

CLC Meeting Minutes, November 27, 2019

Highway 101 Twinning – Three Mile Plains to Falmouth

West Hants Municipal Chambers – 6 PM to 8 PM

Attendees

Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Members:

Dave Crouchman Shelley Bibby Darren Porter Mark Phillips
Liz Galbraith Todd Richard Mike Oulton
Sheldon Hope Martin Laycock Colin Hines Chris Mansky (for Sonja Wood)

Regrets: Sonja Wood, Andrew Sheehy, Randy Hussey, Colin Hines

Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR): Bob Pett, Lyle Russell

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA): Kevin Bekkers

Design Consultants (CBCL): Bob Rutherford

Independent Chair: Ken Donnelly

Minutes taken by: Ken Donnelly

1. Introductions

Members of the CLC introduced themselves.

2. Review Agenda

The agenda was approved without change.

3. General Update – Bob Pett

Using a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix), Bob Pett led an update on the overall project.

a. Highway 101 Twinning Construction Update (TIR – Lyle Russell)

Lyle Russell provided an update on construction.

Schedule

- Project is on track for a 5-year with completion in the Fall of 2022.
- Highway between the Windsor and Falmouth railway crossings (Section 2) will be constructed in 2020-2022 including the Avon River aboiteau, causeway, and Exits 6 and 7.
- Partial infilling for widening of the causeway is planned to begin in January as it will require time for consolidation (settlement) due to the soft sediments in the Avon Estuary/River.

Work Completed to Date:

- Subgrade for Section 1: Highway 101 westbound lanes, from Trunk 14 (Exit 5) to the Windsor Railway Overpass
 - Excavation and fill placement (earthworks) – 3.4 km
- Bridge Structures at Exit 5 (Trunk 14) and Exit 5A (Wentworth Road) for new westbound lanes
- Subgrade for Section 3: Highway 101 eastbound lanes, from Falmouth Twinning to Station 12+400 – 2.4 km
- Bridge Structures at Trunk 1 and Falmouth Railway Overpasses for new eastbound lanes
 - Bridge foundations (pile installation, abutments)
- Girders, bridge deck, barrier walls

Work Scheduled for 2019:

- Bridge Structures at Trunk 1 and Falmouth Railway Overpasses
 - Bridge deck, barrier walls, approach slabs, approach gravels, final site stabilization & securement.
- Paving for Phase 1: Highway 101 westbound lanes, from, Trunk 14 (Exit 5) to Windsor Railway Overpass
 - Base gravels, asphalt paving, signage, pavement markings, streetlighting, ramp construction, guardrail final site clean-up and opening to traffic.
- Bridge Structure at Windsor Railway Overpass
 - Bridge foundation, structural plate tunnel, approach gravels, final site stabilization & securement.

Future Contracts (2019):

- Initial Causeway Widening
 - Infilling/surcharging for new westbound lanes along causeway and dyke system.
- Section 2 Paving
 - Completion of gravels, paving, signage, guardrail, etc.
- Phase 1 Eastbound Subgrade
 - Widening of existing lanes, gravelling, replacement of existing Trunk 14 and Wentworth Road Overpass Structures.

Discussion:

Lyle also mentioned that a wildlife corridor was included in the construction, to facilitate safe crossing of the highway. He clarified that there would be barriers included to funnel wildlife to the crossing area. The committee was pleased to see this, and it was noted that the crossing is being constructed at a spot where wildlife crossing is currently frequent.

In reply to a question, Lyle said that the infilling for the expansion of the causeway will not increase flooding, and that the infilling is only happening on the downstream side of the causeway.

Lyle also clarified that geo-mesh is an engineered sub-grade material that is a substitute for gravel and reduces the amount of traditional material required.

In a question about concrete or asphalt as the surface of the bridges, Lyle explained that it is being evaluated and a decision has not yet been made.

4. Archaeological Program Update (TIR – Bob Pett)

Bob Pett provided an update on the Archaeological Program. The presentation was detailed with many photos and maps. The presentation is attached in the Appendix.

5. Aboiteau Update

Bob Pett updated the committee on the aboiteau.

Bob said that the aboiteau design and modelling are still underway and there is no update on the physical structure.

He advised the committee that there is an adjustment in the placement of the aboiteau. A diagram is available in the presentation in the Appendix.

Bob also stated that the toe berm construction, which will facilitate the expansion of the causeway, will begin in January. It is anticipated that it will take a significant amount of time for it to settle.

Discussion:

Darren Porter asked if there was a requirement for fish habitat loss compensation as there is for wetlands compensation. There is not.

The Project Team responded to a series of questions about the status of the aboiteau design:

- The aboiteau detailed design is still underway
- When it is complete, it will be submitted to DFO for review
- There is one design being pursued, DFO has no requirement or expectation of more than one design being presented for review
- There has been no “coaching” by DFO on the design

Darren Porter updated the Committee on the results of a DFO investigation on the operation of the existing aboiteau gate last spring. He voiced displeasure that DFO found no fault. He said as a result, he has no trust in the operation.

Chris Mansky said he was concerned that the new design would allow for fish to be flushed out of the reservoir if a large gate was open. He said that he was concerned about the aboiteau design and noted that there will be 2 bridges built and the Committee had been told before that the cost of bridges that would be required for tidal flow restoration was too high. He said he did not have trust in the project.

Kevin Bekkers told the Committee that they are currently working with an old aboiteau with insufficient fish passage. They are doing the best they can with an aging system. The intent of the project is to design and build a new aboiteau which will have the flexibility in operation to allow for improved fish passage.

1. Liz Galbraith asked why there was no fishing in the St. Croix River, and if there could be. Darren Porter said he did not know for sure why fishing was not allowed there, but it was probably to protect the habitat. He said the fishing there would be so poor that there is no merit in pursuing the ability to fish there.

Liz Galbraith expressed concern about the impact of the NSP dam operations and wondered if NSP's operations could be integrated into the causeway system. The response was that the NSP dam operations were subject to a scheduled review by DFO.

6. Habitat offsetting project for partial loss of Windsor Marsh: Truro-Onslow Salt Marsh Restoration Project

Bob Pett presented the details about a habitat restoration project in the Truro area. The restoration of the Truro-Onslow Salt Marsh will be initiated in December by allowing existing dykes to be breached. The salt marsh restoration will partially offset the loss of marshland in Windsor due to the twinning project. Details can be found in the presentation in the Appendix.

Committee members generally enthusiastically supported the project, however some expressed disappointment that habitat restoration was not being done locally.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Appendix – Presentation Slides