



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Transportation
ENGINEERING DIVISION

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August 3, 2010

Mark Dieterich
RI Bicycle Coalition
23 Naomi St.
Bristol, RI 02809

Subject: Washington Pedestrian Bridge
Providence/East Providence, Rhode Island
R.I. Contract No. 92135
R.I.F.A.P. No. 1950(439)
Pedestrian and Cyclist Determination

Dear Mr. Dieterich,

Thank you for continuing to advocate for the pedestrian and cycling community. As stated in your email dated June 2, 2010, your group would like to have access to the Washington Pedestrian Bridge during the construction process. Our Department is aware of the needs of your group and, we do take into account that automobiles are not the only users of our State highway system.

In fact, the estimated cost of the Washington Pedestrian Bridge rehabilitation is about \$20 million dollars, which is a large sum of money to be spent on improving the pedestrian bridge for the biking community. We also just recently celebrated the opening of a one mile segment of the Warren Bike Path. This marks our 55th completed mile of statewide bike and pedestrian paths across the State. Also, this year we will dedicate a section of the Coventry Greenway and we expect to break ground on an extension of the South County Bike Path this summer. We will continue on our course to expand our off and on road-system and we look forward to more openings in the future.

Mr. Mark Dieterich

August 3, 2010

Page 2

Although we do understand your frustration with restricting access to cyclists and pedestrians during the construction of the Washington Pedestrian Bridge, this restriction must be done mainly for the following three reasons:

1. Safety – The entire proposed pedestrian bridge area will be a “Work Zone” and the pedestrians/cyclists would be quite close to all construction operations. Curious onlookers had been hopping over fences during the Washington Bridge No. 200 construction.
2. Cost – With phased construction, the cost of the Washington Pedestrian Bridge rehabilitation will go up. We have completed a value engineering review of this project to streamline its high construction costs, saving nearly \$10 million. If we were to provide pedestrian/bicycle access to the bridge as your group proposes the re-design and construction costs would increase substantially as the plans themselves are already 90% completed at this time.
3. Time – If we do not close the bridge, the duration of construction would be lengthened as the contractor would not have full access to the structure. There would be significantly more time and money spent on traffic control, not to mention inconvenience to the communities.

Pedestrian/cyclist counts have been recently completed. As a result of these counts, and the reasons listed above, we believe that it is in everyone’s best interest to close the bike path during the construction of the Washington Pedestrian Bridge. As an alternative, the Henderson Bridge is a viable option to be used as a detour around the Washington Pedestrian Bridge as it has been in the past.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Robert Pavia, Project Manager, of this office at 222-2053 Ext. 4079.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Smith, P.E.
Deputy Chief Engineer/Design

RJP/KPG/afb

cc: Corrao, Farhoumand, Fish, Long, Marzano, Palumbo, Prata, Rocchio, Smith (All w/o Att.);
File (w/ Att.)