

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Engineering District 8-0
Route 462, Section 038, Lancaster and York Counties (MPMS# 79020)
Columbia and Wrightsville Borough and West Lampeter Township
Veterans Memorial (Columbia-Wrightsville) Bridge Rehabilitation Project

Project Information

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is currently performing preliminary engineering and environmental studies for the rehabilitation of the Veterans Memorial Bridge (also known as the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge). The bridge was built in 1929 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 48-span, 1.26-mile long bridge carries Route 462 over the Susquehanna River between Columbia Borough and West Hempfield Township, Lancaster County and Wrightsville Borough, York County.

The project needs to be addressed include:

- Structural deficiencies of the Route 462 Veterans Memorial Bridge
- Inadequate bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout the project corridor
- Inefficient movements at the western approach intersection in Wrightsville Borough

Goals of the project include:

- Preserving the historic character of the bridge
- Improving bridge aesthetics
- Minimizing disruptions to traffic and community events, while also enhancing recreational use and tourism of the Columbia-Wrightsville region and greater Susquehanna National Heritage Area
- Reducing impacts from seasonal swarms of mayflies on the bridge

The purpose of the project is to ensure the structural adequacy and modern functionality of the Route 462 Veterans Memorial Bridge, including effective connections with adjacent intersections, and to provide for safe access and use by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.

The scope of work for the bridge rehabilitation includes deck and barriers replacement, and strengthening and repairs to the bridge underside. The architectural features of the bridge will be repaired as needed and new construction will replicate historical details. The bridge will be restriped to provide for narrower 11-foot travel lanes and 7-foot shoulder/bike lanes, while a wider 8-foot sidewalk will be constructed. Corridor enhancements incorporated into the overall project include improvements to the bridge's two adjacent intersections, bike and pedestrian connections to trails and parks, and lighting upgrades.

The five additional area enhancements that have been identified to address project specific needs and goals include:

- Connecting PA Bike Route "S" (Route 462) and pedestrians to Columbia Borough's Northwest River Trail and River Park by adding wayfinding signs and pavement markings
- Connecting PA Bike Route "S" (Route 462) and pedestrians to Wrightsville Borough's Mason-Dixon Trail and Riverfront Park by adding wayfinding signs, pavement markings and sidewalk improvements
- Improving the Wrightsville Borough 5-point intersection of Routes 462 and 624 (Hellam Street) with North and South Second Streets by constructing a roundabout at the western end of the bridge (during bridge detour phase)
- Adding an aesthetic and traffic calming central median feature at the eastern end of the bridge on Route 462 at the North Second Street intersection with Rotary Park in Columbia Borough
- Potentially adding under-bridge lighting to help increase traveler safety due to the annual mayfly issue and enhance aesthetics of the historic bridge

The project is currently in the preliminary design phase, and work is anticipated to take place between the 2023 and 2026 construction seasons subject to all approvals, environmental clearances, and funding availability.

Please refer to the project's brochure, videos, preliminary plans and other materials located at the Resource Section of this website.

Environmental

The bridge is located in an area of gently rolling terrain and crosses the Susquehanna River between western Lancaster County and eastern York County connecting the small urban areas of Columbia and Wrightsville Boroughs. Land use at each end of the bridge is comprised of concentrated residential, commercial, railroad, and industrial development. The bridge connects the central business districts of Columbia and Wrightsville Boroughs and is the only bicycle (PA Bike Route “S” – 435 miles) and pedestrian connection across the river.

Environmental studies completed for the project have included evaluations of natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and potential waste locations. Wetlands in the project area are located below the bridge on the western shore of the river. A state-listed threatened wildlife species is present within the project area, and impact minimization for this species is being coordinated with jurisdictional agencies.

Evaluation of historic and recreational resources protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S Department of Transportation Act of 1966 include:

- the Veterans Memorial Bridge
- the Columbia Historic District
- the Wrightsville Historic District
- the Pennsylvania Railroad
- Rotary Park (Columbia)
- River Park (Columbia)
- Riverfront Park (Wrightsville)
- the Susquehanna River Water Trail
- the Mason-Dixon Trail
- the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail

The Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Wrightsville and Columbia Historic Districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Mainline and Enola Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad are eligible for listing on the National Register. Each of these historic resources are being evaluated under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Coordination has been on going with historical agencies, organizations and other interested consulting parties regarding the project effect on historic resources. Coordination is also ongoing with agencies with jurisdiction over recreational resources.

The Susquehanna River is a recreationally navigable waterway with boat launch facilities in the vicinity of the bridge. Boating and other recreational uses of the river will be maintained during construction.

Utilities

There are aerial and underground utilities within the project limits, with some relocations anticipated in the vicinity of the Wrightsville roundabout. Utilities attached to the bridge barrier will be consolidated and placed under the sidewalk to enhance the historical integrity of the bridge.

Right of Way

The Wrightsville roundabout will be primarily constructed within the existing and wide footprint of the intersection’s right of way, with only minor right of way and temporary construction easements anticipated. Required aerial easements and temporary construction easements will also be needed below and along the bridge’s land spans in both Columbia and Wrightsville Boroughs.

Maintenance and Protection of Traffic

A shared use bicycle/pedestrian path will be maintained across the Route 462 bridge throughout all phases of construction. Bridge rehabilitation work will be done in three phases to minimize time that the bridge is closed to vehicles. Phase 1 construction will include strengthening elements underneath the bridge deck with intermittent short-term shoulder lane closures and travel lane shifts with minimal effect on all traffic. Phase 2 construction will include replacing the bridge deck, barrier and sidewalk. During Phase 2 vehicles will be detoured to Route 30 for an estimated 12-16 months while approximately 2/3 of the bridge deck width and barriers are built. During Phase 3, two lanes of traffic will return and be

maintained on the Route 462 bridge with intermittent short-term lane closures, while the remaining 1/3 of the bridge deck width and barrier is built.

Traditionally, maintaining traffic to construct a roundabout within an existing intersection is difficult and would result in many phases and extended construction durations. However, while the Route 462 through traffic is already being detoured for the rehabilitation of the Columbia-Wrightsville bridge, the intersection will be concurrently rebuilt to take advantage of the already detouring traffic control. Traffic and Incident Management Plans will be developed with regional stakeholders for both the Route 462 and Route 30 bridges.

Schedule and Cost

Overall construction is anticipated to start in 2023 and last through 2026. The preliminary cost estimate for the entire project is \$59,750,000. Of this total cost, \$55,000,000 is associated with the bridge construction cost while \$4,750,000 includes the five enhancements to the project.

Contact

If there are any questions or concerns related to the project following the review of the website materials, please contact Mark A. Malhenzie, Senior Project Manager, at (717) 783-5080 or email at mmalhenzie@pa.gov.