



April 11, 2023

West Main Street Bridge Over Nonacoicus Brook Replacement Project Frequently Asked Questions

Below please find answers developed by Ayer DPW to frequently asked questions about the West Main Street Over Nonacoicus Brook Bridge Replacement Project.

1. What other funding sources are available for the project?

A: The Town currently has approximately \$1M from prior local appropriations and \$500,000 from the MassDOT Small Bridge Grant. The Town continues to seek alternative funding sources for the project including, but not limited to, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law opportunities, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and various State and Federal funding opportunities including working with the Town's legislative representatives.

2. What happens if the Town does not vote to authorize the recommended funding?

A: There is a risk of the bridge deteriorating further and resulting in closure. This would have impacts on public safety / emergency response and regional connections including the schools. The Town would continue to seek alternative funding sources. Note that even with approval of the funds, the Town is currently and will continue to seek alternative sources to reduce the local funds required for the project.

3. What alternatives were considered?

A: Below is a brief summary of the main alternatives considered. The selected option is Phased Construction. Some main points when selecting the alternative are the need to maintain traffic flow due to the impacts from a 5.8 mile detour. Additionally, the condition of the bridge is such that construction should commence expeditiously.

West Main Street Bridge Over Nonacoicus Brook Replacement Project
 Frequently Asked Questions

West Main Street BRI					
Alternative	Description	Schedule	Cost	Pro	Con
1	Full Replacement with Detour	*2023 Construction (assuming obtain bridge - lead time issues)	*Least Expensive	*Fastest Schedule *Least Expensive	*5.8 mile detour causes major impacts to public safety and regional travel (including schools)
2	Phased Construction - One Lane	*2023 through 2024 Construction	*Moderate to High Expense	*No detour	*2-year construction schedule *More expensive
3	Install a temporary bridge at the closed Shirley Street Bridge to use as a detour	*2023 design/permitting Shirley St *2024 construction of Shirley St *2025 Construction of West Main Street	*Moderate to High Expense	*No detour	*Schedule - West Main Bridge not started until 2025 *Detour on local roads not recommended, trucks unlikely to navigate detour *Do not obtain permanent solution at Shirley Street Bridge
4	Full Replacement of Shirley Street Bridge and used as detour to construct West Main Street Bridge	*2023 design/permitting Shirley St *2024 construction of Shirley St *2025 Construction of West Main Street	*Moderate to High Expense	*No detour	*Schedule - West Main Bridge not started until 2025 *Detour on local roads not recommended, trucks unlikely to navigate detour *Selected alternative for Shirley Street Bridge permanent solution has not been determined (e.g. complete removal, full replacement, pedestrian bridge only, etc.)

4. What are the financial impacts on a typical residential tax bill?

A: The funding request at \$3.0M would add **\$63** to the average **FY2024 residential** tax bill in Ayer.

5. What is the estimated cost to complete the project?

A: The estimated cost is \$4.5M, including construction and contingency.

6. Why is the project critical?

A: The condition of the bridge is “serious”, and a frequent inspection schedule is mandated to ensure further deterioration does not occur. Further deterioration would change the condition of the bridge to “critical” and likely require closure of the bridge.

The only feasible West Main Street detour route that would satisfy traffic demand includes a 6-mile route which is unacceptable from an emergency response perspective. West Main Street is a critical link for Ayer connecting businesses and residents from the surrounding communities of Shirley, Devens and Lunenburg. School buses rely on West Main Street to transport students from surrounding communities to the two regional schools in the area. Emergency response, including ALS/mutual aid, rely on the link as well.

