

# Lyme-East Thetford BRIDGE PROJECT

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) are undertaking the rehabilitation of the Lyme- East Thetford Bridge over the Connecticut River between Lyme, New Hampshire (NH) and Thetford, Vermont (VT). Since 2013, the bridge has been on the NH State Red List. Bridge rehabilitation is required to maximize the life, address structural deficiencies, and restore the load carrying capacity for passenger vehicles and trucks.

The existing Parker Truss bridge structure was built in 1937. The Lyme-East Thetford Bridge is listed as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The nearby Toll House and Smith and Webster House are also listed as eligible on the National Register of Historic Places. Adjacent properties in Lyme, NH and Thetford, VT have been identified as archaeological sites within the project area.

Based on the bridges classification on the National Register for Historic Places, NHDOT and VTrans were required to comply with Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966. This act requires NHDOT and VTrans to avoid the use of Section 4(f) properties which include historical resources, recreational facilities, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

## FUNDING

The Lyme-East Thetford Bridge between Lyme, NH and Thetford, VT has received funding from Federal and State (NH & VT) resources. Projects receiving Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding must be developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

## BRIDGE ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

During the NEPA process, the team was required to find an alternative that was feasible and conducted in a way that causes the least harm to the area. The team considered “no build”, rehabilitation and replacement options. Under Section 4(f) it was determined bridge rehabilitation was the best alternative, which was confirmed through the NEPA process, completed in 2019.

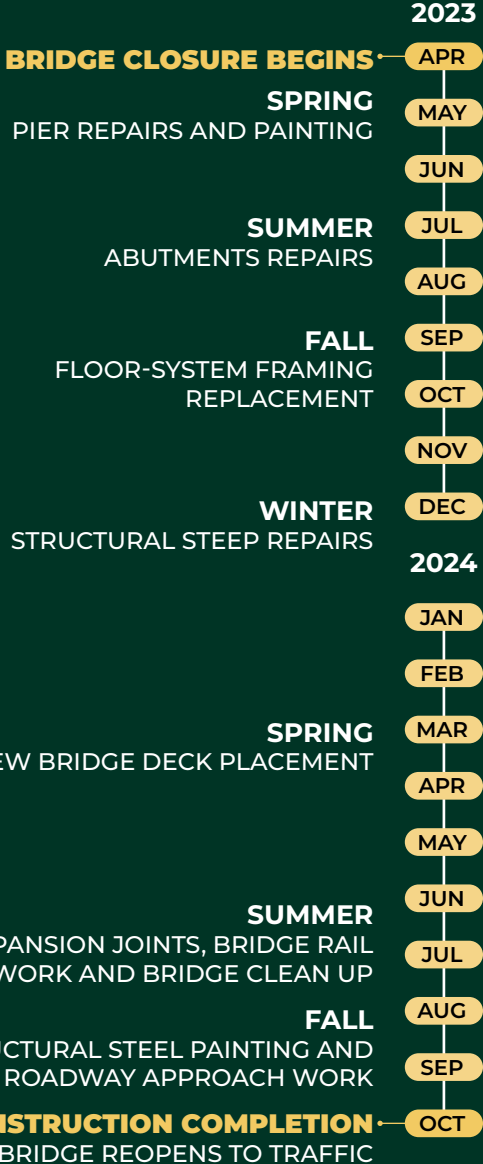
## BRIDGE REHABILITATION

The Lyme-East Thetford Bridge project will include repairs to the abutments and pier, replace portions of the floor system framing, replace concrete bridge deck, replace the bridge railing and steel curb, clean and paint all steel truss components, and limited roadway work on the bridge approaches to provide smooth transitions to the new bridge deck.



## PROJECT TIMELINE

The Lyme-East Thetford Bridge Rehabilitation will begin in Spring 2023 and will carry through October 2024. The bridge will remain closed throughout construction.



## BRIDGE CLOSURE & DETOUR

The Lyme-East Thetford Bridge over the Connecticut River requires a full bridge closure to complete the rehabilitation work. The bridge will remain closed to vehicle and pedestrian traffic throughout construction. Two signed detour routes will be in place, one to the north and one to south. The northern detour between Orford, NH and Fairlee, VT approximately 11.5 miles and the southern detour, between Hanover, NH and Norwich, VT is approximately 17.5 miles.

### FAQS

#### Since the bridge is on the red list, does that mean it is unsafe?

The bridge can safely carry vehicles that are below 15 tons. To maintain safety for the traveling public, the bridge receives routine bridge inspection twice a year to see if any repairs or adjustments to the load posting are necessary.

#### What is the bridge being rehabilitated instead of being replaced?

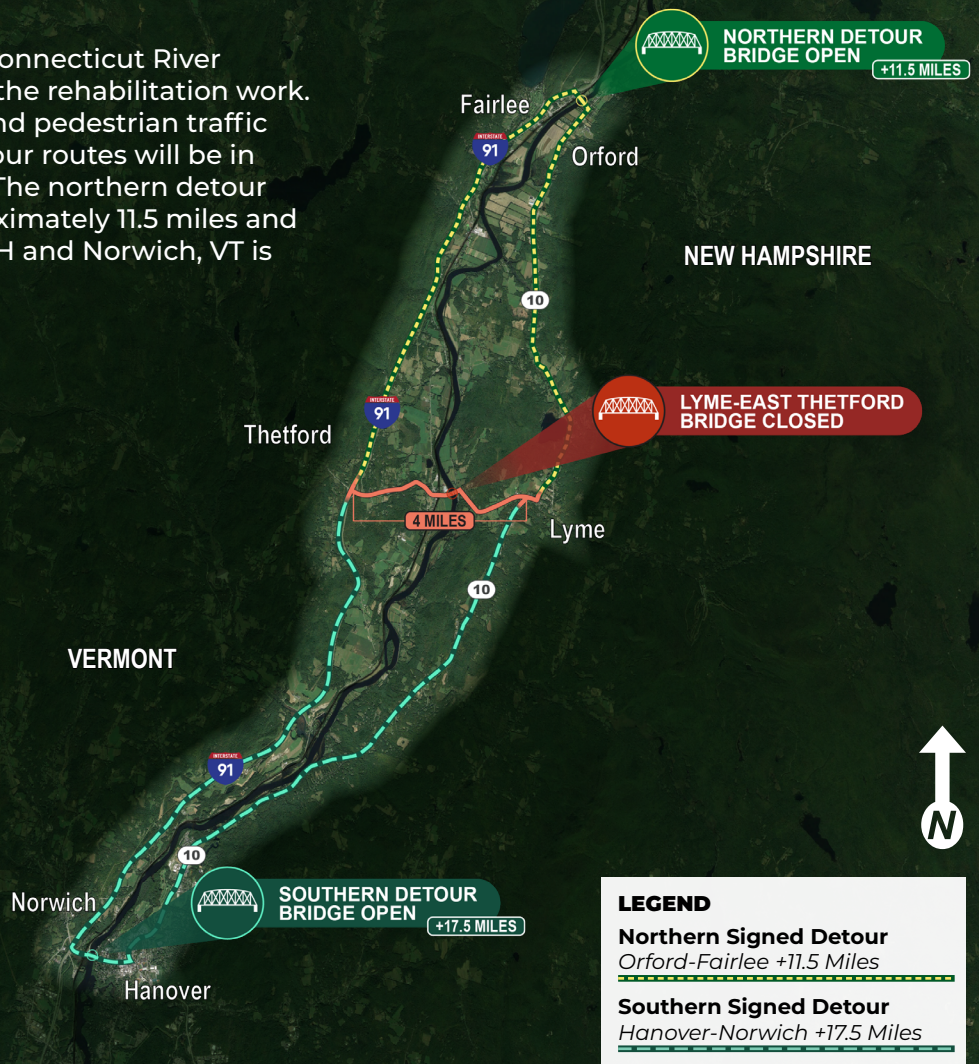
The bridge, along with adjacent properties, have been determined to be eligible for the National registered of Historic Places. This eligibility means that NHDOT and VTrans must comply with the requirements of Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 and 23 CFR 774. The project is required to minimize impacts to eligible properties and to select the alternative that is least impacted to these properties. In this case, the FHWA has determined that it is feasible and prudent to rehabilitate the structure, and therefore rehabilitation has been selected as the alternative.

#### Can a sidewalk be added to the bridge?

The existing bridge and roadway in the vicinity of the bridge do not provide shoulder width for pedestrian use. NHDOT investigated the feasibility of adding a sidewalk to the existing bridge and determined that the bridge cannot safely support the additional load. The addition of a separate pedestrian bridge is beyond the scope of this project under the NHDOT's Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement program.

#### Why can't a temporary bridge be installed rather than detouring traffic?

Currently, the bridge is posted for 15 tons and trucks are being detoured north to the NH 25A bridge between Orford, NH and Fairlee, VT and south to the NH 10A bridge between Hanover, NH and Norwich, VT. Installation of a temporary bridge would require significant additional funding, cause increased environmental impacts, necessitate relocation of major utility lines across the Connecticut River, and require the acquisition of private property, with a risk of needing to relocate residents and businesses. Permanent displacement of private property owners for a temporary purpose is not something NHDOT or VTrans would pursue when other options are available.



#### LEGEND

**Northern Signed Detour**  
Orford-Fairlee +11.5 Miles

**Southern Signed Detour**  
Hanover-Norwich +17.5 Miles

## PROJECT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Join our email distribution list to receive monthly project updates including construction activities, project milestones and traffic impacts. Join by clicking the button below.

Visit the project website at [www.nh.gov/dot/projects/lymethetford14460/index.htm](http://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/lymethetford14460/index.htm) for additional project information. The team welcomes your questions or comments, email us at [info@LymeThetfordBridge.com](mailto:info@LymeThetfordBridge.com).



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