

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

Rehabilitating the North Main Street Bridge comes in at a cost of \$1,250,000. Studies have been conducted the past two years and the city will look to get state funds. The bridge needs a new guard rail and there is significant cracking in it, Public Works Commissioner Melodie Esterberg said.

Wednesday, December 21, 2005

Rochester unveils \$16.9m CIP

Other projects include rehabilitating the North Main Street bridge for \$375,000...

Tuesday, February 21, 2006

Rochester council to mull \$17m CIP

Also being proposed is \$875,000 for pavement rehabilitation and maintenance; \$375,000 to upgrade the North Main Street bridge...

Tuesday, February 21, 2006

Funding for Rochester pathway funding hits snag

In other business, the committee heard more on the \$1.2 million, ready-to-bid North Main Street bridge rehabilitation plans. DPW is seeking an additional \$350,000 for engineering. The plans will be discussed at the council level soon. City Engineer Tom Willis said the project will keep the bridge strong another 15 years after the deck and arches are repaired and drainage improvements are made.

Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Rochester councilors question funding for park

Others items include \$333,000 in vehicle and equipment maintenance; \$375,000 for rehabilitating the North Main Street bridge...

Saturday, August 19, 2006

Rochester officials defend use of consultants

Public Works contracts with other consultants as well. A list provided by Esterberg showed seven companies handling specific projects like the Route 108 sewer extension for the Homemakers of Strafford County and North Main Street bridge rehabilitation or broader things like land surveying, new water supplies and testing services during construction projects.

Saturday, November 10, 2007

Underground utilities approved by council for Rochester's North Main Street project

The utilities would run from the North Main Street bridge to the square, which would have had above-ground utilities if councilors decided differently.

Friday, April 25, 2008

Rochester council postpones North Main Street bridge project

ROCHESTER — The North Main Street bridge rehabilitation project, set to start this summer, is being pushed back.

Councilors voted 13-0 Tuesday after the Public Works Committee unanimously recommended the work be postponed a year. Officials want the city to get a handle on its debt and finish projects already started.

The \$1.63 million bridge project, which has about \$500,000 in state aid, will give the bridge a new road surface, prevent water from draining into the granite, plug cracks and improve the street's intersection by River Street and Cove Court.

"The bridge is currently safe for another year. It's certainly safe for cars. We keep testing it," City Manager John Scruton said. "It is possible that it would have to be closed to trucks but we don't believe that is going to happen."

Thursday, October 16, 2008

Major bridge in Rochester to be closed for months

The bridge over the Cochemo River is crossed by thousands of motorists daily coming into or heading north out of the city center. The work, currently priced at \$1.63 million, is slated to begin in May 2009, and will give the bridge a new road surface, prevent water from draining into the granite, plug cracks and improve the street's intersection by River Street and Cove Court. The project qualifies for about \$500,000 in state aid.

It is his hope, and that of businesses close to the bridge, that one traffic lane can be kept open in order that they do not become a forgotten commercial cul-de-sac on the edge of a construction zone. Jenny Stimac, owner of the Jenny Wren Gallery, while acknowledging the need for the bridge repair, expressed the hope that the municipal riverside parking lot opposite her store and Yo's Thai Cuisine restaurant, could become the focal point for outdoor functions and recreational events next summer, to attract people to that part of downtown and help to mitigate any loss of business.

As things stand at the moment, those businesses are likely to be facing a significant financial blow. City Manager John Scruton said the intention, at present, is completely close the bridge for a three-month period, and to use the parking lot as a staging area for construction equipment, vehicles and materials.

Scruton, explaining the rationale for the bridge's complete shut down, said that preliminary time estimates for the work's completion are three months with no traffic

movement, and five months, if the northbound lane stays open, separated from workers by Jersey barriers. With the one-lane-open option, he expects the price tag would jump by several hundred thousand dollars, and he noted that City Engineer Tom Willis is expected bids, for the 2009 job, to come in around \$2 million, rather than the previous estimate of \$1.63 million.

"We believe finances will force us into a complete shutdown," said Scruton, adding that bidders on the project would be asked to also cost the work based on the option of keeping one lane open.

City Engineer Tom Willis, speaking on Tuesday afternoon, said that his preference would be to close down the whole bridge to do the project, as keeping one lane open would present an additional set of design challenges, as well as increasing the time and cost.

"It's not up to me, though," said Willis, adding that if public dialogue (at the Oct. 20 meeting) were to suggest there is greater communal benefit in keeping a lane open, city councilors may become involved before a final decision is made.

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

Rochester residents urge city to rethink bridge job

ROCHESTER — There was an overwhelming outcry during a Monday night public hearing from residents urging the city to consider any alternatives to closing down both lanes of the North Main Street Bridge while it is undergoing repairs next spring.

During the hearing, which was held as part of the Planning Board's regularly scheduled workshop, three different options regarding how the project could be approached and how traffic could be rerouted during construction were presented by City Engineer Tom Willis and two engineers from McFarland Johnson in Concord, a private firm that deals with planning and design for major transportation projects.

"Can we squeeze another couple years out of this bridge as is?" Varney asked in a request for additional information made to Willis.

Varney's sentiment was shared by the majority of residents, councilors and Planning Board members who spoke during the hearing, many of whom cited various different reasons, such as other construction, the economy and impact on local businesses, while expressing concern the timing of the project was just not right.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Few favor closing North Main Street Bridge completely

The three options, which were presented on the first night of the public hearing held last month, were recapped by city engineer Tom Willis to start the hearing on Monday.

The first would be to close the bridge completely while repairs are made. During the closure, traffic headed both into and out of the city's downtown area would be rerouted via Bridge and River streets. According to information presented at last month's hearing by McFarland Johnson engineer Brian Colburn, this option would cost roughly \$1.8 million and take anywhere from three to six months to complete.

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Council examines safety concerns of sign ordinances

ROCHESTER — The City Council covered a lot of ground at Tuesday night's workshop, making decisions that will expedite both an initiative to rewrite a city ordinance governing electronic advertising signs and a decision on how to approach repair work on the North Main Street Bridge.

No decision on which of these options would be pursued was reached. A request for more information on each remaining option was made to City Engineer Tom Willis. The additional information will be presented and discussed at the next Public Works Committee meeting, currently scheduled for Jan. 15.

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Rochester council votes for full closure of North Main Street bridge

ROCHESTER— The City Council voted Monday night to support a full closure of the North Main Street Bridge during repair work scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010. Included within the plans for the project will also be the repaving of North Main Street from Union Street to the bridge, as well as the repaving of River Street from the bridge to the new Riverwalk park.

According to information presented by McFarland Johnson engineer Brian Colburn at an October public hearing on the project, Option A would cost roughly \$1.8 million and take anywhere from three to six months to complete.

However, Ward 1 Councilor Ray Varney requested an updated estimation for the project, along with a report on whether any funds had already been appropriated for the project be provided for the council's next workshop, currently scheduled for Jan. 20.

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Rochester North Main Street bridge project will be put to bid

After a lengthy discussion on the project, councilors directed City Engineer Tom Willis to go ahead and begin the process of going out to bid on the project, but will concurrently work with the Historic District Committee to find a railing plan that is suitable for all parties involved.

The North Main Street bridge project has been ongoing since 2004.

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Rochester officials don't agree about bridge project

ROCHESTER — Despite recent rumors to the contrary, City Manager John Scruton insists the North Main Street bridge project will close down the road for only about 90 days.

During last week's City Council meeting, several councilors raised questions about continuing with the bridge project this year if the city is not fully prepared for the impact construction will have on local businesses.

Ward 5 councilor Ralph Torr said he has heard rumors the project will "drag on" until December.

"That's just unacceptable in this city," Torr said at the meeting.

Scruton said while it's true construction crews could be in the area until December, the road will not be closed for the duration. The plan continues to be that the road will be closed for about 90 days to lessen the impact construction will have on businesses in the area.

Public Works Commissioner Melodie Esterberg said at the council meeting the project will include incentives for early completion of the project, while the construction company could be penalized for stretching the project out.

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Rochester's North Main Street Bridge still in limbo

ROCHESTER — The North Main Street Bridge project continues to be stuck in limbo and it is not clear whether the City Council wants to go through with construction this year.

Public Works Commissioner Melodie Esterberg informed the council at its meeting Tuesday night the project is still in the hands of state government. Once the city's application for funding is approved, they still have to go through a bidding process and even when that's completed, it is unlikely a contractor will begin construction immediately.

Councilors originally agreed to go out to bid on the project under the assumption the work will begin in June and be done by the end of summer. With each delay in the process, it appears less likely construction will begin this year.

City Manager John Scruton has pushed to get bridge work under way to allow the city to receive funding from the state. His claim is that funding is on a first-come, first-served basis and the city could miss out if it does not act quickly.

Thursday, December 17, 2009

Rochester city councilor calls bridge work delays 'foolishness'

ROCHESTER — Two city councilors sounded off Tuesday night about the ongoing delays with the North Main Street Bridge project.

City Manager John Scruton said before the council's workshop that bridge work has to happen in 2010 to utilize bridge aid and stimulus funds. The bridge work, which will close off North Main Street at the bridge, still has not gone out to bid because the state

has not signed off on all the necessary approvals, according to Public Works Commissioner Melodie Esterberg.

The city originally intended to do the project last summer. Ward 5 Councilor Ralph Torr called the continued delays "foolishness," asking Scruton to put in a call to the governor to get things moving. He then said he will call the governor himself, saying, "There's no need of this."

Friday, April 16, 2010

Span attention: Bridge work will close major route to downtown Rochester

ROCHESTER — It is finally official: North Main Street Bridge repairs will shut down a major roadway into downtown Rochester this summer.

The state approval means the city can go forward with Richmond, Maine, firm Wyman and Simpson's \$1,326,270 bid, which does not include \$48,375 for optional road work. Esterberg said Rochester's SUR Construction, which is already in the area doing work on Washington Street and the Spaulding Turnpike, is the subcontractor.

Esterberg said crews will remove all the pavement on top of the bridge, exposing all the brickwork for repairs and maintenance that will prevent damage to the brick arch. "It's been needed for quite a while," she said.

Friday, May 14, 2010

ROCHESTER — Brace yourselves — repairs to the North Main Street Bridge begin Monday.

Once closed, it is expected the bridge will remain closed and all detours will be in effect until mid-September, unless the condition of the brick arch work under the pavement is worse than expected.

The revelation the work may take longer than anticipated has not been heavily discussed in public. Willis said they took small samples several years ago that may not be representative of the condition of the entire bridge. He said they will not know for sure until they remove the pavement and structural fill to expose the brick arches.

"It could have been we got lucky (with the sample)," he said.

The project is slated to end in mid-September. Willis said he could only speculate that more extensive work would cause delays of a few weeks to a month. He said it is crucial to finish before cold weather sets in.

Willis said the city's contract with Richmond, Maine, firm Wyman and Simpson states a 105-day construction period, which is longer than summer vacation. He said the city did not believe the work could be done within the summer vacation period.

The end date is flexible and there are incentives for the contractor to finish the work sooner, he said.

Rochester hears \$13m capital improvements plan

By [Adam D. Krauss](#)

Democrat Staff Writer

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

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Friday, April 25, 2008

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**Major bridge in Rochester to be closed for months
Merchants fear public input won't matter, if plans are set**

By JOHN NOLAN

jnolan@fosters.com

Thursday, October 16, 2008

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Rochester residents urge city to rethink bridge job

By BILL O'CONNOR

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Wednesday, January 7, 2009

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Rochester North Main Street bridge project will be put to bid

Railing accuracy still being debated

By [Joey Cresta](#)

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

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jcresta@fosters.com

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Friday, April 16, 2010

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Downtown Rochester bridge repairs start Monday

By [Joey Cresta](#)

jcresta@fosters.com

Friday, May 14, 2010

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