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DOT rethinking Farley bridge plans amid Stony Point residents' concerns

By [KHURRAM SAEED](#)
THE JOURNAL NEWS

(Original publication: September 28, 2007)

Heeding public outcry, the state Department of Transportation is taking another look at its plans to replace the deteriorating James A. Farley Memorial Bridge in Stony Point.

The 85-year-old Route 9W bridge will still be replaced with a larger span, but perhaps with one not as wide as planned, said Nicolas Choubah, a regional structures engineer with the DOT.

Improvements to the busy intersection of Route 9W and Main Street, which some residents have said were excessive and unnecessary, are also being reconsidered.

That might mean the state wouldn't have to acquire as much private property, which had been a sore point with local businesses.

Not having to buy land would lower the project's cost, which is estimated to be \$16.5 million.

"I don't want to tell you we have a solution yet, but by November, I'm hoping we'll have something that addresses most of the concerns that have been presented," Choubah said yesterday. "The driving principle of our analysis is to come back with a solution ... that has less impact to the community than what we presented."

Work would begin in late summer or fall 2009, four months later than the original start date, and take two years to complete.

In June, more than 130 town residents and elected officials called on the DOT at a public hearing to consider reducing the size of the replacement bridge, which would have three lanes instead of the existing two, new shoulders and sidewalks.

"I'm very glad they are reconsidering and listening to the people of the town. There's not a whole lot of business in this town, and taking out some of them will hurt it," said Phillip Laquidara, whose business, Shell Ann Printing, at the south end of the Farley bridge, could be purchased by the state as part of the project. "It's not that easy to relocate. There's not a lot of space in this town."

Whether to replace the Farley bridge, which spans Cedar Pond Brook, is not controversial. During a recent DOT inspection, it was given a rating of 3.99 out of seven and two yellow flags for corrosion on a non-weight-bearing piece of the deck truss and for corrosion on a floor beam.

Bridge safety

The James A. Farley Memorial Bridge in Stony Point is one of five bridges recently flagged by the state for additional attention. Reinspections were ordered this summer after a deck-truss bridge in Minneapolis collapsed and killed 13 people. To search the database summarizing the findings, visit [LoHud.com/data](#) and click the first link under "Transportation."

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Even if changes are made to the bridge's design, the DOT must still decide whether the new span will be built to the east or the west of the existing bridge. A bridge built to the east would mean demolition of a home and two commercial buildings at East Main Street and Route 9W, including the Civil War-era Malloy Building. The other option would mean the loss of two commercial buildings, including Shell Ann Printing.

George Potanovic, president of the Stony Point Action Committee for the Environment, said the town couldn't afford to lose any more of its landmark buildings, which, he said, give it its historic, small-town American character.

"It's nice to see that the DOT is trying to be responsive to the community's concerns," said Potanovic, a Town Board candidate this November.

The DOT is only considering the east or west option because half of the existing bridge would continue to serve north-south traffic while the new bridge was being built. The following year, traffic would be shifted to the new bridge while the rest of it is built.

Choubah said one issue not up for debate is detouring traffic to local streets while a bridge is built.

Town Supervisor Phil Marino understood changes were inevitable in order to bring the new bridge up to modern standards.

"I can't fool myself that there will be zero impact," Marino said.

But he remained hopeful that they would have a minimal effect.

"I anxiously await to see what they come up with," Marino said.

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