



KENT ASSOCIATES  
Planning & Design Consultants

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November 13, 2008

Devin Anderson  
Dan Stewart  
Maine Department of Transportation  
16 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0016

Dear Mr. Anderson and Mr. Stewart:

Thank you for your efforts to address the serious deficiencies with the 100-year-old New Mills bridge. I recognize that a new replacement bridge is needed, on a speeded-up schedule. Your attention to this matter is appreciated. As you know I have reviewed the preliminary designs and see low- or no-cost ways to improve on the design so that:

- (a) it is a worthy “gateway” to Gardiner and the Cobbossee Corridor and represents the best *Context Sensitive Design* (CSD) approach; (And, is not just a standard design imposed on a historic site.)
- (b) traffic *Access Management* principles are incorporated; (And, the serious deficiencies in the access/intersections to the east and west of the bridge are not incorporated in the new design.)
- (c) *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety* is improved (so that current gaps in the sidewalk’s continuity are addressed), and a positive start to our planned sidewalk and trail plans is made; and
- (d) the *Temporary Bridge* site is restored and improved.

The recommended improvements we have, are listed below. As Representative Stephen Hanley has suggested, please evaluate these and respond. Itemized estimates of added costs and savings, if any, would be appreciated by the City.

Our recommendations are consistent with the master plan we did for the City for the Cobbossee Corridor; that plan has been approved by the Council.

A unique, well-designed and landscaped “gateway” bridge and its approaches will be an asset of which we can all be proud.

This is the one opportunity in our lifetimes to provide a memorable new bridge. We urge MDOT to help build the best possible design.

## Recommendations to Improve the Proposed New Mills Bridge

### A *Context Sensitive Design*

The goal is to make a unique gateway using quality materials and a design that recognizes the historic importance of this site. As our Cobbossee study showed, this was Maine's "Silicon Valley" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is next to the historic Waterworks building and dam.

#### 1. **Curb**

The use of granite is welcomed.

- (a) use granite curb, not concrete, on the bridge itself; and
- (b) incline the curb elsewhere (Camden, Route 1, and Lincolnville, Route 1, are examples of how this has been done successfully).

#### 2. **Bridge Railing**

The steel rail (galvanized?) proposed is not distinctive and does not fit in this historic site.

- (a) our first preference is to replace it with a concrete Texas rail as shown at the hearing (this design is similar to the bridge rail design downtown);
- (b) or, alternatively, cost out a steel rail coated with a green enamel(?) that matches the light poles downtown.
- (c) what is the added cost of a railing between the sidewalk and traffic lanes (as Representative Hanley suggested) to increase safety for pedestrians?

#### 3. **Guard Rail**

The guard rail proposed is ugly.

- (a) what alternatives are available that meet ASHTO standards? And, what do they cost compared to that specified? For example, is pressure-treated or laminated wood or wood from UMO's carbon reinforced wood laboratory available?

#### 4. **Tree Planting**

The Pleasant Pond shore trees help make an attractive gateway (with recent improvements by Gardiner Rotary); the wide right-of-way in this vicinity provides an opportunity for tree planting on the opposite side.

- (a) add a row of trees along the west approach to the new bridge, on Route 126; specify species that will not interfere with overhead wiring (see sketch);
- (b) add trees of the same species on the east side approaches, if feasible (see sketch);
- (c) any trees cleared for the temporary bridge should be replaced, unless a sculpture can be located on the Route 126/Pleasant Pond side) (see sketch).

#### 5. **Landscaping**

- (a) low plantings, of native species, should be added east and west of the bridge, especially in areas that were paved (see sketches). Avoid blocking sight lines.

*Note: the entire “gateway” effect will be embellished with these tree planting and landscaping measures, making this an attractive, memorable entrance to the City.*

## **6. Bridge Width**

With a 30 mph speed limit and low AADT the travel width of the bridge can be narrower (the new Duck Trap Bridge and the new Lincolnville Beach Bridge on Route 1, with much higher traffic volumes, both have 11-foot travel lanes and 4-foot shoulders). This may be a cost savings.

- (a) make the bridge narrower, with a 5-foot sidewalk;

## **7. Percent for Art**

- (a) please investigate if this program could be applied here.

## ***B Access Management***

### **1. Harrison Ave./Andrews St. Intersection**

This is poorly designed now, has no markings, and is unnecessarily wide ( $\pm 130'$ ) making it unsafe as a pedestrian crossing linking the proposed new sidewalk. It should be improved, not kept as is.

- (a) reconfigure the entire intersection; consider making Andrews “tee” with Harrison; narrowing the Harrison lanes; adding a small island; improving the entry to the Gardiner water storage yard; and making the crosswalks (see sketch).

### **2. Gardiner Water/E.J. Prescott Area**

This paved areas is wider (145') than needed; the width of Route 126 is also very wide and channels what appears to be 2 lanes into one, right at the east approach to the bridge. The shoulder is, in effect, 16' wide.

- (a) Reconfigure the entire area; consider narrowing the Water District entry; narrowing the shoulder; marking the crosswalk and extending the project area so it at least includes the crosswalk from West Street, across Route 126 (see sketch).

### **3. West Street Intersection**

This intersection is unnecessarily wide.

- (a) Reconfigure to narrow and reduce curb radius (see sketch).

*Note: These Access Management recommendations improve pedestrian safety, reduce the amount (and cost) of pavement, and serve to slow/calm traffic turning into residential areas.*

## ***C Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvement***

The goal is to encourage healthy/safe walking and cycling (and to reduce vehicular travel and carbon emissions). The design should include the following:

### **1. Curb**

- (a) incline the granite curb (except on the bridge) so as to make a more attractive “gateway” and avoid bike pedals hitting a vertical curb (see A.1.b).

## **2. Sidewalk Setback**

- (a) provide a grass strip (verge) between the curb and sidewalk to increase safety and embellish this gateway approach (see sketch). (Examples include Route 1, Camden, and Route 302, Raymond.)

## **3. Sidewalk Continuity**

- (a) extend the sidewalk west to the corner of Route 126 and West Hill Rd.;
- (b) reduce the crosswalk distance at Andrews/Harrison (see sketch);
- (c) reduce the crosswalk distance at Gardiner Water District (see sketch);
- (d) mark the new crosswalks with lines/stripping and/or a thermoplastic adhesive, patterned, marking.

## **4. Bike Lanes**

- (a) mark to shoulder/bike lane for bicycle use with signage and road markings.

*Note: Gardiner and MDOT have discussed extending the sidewalk/trail from this vicinity to the Middle School. This same route connects to the High School and proposed trails along Cobbossee Stream (connected to the KRRT). It is thus important that these improvements set a high standard for the future.*

### ***D Restoration of the Temporary Crossing Sites***

The temporary bridge is on Gardiner Water District property; upon completion, this property should be restored and can be improved as a small waterfront park. In doing so, MDOT should consider:

- (a) placing a wood (split-rail) railing at the old abutment, where there will be a severe drop, and along the embankment;
- (b) providing a small (car) gravel parking area off West Street;
- (c) placing an educational/informational sign here (with illustration/photo of the historic trolley (1908) bridge and information on the 10 dams that were located on the stream below...as mitigation for dismantling a listed historic bridge);
- (d) landscaping the area appropriately (see sketch).

Thank you for your serious review and pricing of these recommendations. We believe they are practical and will increase safety while making this project design unique to Gardiner.

We understand that you are on a fast-track schedule. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at 582-1718.

Sincerely,

Brian Kent  
President, Kent Associates

Attachments