

Summary Report for Hardwick Village Bridge Revival Workshop July 17, 2021

Introduction

On a warm Saturday in July upwards of 50 individuals of all ages gathered under the tent at the Daniels parking lot at the end of Bridge Street in the center of Hardwick’s bustling village/downtown. The purpose of this gathering was to conduct a workshop to consider the future of the historic pedestrian bridge which had served the community since the late 1800s as a pedestrian only connection between North Main Street and the neighborhood on the other side of the Lamoille River. The bridge was no longer safe due to deteriorating conditions and the loss of a cable support.

The workshop had been well promoted locally, and the intent was to garner citizen input and preferences for a bridge replacement and to consider the areas for enhancement around the bridge. After an informal site tour with a number of attendees, billed as a “Walk and Talk” activity, the event formally began with a welcome and overview from Eric Remick, Chair of the Town Selectboard. A brief account of the bridge’s history was provided by Elizabeth Dow, also a Selectboard member and representing the Hardwick Historical Society. A summary of the bridge conditions and safety issues, as well as options for replacement, was presented by Bob Neeld, P.E. Structural Engineer from Engineering Ventures. The “charge” for the workshop participants was orchestrated by David Raphael, Landscape Architect and Planner from LandWorks.

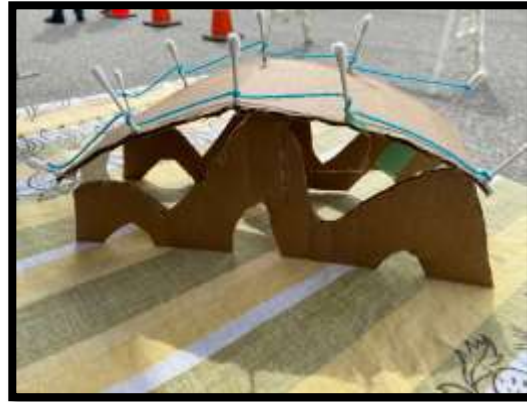
The workshop participants were provided with a handout that provided a range of bridge designs to rank in order, with instructions to rank the most desired design first, and then to provide 2nd and 3rd choices. Hardwick citizens were also asked to consider improvements in the areas around the bridge, including the bridge landing and entry on N. Main Street, as well as the other side and the riverbanks adjacent to the bridge.



Elizabeth Dow presents the bridge history and local kids provided lemonade at the workshop!



Workshoppers in action as they work in breakout Groups led by Hardwick town leaders.



One of the wonderful models created by children from the Hardwick Beach Camp.

Results of the Workshop

A tabulation of well over 100 responses yielded the following overarching conclusions:

1) A bridge that retained some of the look and feel of the bridge replacement was voiced as the top choice by the majority of residents participating. The preferred design option, by far, was the bridge design shown below – the arch and suspension design was a clear favorite as it added something new - the arch – but retained the suspension bridge design for the actual bridge walkway itself.



The rendering above was selected by twice as many respondents as the 2nd choice.

2) A second distinct interest voiced by respondents was to retain some of the look of the old bridge, perhaps with some reference to the existing uprights at the bridge ends that have the “star-like” pattern.

3) There was also a lot of support for Most respondents supported a bridge that included lighting, was wide enough for bikes and wheelchairs, and incorporated in it or near some forms of public art.

“Retain some quiet spaces”

“Make it an attraction, make it a draw and an economic asset”

Transcribed Notes from the 3 Workshop Break-out Groups

The following notes were transcribed from the workshop break-out groups newsprint sheets:

Group #1

From a Hardwick “kid”

A Bouncy bridge

Parking area not easily accessible

Many very attached to the “movement” of the swinging bridge

Suspension preference – for height and lighting

Bring truss from old bridge

Incorporate nature in bridge

River access

Wayfinding signs/stories

Make sure nothing now makes more impossible or more ???

Access to the river

Places to contemplate (lower is quieter)

Design that is low maintenance (to avoid future cost to town budget) – such as open sided contemporary covered bridge (not fake historic)

How close do we have to follow ADA for river access?

Overlooks to the bridge

Bridge of flowers in Shelburne, MA is very nice – public art/flowers/lights

Permanent lighting

Custom bridge

Unique to Hardwick

Group #2

Connect to Rail Trail

Snow removal?

Sidewalk plow

Accessible/wheelchair

Bounce/swing – maybe not necessary?

Visibility up to river

See-thru

Unique/attractive “destination”

Cascading evergreens- flowers

“flare” in bridge

walk bike or bike parking

width necessary

curve(?)

weight of bridge and snow load (biggest are loads)
snowload 40 lb./sq ft
4'2" current width
no salt on bridge
river clearance
park on Daniels side/move parking back
EV charging
Steps to river
Pavilion/wifi
Wayfinding as part of the improvements

Group #3

Wider (at least 2 people)

- Year round use/maintenance
- Accessible for all
- Snow removal issue
- Accommodates bikes
- Observational opportunity (the bridge itself)
- Optimize the entrance areas on both sides
- Some people uncomfortable with “sway” (ADA issue?)
- Historic, respectful
- Not a replica
- Invites access to river
- Terraced access – path (not stairs)
- Green space surround
- Bike racks
- Bike maintenance station (tools, etc)
- Benches
- Picnic tables

Cost factor considerations

High flood resilience

- 1) Attractiveness = Income (Business to Town)
- 2) Ease of maintenance
- 3) Durability = long life (minimize repairs)
- 4) Federal dollars available

Style

- Not red example
- Not Cottage Street bridge style
- #7 (pg 2) Open covered bridge
- #8 (pg 1) Truss/suspension bridge
- #4 (pg 2) Steel suspension

HARDWICK VILLAGE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE WORKSHOP REPORT



There was support fro some reference to the old bridge
In the design of a new pedestrian bridge for Hardwick

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

Prepared by LandWorks, Landscape Architects and Planners
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