, we did another inspection. At this time, the deck and superstructure condition was rated poor and the condition and deterioration at that point in time dictated to us that we should go out there and do a special inspection in August. And a big upshot of that inspection there, which was the result of a special inspection where our engineers went out there
and went all over the bridge, it's posted for 25 tons in response to that inspection results thereof. And, again, it's posted for 25 tons and I think these photos speak for themselves. Very poor condition. They're in poor condition, not very poor condition. They're in poor condition. That is for, you know, that is today right there and what we have now the existing condition.

That takes us to the current maintenance project to address the conditions right now as they are today. We need to provide repairs to maintain the 25 ton weight limit that we have now. The project that is going out -- that is actually out, which they will be starting construction on eminent -- the eminent start here is a short-term five year fix. That project is going out the door. It's out there. The contractor is ready to line up. It's going to take 42 days of closure with construction complete this May 19. And, again, this is just to maintain the 25 ton posting.

Environmental considerations on our projects, historic resources. Frank J. Wood is a contributing resource to the National Register Eligible and listed properties and districts. There are parks and recreational areas involved in this,
the River Walk part, recreational areas, there is Anniversary Park as well. Endangered species, there is fish, shad. What is the regular fish there I'm trying to remember.

   AUDIENCE MEMBER:  Sturgeon.
   MR. KITTREDGE:  Thank you.  Sturgeon. Sturgeon and shad that we're concerned with. Impacts to fisheries of course. Impacts to the Androscoggin River. And of course the environmental considerations all have to be taken into account with our public process, which is the current public process, which is ongoing.

   And I think I skipped a slide there folks. I may have to go back and I apologize. The current maintenance project. Okay. A long-term solution is needed, but we're doing the maintenance fix now. Address the poor structural conditions and load capacity issues separate from the 25 ton project that we're doing right now as part of the maintenance project. So we're here -- the purpose and need, what are we going to do for a long-term fix? We need to address the poor structure conditions and load capacity issues and we need to talk about bicycle and pedestrian use, mobility and safety concerns.

   There we go. Environmental considerations
for this purpose and need on this project, this long-term project that we're trying to establish here, the right thing to do here I just went through.

Moving along to other considerations. Construction duration, how long is it going to take depending on what the fix is, if it's a rehabilitation or if it's a replacement. What are the traffic impacts, what are the impacts to folks trying to get from one side of the river to the other depending on what the fix might be. Utility impacts, what needs to be moved, what's there now, what are the long-term build-outs the needs of Brookfield. Right of way impacts, depending on if it's rehabilitation or replacement how many properties are affected and what are those impacts. The construction cost of course, that goes without saying. And a life cycle cost, which are project costs that are taken forward into the future and then brought back to a net present value with a discount rate applied.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you tell us what the difference is between the construction cost and the life cycle cost?

MR. KITTREDGE: I think what you'll see as I go through the slides --
AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, I don't mean the numbers, I mean the concepts.

MR. KITTREDGE: After the meeting, after this presentation, we'll be able to talk in depth about any questions that you may or may not -- that you may have about that kind of thing, so I guess I would ask that perhaps we wait until after the presentation and go to the stations. Thank you.

So the five preliminary design Alternatives 1 through 5, a new bridge on existing alignment, a new bridge on a curved upstream alignment, rehabilitation of the existing bridge, rehabilitation of the existing bridge with an added second sidewalk and we did take a look at a new alignment downstream of the existing structure.

So this graphic here shows what I just talked about, Alternatives 1 through 5. And, again, 1, 3, and 4 are on-alignment in some fashion, either a rehabilitation or a replacement on that alignment or the curved upstream alignment or downstream alignment.

Okay. Alternative 1, new bridge on existing alignment. It's a geometry. For any of these replacement structures, whether it's on existing alignment or on upstream or downstream, the
geometry -- the horizontal geometry is the same. It's 11 foot travel lanes with 5 foot shoulders and 2 5 foot sidewalks and barrier rail.

    Thank you. New bridge on existing alignment, construction duration is 3 1/2 years and that could be broken up between the actual time to build the temporary structure and the time to construct the bridge itself. Traffic impacts, on-site temporary detour. Utility impacts, we have to relocate existing utilities to the new bridge. Construction cost for on-alignment $16 million. Life cycle cost, $16.7 million. And the cumulative service lifetime cost for this alternative was not pursued.

    Alternative 2, a new bridge on curved upstream alignment. Again, as I said before, the geometry is the same, same width, same travel way, shoulders and 2 sidewalks, two 5 foot sidewalks. I will say that as far as these replacement alternatives, this geometry here as it's shown is 11 and 5. There is some possibility of changes in the geometry especially with regards to the sidewalk and the barrier. The barrier, if you will, I know that the Design Advisory Committee staffed by both sides of the river have been very active in trying to come
up with some creative solutions and enhanced widths
and I think there has been some progress on that and
so that's why you see 11, 5 and 5, 5 foot sidewalks.
I believe there is some room for expansion, but
that's in the event of replacement.

Next slide, please. And this is a graphic
for that. Again, this is five span structure.
Looking down, that's pretty much self-explanatory.
This is the other graphic we have. You'll note this
does show a bump-out. This bump-out was shown some
time ago. This is one of the things that we had put
forward back in April of last year. A bump-out was
something that was, you know, a possibility. Just
another thing that perhaps would be a good amenity to
any kind of a replacement structure. And, again, I
think if you talk to folks on the DAC, Design
Advisory Committee, they've been very active, very
creative, so I urge you folks to reach out for
further conversation and find out what has been done.
Pursued.

Next slide. Alternative 2, new bridge on
curved upstream alignment. Construction duration is
2 1/2 years. Traffic impacts, this is -- we're going
to maintain traffic on the existing structure so that
this will be a good thing in that case. Utility
impacts, we have to relocate existing utilities to the new bridge.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Please speak up.

MR. KITTREDGE: Sure. I apologize.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Closer to the microphone.

MR. KITTREDGE: Okay. I won't move my head. I'll stay right here. Right of way impacts to three properties. Right of way impacts, three properties affected for a curved upstream alignment.

Construction costs are $13 million. The life cycle cost is $13.7 million and a cumulative service lifetime cost of $17.3 million.

Next slide, please. Rehabilitation of the existing bridge. Proposed section. Okay. This is Alternate Number 3. Again, as I talked before, your floor beams, your stringers in and out. This is your deck itself. This is your sidewalk. Your sidewalk support. With the rehabilitation of the existing bridge you would -- there would be one sidewalk to remain on the bridge, but the floor beams and the stringers and the needle beams and the deck itself would all be removed and replaced. The chord -- truss chords and some of the cover plates on the chord would be replaced and/or improved and repaired, so this is a major, major rehabilitation of this
existing structure.

Rehabilitation of the existing bridge.

Again, as I said, it would have a new deck. New deck here, new floor beams, new stringers, sidewalk support, framing repairs on the truss itself, bottom chord repair and of course the entire bridge would need to be painted. Further on rehabilitation of the existing bridge, construction duration of three years. The traffic impacts would be an on-site temporary detour. This rehabilitation of the existing structure does not address the mobility nor safety concerns. Construction cost estimated at $15 million. Life cycle cost at almost $21 million. And if you talk about the cumulative service lifetime cost it's at $35 million.

Sir, I see you waiving your hand, but what we'll do is we'll address those questions after this presentation. Thank you.

Alternate 4, rehabilitation of the existing bridge with an added sidewalk. Alternative Number 4 is everything that we just described to you in Number 3 with the addition of a downstream sidewalk. I think the -- that's really pretty much the major difference is that does have the added sidewalk and to allow for that additional second sidewalk it would
use a light-weight bridge deck. This would not be just your standard concrete -- reinforced concrete bridge deck, but it would be a special light-weight deck configuration. Alternative 4 is a rehab with a second sidewalk. Construction duration of three years. The traffic impacts, we would have the on-site temporary detour. $17 million construction cost, $23.2 million life cycle cost and a cumulative service lifetime cost of $38.2 million.

This graphic here, again, just to get us back to where we started with the five alternatives. And with that, that concludes the presentation.

MS. MARTIN: Okay. Thanks, Joel. The presentation portion of the meeting is over and I invite and encourage you to visit the various stations throughout the room. MaineDOT, FHWA and consultant staff are available to answer your specific questions and please provide your comments on the project by your method of choice. Thank you for coming.

(Whereby several audience members spoke simultaneously voicing displeasure in the process.)

COMMENTS FOR THE RECORD

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Christine Macchi. I have a business next to the Frank Wood Bridge for 17 years
called Maine Fiber Arts and I'm in favor of keeping
the current structure and rehabbing the existing
bridge. And I am shocked and appalled that citizens
who came out tonight were not encouraged to use the
microphone to speak so that we could learn from them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name a Hugh
Maynard. I live in Bath. I cross over the Green
Bridge often and I think this whole public -- it's
not a public meeting. They call it an open house.
It's bullshit. It was advertised as a public
meeting. The format is terrible. It is
counterproductive. These people want answers. They
want to hear it in -- the whole room wants to hear
answers to the same questions. Many of these
questions are not argumentative. We're trying to
find out what the terminology means. We're trying to
figure out what, you know, what the project is. It
is useful to go around to these stations, but the
whole thing is a travesty. An absolute travesty. I
don't know why we -- people have said we could have
gotten this information online, that's right, but
we're not here to get information online. We're here
to hear answers. We're here to have our input not --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Christine Macchi.) From
the community.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Hugh Maynard.) -- from the community, not one by one going around the room. We've got well over 100 people here. We don't want to have to say the same thing over and over.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Henry D'Alesandris. And I think that because the historic significance of the mills on both sides of the bridge and the mill and the bridge itself we should keep all of that. Brunswick has a habit of getting rid of things that they shouldn't. We got rid of the high school. It was only 50 years old. I mean, I've watched these shows in Britain and I travel a lot. Every town has got something historical. They have to pay a little extra to keep it, but they have it and it's an attraction. People come to see that and we need to do something to keep this bridge. We really need it. It's a beautiful piece of construction and please let's do whatever we can to keep it. Don't worry about the -- we shouldn't worry about the money all of the time. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Robin Brooks.) This was the most undemocratic forum I've ever attended. I'm appalled at the way the MaineDOT silenced public. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Steve
Stern. I'm a party to the 106 process and the last time we met, which I couldn't go to because I seem to be working of the time, but we were told by Cassie that she would get information to us before the meeting -- more than one day before the meeting. Yesterday I received the itemized report from the MDOT. I don't think that's very fair. We don't have time to evaluate any of the data as we come in in an appropriate time frame. That's all I have.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Steve Hinchman, H-I-N-C-H-M-A-N. I am an attorney for the Friends of the Frank J. Wood Bridge and I want to voice a protest that the format of this hearing as it is preventing the public from having a dialogue. I have been approached by at least six people saying they wanted to hear the back and the forth Q and A so they can be better informed and understand what the issues of concern were with regard to specifics, for example, bike and pedestrian access and the cost of the bridge, the assumptions that go into the cost, those are just some examples so that people have been looking in detail that have questions as the questions are answered the rest of the public would be better informed. The format of this meeting has deprived people of that and many, many people are
complaining to me asking what can I do as a lawyer, so I just want to go on record as saying this format seems to be intentionally designed to suppress public dialogue and minimize criticisms and comment. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just wanted to add one thing. Henry D'Alesandris. You know, a friend of mine just said to me, you know, they show these pictures of all of the rust on the bridge and everything and they talk about it and say it really needs to be replaced, but, you know, if you have two teeth in your head that you need to pull out you don't pull them all out just because you've got two bad teeth, you know what I mean. There is things that they can fix on that bridge that they should to maintain it. And the other thing is that, you know, we feel a little railroaded here because you come to this public meeting and you want to hear the questions that everyone else has, but the way they set it up with these stations that you have to go around and talk to all of these experts, but nobody hears what the questions are. Nobody hears it, so they're really trying to keep us from communicating with each other, which I think is a very bad thing.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Arlene Morris. I live
Brunswick and I own a historic commercial building in Topsham that abuts the bridge. I just think the process today is unbelievable to not let people talk and hear. I joined the Friends of the Frank Wood -- of the Frank J. Bridge and we've been meeting for over a year, we've been following all of your -- all of the notes that come out of the MDOT and I cannot believe that you didn't give us an opportunity to tell people what we know. We know a lot. And it's just ridiculous. I'm just -- I'm just totally offended.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: John Graham. I am deeply disappointed in the format tonight. I was looking forward to hearing -- to making statements and hearing public dialogue on the bridge itself. I understand the idea of going after and having some questions answered, but I think there should have been a bit of public comment back and forth and some answers done before they did that and I believe they should try to do this meeting over so that we can have that opportunity before they close out decisions. And finally, I would like to state in the public record I am all for rehabilitation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Wallace Pinfold. And I came out this evening expecting a
public meeting rather than just a flat statement. I thought there would be people, engineers, designers, whatever to answer public questions, but I see that that hasn't happened. I don't know what the federal government's intentions was, but it looks like its mind is made up and had decided to suppress all public curiosity by giving a set presentation. So that's what I have to say.

THE REPORTER: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Wallace Pinfold.)

Certainly.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Cathy Leonard. I'd like to request that this be done again with an opportunity for the public to ask questions in a general venue where everyone gets to hear the answers from the folks who are spread around the room. This is extremely disappointing. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: J. Phinney Baxter White. My name is J. Phinney Baxter White. I was expecting to be able to speak tonight. MDOT got to speak and no one else got to speak. That is my complaint. We had a lot of information to put forward. There is a lot of new information. And a year and a week ago MDOT spoke at this meeting and said that no matter what that the bridge could only last 30 years with
rehabilitation. The bridge is now a 75 year bridge with their numbers and it would have a temporary bridge constructed the whole time so that there is no traffic impact. People don't understand that and don't know that because a year and a week ago those weren't items that were up -- that were even considered. So this was a suppression of our group, the Friends of the Frank J. Wood Bridge group. I'm a consulting party with my small business in Topsham and I feel suppressed and I think this meeting has to be held again and I think it was tipped to balance MDOT's wish to do Alternative 2. Anyway, they've got their thumb on the scale.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Cynthia Howland. I'm a resident of Water Street in Brunswick and I came out especially to this meeting to hear the alternatives and the comments of people and just to see what the -- how the land lay. I am horrified at this meeting. It's a disgrace. I was shocked that whoever organized this made no attempt to listen to the people who came out, who spent their time from doing other things to come out. They obviously did not want to hear what anyone had to say and I strongly believe this meeting needs to be held again. Thank you.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Karen Munson. I live at 15 Summer Street and I came tonight very open to hearing about the alternatives. I am first all of really annoyed that I couldn't hear what was being said and this was the second meeting that that's happened at. I made comments after the last meeting, none of them were responded to. I sent emails, so I'm disappointed in that. I came very open to listening to all of the alternatives and I'm leaving furious and I have not been this furious since I lived in this neighborhood. I have a very high level in the -- of trust in the intent and the process of government and I am feeling like that trust has been betrayed by the process tonight or the lack of it. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Sean Ruel. First of all, I'd just like to express my displeasure with the structure of the meeting. It was advertised as a public meeting and was absolutely not. It's a series of small one-on-one private meetings, which I don't think is productive. The other point I would like to make is the false decision we're making here between rehabilitating a reasonably attractive esthetically historic bridge and replacing it with a new bridge that's ugly. We don't need to do either
of those things. We could hopefully find an aesthetically pleasing signature style bridge that could serve to represent this community for generations. Recently in Portsmouth they tried to replace the Memorial Bridge over the Piscataquis River. And similarly proposed a very dull bridge and eventually after community outcry it was replaced with something that's quite pretty. And we just need to take the time to think about this now so we don't have an ugly bridge for the next 100 years. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Alexis Burgdorf Sullivan and we were just hoping to have a chance to, you know, speak up in favor of the existing bridge and it just doesn't seem like we really had a chance to do that, so we'd like another opportunity to be able to sort of like present a case for the existing bridge. I am really not in favor of this project, so we would like the chance to be able to do that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name Tom Feeley. I live right about a half mile from the bridge. I've got a 3 year old and a 6 year old and I'm concerned about increased truck traffic if they're going to be putting up a new bridge and everything. Personally, I think the area should be a residential pedestrian
neighborhood and I'm concerned about increased
traffic, increased flow of trucks and I'm
disappointed I didn't get a chance to voice my
opinion at a public hearing and I would hope that
they open this up to the public in a way that we can
actually have a dialogue. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Bruce Van Note.
I'm a resident of Topsham and I'm the Chair of the
Design Advisory Committee that was formed by the
Topsham Selectmen and the Brunswick Town Council.

And first of all, I'd like to thank Federal
Highway and MaineDOT for thoroughly considering all
the impacts before making any decision. This is a
100 year decision, it's okay to take a few months and
think about it. I respect people who respect old
things. The older I get, the more important that is.
So, again, it's very good that they looked at this
and I don't think there has been a more detailed
process to look at the impacts of this. I don't --
so if it's not the most thorough process in the
country it's got to be close to it, so I think it was
worthy.

With that said, I've got to respectfully
disagree with people who think rehabbing the bridge
is the right thing. I fully support Alternative 2,
it's the new curved upstream alignment, for three
principle reasons. The first is that the new bridge
will just be safer and more reliable. There are
literally pieces falling off that bridge. I actually
have one and I'm glad it didn't hit anybody. And
safety and reliability is the cornerstone of anything
you do. It's the mission of MaineDOT, it's the
mission of every transportation agency in the
country, so safety and reliability have to be
foremost.

The second major reason is financial. This
is a financial no brainer for the state and federal
government both in terms of initial capital cost, the
difference that's between $15 million and $19.5
million for Alternative 2 and Alternative 4
respectively. If you think longer term it's even
more of a no brainer. $17.3 million for 100 years of
life for Alternative 2 versus $38 million plus for 75
years of life. Anybody who is writing that check has
to know the right answer. And that's just state and
federal tax payers. The business impacts of the two
aren't even close. A couple -- a few weeks of
closure for Alternative 4 versus who knows how long
for alternative -- sorry, for Alternative 2 is a few
weeks of closure, Alternative 4, the rehab, much
longer.

So safety, money, those are usually reasons that a lot of decisions are made, but the biggest reason, the third, is that Alternative 2, the curved upstream alignment, would just be a better connection in so many different ways. It's going to connect the communities. The current bridge is a long green tunnel. You go on one side and you know you're in Brunswick, you have to go through a long green tunnel where you look at nothing except the trusses you go through and then you pop out and, oh, I'm on the other side. It has the effect of dividing the two. Alternative 2 is going to be low profile and totally open up the whole area. It's going to be very liberating. People are going to think of the Pejepscot Falls site, not Brunswick, bridge, Topsham. It's going to be one big site that's connected. People will be able to sit up at the Frontier and look down at the Sea Dog and the Sea Dog up to the Frontier, hey, maybe we should be go down there because it's wide open. People are going to see the architecture on both side and go, hey, why don't we go over there. It's just a very big feeling of openness. So it's going to connect the communities, it's going to connect all users.
The curved upstream alignment has much better facilities for bicycles, pedestrians than anything you do with the old bridge can as to be expected. They built the old bridge in 1931 using technology they had then. This is going to be just wide open with very wide sidewalks that people haven't even seen yet. Very well integrated into the site. The railings are going to be beautiful. The lighting is going to be beautiful. It's going to be a place people want to go, so it's going to connect pedestrians to the site. It's going to connect it to the parks that are there. It's going to connect it to pedestrian facilities. To the west you have the River Walk, which will connect right to this bridge. There is a potential for a pedestrian underpass so you don't even have to cross at grade. Completely safe. So you can go one side to the other in Topsham without even having to deal with a car. And it's going to connect with the Pejepscot Falls.

Alternative 2 actually leap frogs over the falls, so instead of being on one side or the other it doesn't cover them up. A lot of people care about the falls, so do I. You're still going to be able to see them.

So Alternative 2 is clearly the better choice in my view, but I know change is hard. We sit
here on a base that was closed several years ago. I
grew up in this area, I know what it was like when
that announcement came. There was a lot of shock,
dismay, fear. Things are changing, things are bad.
Well, we're sitting in this facility, CMCC, on the
front page of the Times Record today they talked
about a new set of jobs coming in. We don't have all
of the jobs back, but the ones that are here are much
more resilient and not subject to the whims of people
in DC. So change, although hard here, has been good
and the same thing is going to happen here. If you
accept and embrace change it's going to be good and
this is going to be very good, so I am very hopeful
that Federal Highway and MaineDOT select Alternative
2. With that said, that's my opinion. I'm really
glad they took all of the other people's opinions
because this is a long-term decision that should be
thoroughly considered and I think they've done a
great job doing that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Gavin Engler.
I live in Brunswick. I absolutely support
rehabilitation of the existing bridge one way or the
other. 100 percent oppose the new proposed
construction. I just think that aesthetically and in
regards to the community it's wildly inappropriate.
The existing bridge is an iconic piece of our towns and without it everyone would be really -- I think if it was erased our communities would regret it and replacement is a short-sighted decision based on financial impacts and some things are more important than money, so rehabilitate the bridge, please.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Evan Duda. I am 100 percent for rehabilitating the Frank Wood Bridge. I think in regards to the financial decision, which is where these alternatives came from it's undermining and short selling the landscape of our community and the state. I think it's absolutely important that the bridge maintains its esthetic properties for the historic image of these two towns. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. I'm Scott Hanson, resident of Topsham and I strongly support rehabilitation of the Frank J. Wood Bridge. I also strenuously object to the format of this so-called public meeting tonight. It needs to be done over and the public needs to be able to hear each other on this topic. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Tony Barrett and I love the work that's gone into the various designs and I like the accommodations for bicycling
and pedestrians and Alternative 2 for the bridge design looks great. And I hope some of the amenities that the Topsham and Brunswick Design Advisory Committee would be incorporated by MaineDOT in final design.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: All right. My name is Alicia Heyburn. I'm a resident of Brunswick. In my professional life I work in land conservation and river restoration and so it is rare for me to advocate for new construction or development, but in this instance I am strongly in favor of replacing the existing bridge with Alternative Number 2. The reason for that is that it's a much longer life span, much better investment and use of our infrastructure dollars primarily. Number two, is I feel that it's extremely beautiful, the new simple design because it opens up the view to the river. And in my work, opportunities to connect people to place through a direct experience such as walking across the bridge and having a view of the beautiful river gives them an opportunity to learn more about the river. I know that we have the chance to build bump-outs and have informative signs, which can talk about the migratory fish that come up through the Androscoggin. And the third reason is that I'm a cyclist and it's quite an
inconvenient roundabout route to get from my downtown Brunswick to my primary destinations in Topsham in a safe way and I would like to be able to go straight across the bridge at that point. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Nancy E. Randolph. I actually have served on the board of selectmen in Topsham and the town council in Brunswick. I might be the only person. I have actually served on the committee and actually spearheaded that committee in rehabilitating the Swinging Bridge that's just up river from this bridge. I right now serve on a non-profit that maintains the Swinging Bridge because the towns don't want to spend any local dollars maintaining it even as they didn't spend any local dollars rehabbing that bridge and therein lies the problem. Locally, we never want to spend any local dollars maintaining a bridge and we go back in history back to every main street bridge, every -- you know, the Pedestrian Bridge, the Swinging Bridge and even the Black Bridge, both towns wanted the other town to pay for it and it takes a long time for either town to do anything, so I want a new bridge with a little maintenance for 100 years. I know that when a rehab project is specified with money it's never enough. The Swinging Bridge was twice what we
expected and that was with us really holding the
reigns on things. It always costs more. There is
always something that has to be done and I know that
although people who are -- there are people who are
very, very strongly wanting to keep this bridge and
they think the numbers are too high to rehabilitate.
I know that when you open up any rehab whether it's
bridge, building or even an old car it's always more
expensive because when you open it up you find rot
and broken parts that can't be replaced without
rebuilding and making. So I know we need a new
bridge to serve us all, serve the people who are
walking, serve people who are in cars and on bicycles
and that's it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Evan Duda and I
would like to request that MDOT provides another
public hearing where the community can ask questions
and they can answer in a public and shared
discussion. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (William Morin.) I've got
a question, where do we go next from here? Well, I
think it was a nice presentation here, but I think
obviously people wanted to get answers in a different
format and sort of like a town meeting, somebody gets
up and asks a question, sit down again and get some
of those basic questions, cut it off at a certain
time and then send people over to see these displays
because they're all wonderful and then all of the
other people around it that way, so I think everybody
kind of felt cutoff.

THE REPORTER: Do you have a preference on
rehab versus new?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (William Morin.) Well, I
definitely have a preference.

THE REPORTER: If you would like to state
that and why, that would be great.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (William Morin.) Well, I
have in my other documents that I sent, but I think
it's -- one of the major things I think -- I know the
money as it was presented tonight in the five
alternatives the money is a problem. Well, it's
glaring. It is a more expensive proposition to rehab
the bridge, but the -- it will preserve the
Brunswick/Topsham industrial historical district and
will not negatively impact the area if it's torn down
and a girder bridge is put up. But in spite it
costing more at this time and maybe a little bit more
later on this site is basically -- I will take the
word basically out. It's a very attractive area and
Brunswick in itself is a very attractive area for
tourists and visitors and they visit the downtown area and they gravitate towards the falls where the bridge is and it's very much of an attraction and only a short distance up the river from the Green Bridge is the Pedestrian Bridge that was rehabbed almost 10 years ago. The State of Maine paid basically all of the costs of the federal monies and all of that. And I live very close to that and they in summertime especially during the day there usually somebody is stopped on the highway or parked on the Brunswick side and sometimes on the Topsham side and walking around the bridge area looking at the bridge and the river and the falls and all of that sort of thing. So it's turned into a great physical tourist attraction and then you have people down there taking pictures if they're having their prom. One night I thought they were getting married, but they weren't. It looked like a wedding scene, but it's one of these attractive things and so what I'm saying is that this is a, you know, a tourist attraction. There is no charge for it, but people tend to gravitate. It's called historical -- what do you call it -- tourism or whatever, so a lot -- that is getting very, very popular. This bridge can certainly -- the current bridge could certainly fill that bill and would add
to it and I think there would be a lot of income to local restaurants and other businesses that cater to visitors and tourists, whatever. So that's why I think it's -- I think you get more money out of it if you keep the bridge. You won't get it all in the same year though. You'll have good years and bad years. Okay. I think that's good.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Robert Wiener.) My comment is that the -- I -- I strongly favor the rehabilitation option. I think the existing bridge is an essential part of the character of both towns and the historic fabric of the historic district and it's irreplaceable. I think it would be a great loss to the -- as I say, to the historic character of both towns and the historic district. I think it has -- I think it has value in and of itself, but I understand that as far as the evaluations that have been done its primary value has been found to be -- as it is part of that fabric of the district -- the historic district, but I just -- I feel strongly that it should be rehabilitated. It would be a great loss not to do that. I guess that's it.

Oh, I also feel -- one more thing. I think it was unfortunate that there was not public comment -- spoken comment at this meeting. I think
that they missed an opportunity for the public to
hear each other's point of view and by doing them all
in writing and privately I think it is a way of
undermining the public process. I think that's
unfortunate. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Donald Gower, G-O-W-E-R.
I don't know where to begin. I'm on two committees
here in the Topsham/Brunswick area, the Androscoggin
River Walk and the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge
Committee, so my focus is on pedestrian and bicycle
safety. So I'm concerned about the develop -- I'm
concerned about the original bridge design because it
only offers a 4 foot bike lane, which are going to
have metal railings next to you and also grating that
will prevent you from taking advantage of a safe ride
across the bridge, so in that aspect I'm in favor of
the new bridge. Also on the sidewalk, I think it's
comparative to have sidewalks on each side, which the
new design has anyway, but also at either or both
ends of the bridge to have a pass-under so you have
safety for people who want to cross that very busy
road without stopping traffic, which is in itself a
problem. We don't want to stop the traffic. For
safety, particularly for young kids and families,
they would be able to cross under the bridge to get
to say the Sea Dog or to the park on the Brunswick side. Also, there has been recently some money allocated for a design of the River Walk portion in Brunswick and I'd like to see how that incorporates with the new design for the bridge so there is safe travels up through there, which I suppose they will do.

But I would make one other additional comment, which maybe is outside the scope of this particular project, but from the Swinging Bridge in Brunswick we should determine a method to get a sidewalk on the Topsham side of Route 1 up to the Black Bridge and connect to the sidewalk that's just south of there up towards Pleasant Street. There is a need for people particularly in Topsham to cross the bridge and go up to all kinds of businesses. There is Dunkin Donuts, there is a bar in there, there is McDonald's, there's Cumberland Farms all on that right side of the road and there is no real easy way to get across Pleasant Street or Route 1 safely. So if we had a continuous sidewalk from Maine Street Brunswick all the way to Pleasant Street on the Topsham river side, on the river side of Route 1 that would be a big benefit for everyone. That covers my thoughts. Thank you. I appreciate it.
(Meeting concluded at 8 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

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:

____________________________________
Court Reporter/Notary Public


DATED: April 12, 2017

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