

SOUND BEACH AVE BRIDGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Sound Beach Avenue Bridge near Binney Park is scheduled to be replaced starting in the summer of 2020. Please visit the page on the Town's website that is specifically about this project for further information. <https://www.greenwichct.gov/1606/Sound-Beach-Avenue-Bridge-No-03954>

DPW has already provided answers to many questions we have received from a variety of sources. Please review this list and check back frequently to the Town's website for further updates.

General Questions:

Why do we need this project?

The existing Sound Beach Avenue Bridge was built in 1925 and rehabilitated in 1977. The bridge has been rated in POOR condition and is in need of replacement.

What happens if this bridge is not completed? What impact would it have to delay this project to 21/22 budget cycle?

Due to the POOR rating of the bridge, if nothing is done, the bridge is subject to be posted for a weight limit, or worst case, may be required to be posted for closure in one or both directions.

What will the project entail? How does this plan differ from the previous plan that was submitted?

The project will be a bridge replacement only. The bridge itself will be raised approximately 2.5 feet. (see more below). The project does not impact the traffic circle, the library property, nor construct a roundabout.

Is this the same project that was voted against during the Municipal Improvement(MI) process in 2018?

No. The prior proposal included a full roundabout at the intersection of Laddins Rock Road, Harding Road and Sound Beach Ave intersection as well as raising Sound Beach Avenue from Arch Street to Wesskum Wood Road. None of these are part of the bridge project.

What changes will be done to Binney Park as part of this project?

There will be minimal impacts to Binney Park as part of this project. It is anticipated that within about 50 feet of the bridge, the ground will be graded and blended in but it will be minimal. There are no retaining walls, hand railings, guiderails etc. proposed in Binney Park.

Is this project being forced upon the Town by the CTDOT or others at the state/regional level?

The project is to maintain the critical infrastructure owned by the Town. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and CTDOT recommends that the Town maintains its bridges. Sound Beach Avenue is a town road and therefore the Town is responsible for maintaining the bridge.

What changes to the project would be proposed if state funding was not involved?

The Town is utilizing the CTDOT Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program funding. This program funds 100% of the construction costs. The Town is responsible for 100% of the design and permitting costs. As part of the funding, there are no specific requirements that would change the design of the project.

Public Involvement Questions:

How many public meetings have been held about this project?

The Town has held 3 formal public information meetings. November 21, 2013, May 18, 2017, and January 25, 2018. In addition to these meetings the Town has presented to the Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, and at RTM District Meetings on several occasions. Individual meetings with other small groups of residents have also occurred. During all these meetings the bridge replacement has been included and the design of the bridge has not changed significantly.

Why should action be taken now while the COVID-19 stay at home order is in place?

The project has been in the works since 2012. The bridge is in poor condition and is in need of replacement. In addition, the bridge in Binney Park on Wesskum Wood Road is scheduled for reconstruction starting in summer 2021 and both projects cannot be under construction concurrently.

Old Greenwich has had a lot of construction in recent years (MNR Bridges, Dredging, Sound Beach Drainage). Why do this now?

DPW continues to maintain the aging infrastructure of the Old Greenwich community to improve the area. Bridges are designed to last between 50-75 years. This bridge is approaching 100 years old. The bridge has been rated in POOR condition and is in need of replacement.

What does the Town do in order to contact private property owners impacted by the proposed construction?

Beyond the numerous public meetings stated above, the Town works directly with the property owners that have direct impacts to their property as part of the bridge construction project on an individual basis.

Bridge Raising Questions:

Please give details clarifying the need to raise the bridge height.

The current FEMA flood map elevation is 11 feet at this location. Federal and state design guidance recommends bridges be constructed 1-2 feet above the FEMA flood map elevation or as close to that as possible based on the topography. Due to proximity to the park and private property the Town is proposing this bridge to be built at elevation 11.

Will the project require the raising of the circle/ road/sidewalks near the library?

The proposed bridge project will not impact the traffic circle, the road, or the sidewalk near the library.

Is Binney Park tidally influenced or floods by high tide events?

Due to sea level rise and climate change impacts, Binney Park has seen more instances of tidally influenced flooding in recent years. In December 2018, the State of Connecticut adopted a scenario indicating that sea level rise will be 20 inches higher by 2050.

Can they dig the drainage way deeper rather than replace the bridge?

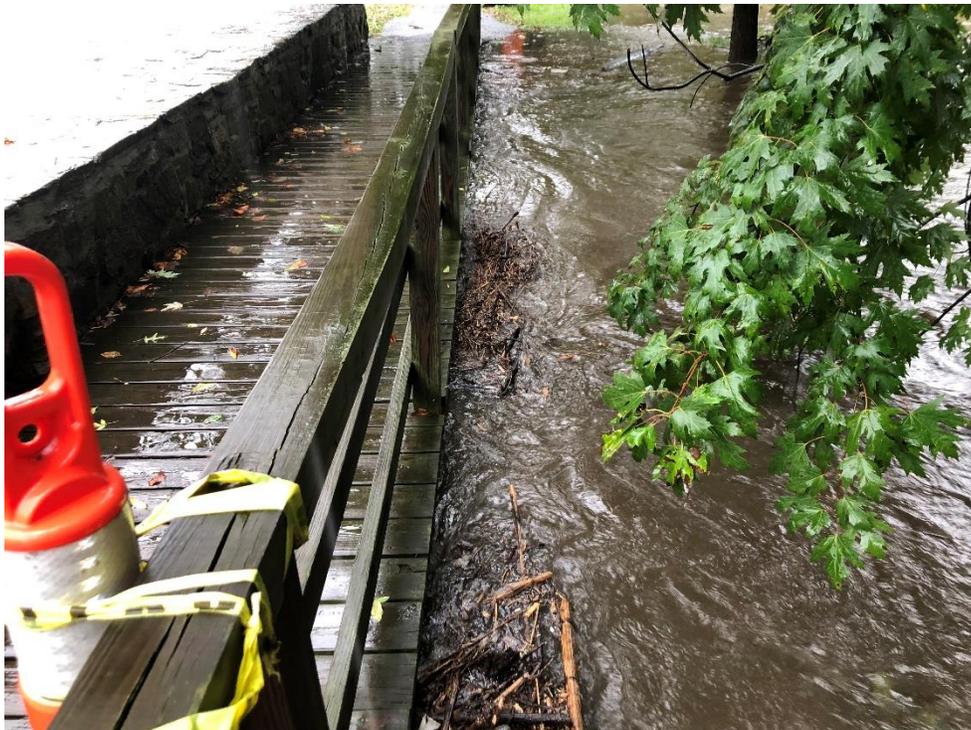
Digging the drainage channel deeper will not require the bridge to be lowered. The elevation is established due to tidal influences.

Didn't the dredging of Binney Pond improve/eliminate the flooding in this area?

The dredging of Binney Pond was a water quality improvement which removed sediment from the pond. It did not modify the drainage/hydraulics of the water way.

I have never seen flooding in this area? Why do we need to raise the bridge?

During Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the elevation of the flooding in this area was elevation 10.2. The current height of the bridge is at elevation 8.5 feet. As recently as 2018 during a high intensity/short duration event (see photo below), the height of the water was above the bottom of the bridge deck.



Aesthetics of the Bridge Project:

Will this bridge maintain the current scenic/historic look/entryway of the area? What are you doing to make the bridge aesthetically pleasing/match the existing?

The bridge will be designed to look and feel the same as the current bridge with stone walls behind the sidewalk, asphalt roadway and concrete sidewalks that match the surrounding area. The view from Binney Park will remain very similar with the New England stone bridge look.

Is Sound Beach Avenue considered a scenic road?

Sound Beach Avenue is not a designated scenic road. The bridge is being designed with the New England stone bridge look.

Will the project propose to cut down trees?

The project as currently proposed does not require any tree removal.

Will guiderails be installed? Won't that change the way the bridge will look?

The Town does not plan to install guiderails as part of the project. There are certain safety requirements that the new design must meet that will require the walls behind the sidewalk to be curved away from the road further than they currently are which will be a very minor visual change.

Traffic Impact:

Will the project make changes to the roadway to make it more of a highway versus the scenic look it has now?

There are no proposed modifications to roadway. The project is going to maintain the current look it has now.

How much traffic increase would be anticipated as a result of this project?

DPW does not anticipate a change to the traffic as a result of the project as no traffic improvements are incorporated in the design of the project. During the construction the roadway will be closed for approximately 2 months which will require a detour around the area which adjacent roads may see an increase in traffic however this will be temporary.

How will this project improve pedestrian safety?

The only pedestrian improvements proposed to the area are the replacement of existing sidewalks in the area that will be the same width and materials as currently exist. All sidewalks will be ADA compliant. No additional crosswalks, signage or other improvements are proposed as part of this project.