

Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting

Richford, VT- Sutton, PQ BHF 0814(1)

11/16/17

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM:

Location: Richford Town Hall, 94 Main Street, Richford, Vermont 05476

Project Representatives/ Stakeholders:

Carolyn Carlson, Project Manager

Chris Williams, NW Reg. Const. Engineer

Cory Burrall, Project Design Engineer

Wendy Ducey, Pre-Contract and Specs Manager

Ryan Sengebush, Pre-Contract and Specs Coordinator

Maureen Parker, Administrative Services Manager

Larkin Wellborn, Federal Highway Administration

Jeffery Schoolcraft, Ministère des Transports

Steven Long, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Pierre Gulinaire, Canada Border Services Agency

Contractors in Attendance:

Austin Construction, Inc.

A. L. St. Onge Contractor, Inc.

CCS Constructors, Inc.

Blow & Cote, Inc.

T. Buck Construction, Inc.

Winterset, Inc.

Alpine Construction, LLC

J.P. Sicard, Inc.

CPM Constructors

BSL Construction

Excavation Loiselle Inc.

Pre-Bid Meeting Summary

Starting at 10:00 AM and continuing to approximately 11:30 AM on November 16, 2017, representatives from the Vermont Agency of Transportation along with the Federal Highway Administration, Quebec Ministère des Transports, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Canada Border Services Agency met with potential bidding Contractors at the Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting to discuss the Richford, VT-Sutton, PQ BHF 0814(1) Bridge 3 rehabilitation project along VT 105A at the international border between the United States and Canada. Introductions of those in attendance were conducted followed by a summary of the project, as well as a discussion of the major Notices to Bidders included in the Special Provisions. The following were the major points of discussion, as well as questions from the prospective bidders that will be posted on the VTrans Contract Administration website.

Notice to Bidders

Building Inspection: Contractor shall video inspect potential affected buildings in the area before and after the project. This includes the United States border station building.

Environmental Commitments:

- Archaeological area - This area shall not be disturbed regardless of whether it is inside or outside State or Town ROW.
- Northern Long-Eared Bat- This project is a potential bat habitat and tree cutting is subject to time of year restrictions.
- Pre-and Post-Construction meetings with the National Parks - The National Park Service requests to meet with all project permitting agencies and construction contractor onsite for pre-construction and post-construction meetings to discuss the final approved plans, permit conditions, and post-construction requirements. Jim MacCartney, River Manager National Park Service, Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301 603-226-3240 (phone) 603-224-0091 (fax) email: jim_maccartney@nps.gov.
- Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) - Any work occurring June through August will require care to not affect any identified turtles laying eggs in the area. This turtle is threatened in Quebec and the Resident Engineer should be notified if any turtles are encountered so that they can be relocated.

Specifications: This project shall follow the Vermont Agency of Transportation 2011 Standard Specifications for Construction. Special attention should be taken regarding the requirements of Agency projects including material requirements, section 105.03 working drawings requirements, as well as all other required submittals.

Wage Rates: Davis-Bacon wage rates do not apply on this project. Quebec workers must be paid in accordance with the conditions of the *Act Respecting Labor Relations, Vocational Training, and Workforce Management in the Construction Industry*, commonly known as Act R-20 and pending requirements. The requirements of Act R-20 can be found at the following web address:

<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/R-20>

Questions and Answers

Question 1: When will the bridge closure date commence?

Answer:

Special Provision No. 24: The Contractor can select any date starting as early as April 15, 2018, and will be allowed to keep the bridge closed a maximum of 150 consecutive calendar days from that date. Before and after this period the Contractor must maintain a minimum of one lane of alternating traffic. The Contractor shall provide a minimum notice of 14 days prior to the closure period to necessary parties. There shall be a pre-closure meeting held a minimum of 7 days prior to the BCP.

Special Provision No. 2: Project shall be completed by October 26, 2018.

Question 2: Is the approach span painted?

Answer: The approach span structural steel will be composed of (4) W27 x 84 rolled beams and will be painted with the same paint color as the truss, SAE AMS-STD-595 Color Chip 14062. Note the top coat of the approach span structural steel need not be painted in the field. **See Note #58 – Plan Sheet 6.**

Question 3: Sheets 41-42 of the Record Plans show a North Bennington project, please clarify.

Answer: The Record Plans have some incorrect sheets from other projects that were possibly scanned incorrectly. These sheets have been removed and marked "This Sheet Intentionally Left Blank". **See Addendum #1 – Reference Sheets 41 and 42.**

Question 4: Boring B-101 shows concrete being cored from 27.3 feet to 42.3 feet at Abutment #1. Please provide some clarification.

Answer: During initial coring the driller cored too close to the existing Abutment #1 and started to hit the existing concrete skeletal abutment foundation. The driller then proceeded to back up and take boring B-101A.

The existing Abutment #1 shall be removed in its entirety in order to construct the new abutment and drive piles. Any removal of the existing abutment outside the limits of bid item 204.25, "Structure Excavation" will be paid for under bid item 529.20, "Partial Removal of Structure". The Record Plans included in the contract plans show the existing Abutment #1 details and the Geotechnical Data Report can be found on the VTrans Contract Administration website. **See Addendum #1 - Note #14 – Plan Sheet 5.**

Question 5: If the Canadian border station is closed will there still be access to the project from the Canadian side?

Answer: Although the U.S. and Canada border stations will be closed during the closure period, access for the Contractor will still be permitted for the transportation of materials and equipment. Note that when the border stations are open Canada's operating hours are from 8 AM to 4 PM and the United States operating hours are from 8 AM to 12 AM. Coordination may be required to remove or leave open any gates/ barriers in the way of construction activities both during and outside the closure period.

Question 6: Who is responsible for signage in Canada?

Answer: Quebec will be responsible for any detour specific signage, portable changeable message signs, etc. relating to the detour on the Quebec side. The Contractor will be responsible for any detour specific signage in the U.S., as well as construction specific signage. Note some construction specific signs may be required on the Canada side of the project, for example "Begin/ End Construction" signs that will also be the responsibility of the Contractor. **See Plan Sheets 16-18.**

Question 7: What is the total dead load weight of the steel on the existing truss?

Answer: The weight of the existing steel truss (all truss members, chords, gusset plates, laterals, connections, floor beams, stringers) is estimated to be approximately 200,000 pounds. This weight does not include the weight of the half-filled grid deck system. Note #45 has been added to the Project Notes sheet 5 to address this. **See Addendum #1 – Plan Sheet 5.**

Question 8: What work can be done during the seasonal closure period prior to April 15th? Can truss shoring occur or just staging of materials for the truss shoring?

Answer:

Special Provision No. 2: Indicates which work the Contractor will be allowed to perform prior to April 15th. Shoring of the truss can occur during this period as long as all other requirements of the contract are met.

Question 9: Has there been consideration to encasing the entire pier or abutment #2 rather than doing traditional Class II and Class III repairs?

Answer: Yes, encasing of the substructures was considered. Since this is a bridge rehabilitation project it was determined that encasing the substructures fell outside the scope. The size and dimensions of the existing substructure would result in a significant amount of concrete and make formwork difficult. Repair of the deteriorated sections of the substructures was determined to be the most cost-effective solution.

Question 10: On sheet 85, there is an archaeologically sensitive area near the approach span that may need to be used as a staging area.

Answer: All proposed construction limits fall outside the archaeologically sensitive area and the barrier fence in these locations restrict the Contractor's access into the identified archaeologically sensitive area. The archaeological lines have been revised in Addendum #1 and almost completely moved outside the State and Town ROW line for potential use of staging areas. The Contractor will still be prohibited from disturbing any archeologically sensitive areas both inside and outside State and Town ROW. In addition, the Contractor will need to get permission from property owners to utilize any areas outside the State and Town ROW. Cindy Ryan is the contact for any property owned by the General Services Agency (GSA). **See Addendum #1 –Plan Sheets 84 and 85.**

Question 11: Will the paving project on VT 105A be concurrent with the bridge project?

Answer: As of now it is unclear whether the paving project will occur before, during, or after the bridge project. As stated in Special Provision No. 29, the Contractor will need to coordinate with this potential project, as well as the rehabilitation projects at the border patrol stations. **See Special Provisions No. 29.**

Question 12: If concrete is supplied from Canada will the supplier need to follow all VTrans guidelines for submittals, testing, and certification even if it is just a small quantity? Can this be waived?

Answer: All materials supplied on the project will need to follow the 2011 Vermont Agency of Transportation Standard Specifications for Construction. Any concrete supplier can be used on the project as long as they meet requirements.

Question 13: Sheet 38, Note #1 indicates that all existing and new gusset plates shall be designated FCM (Fracture Critical Members). How can existing members be identified as Fracture Critical Members?

Answer: Note #1 on Sheet 38 will be revised to only include new gusset plates being identified as Fracture Critical Members (FCM). In addition, revisions will be made to Sheet 30 and Sheet 37 to clearly identify that only new structural steel members be identified as Fracture Critical Members (FCM). **See Addendum #1 – Plan Sheets 30, 37 - Note #1, and 38- Note #1.**

Question 14: Notes in plans indicate that additional portions of the truss may be identified for replacement upon further inspection. This makes it difficult to determine bid prices, timeframes, and may put the 150-day bridge closure window in jeopardy.

Answer: Unfortunately, the 150-day bridge closure period is set in stone as it is part of the Presidential Permit waiver. It is typical of a truss rehabilitation project to have additional members deemed for replacement during construction. An additional 3,000 lbs were included in Contract for the quantity of bid

item 506.57 “Structural Steel, Truss.” It is recommended that truss survey and measurements commence as soon as possible and can be conducted before April 15th during the seasonal closure period. **See Addendum #1 – Plan Sheet 5, Note #44.**

Question 15: A lot of significant questions have been asked during the Pre-Bid Meeting and if the Addendum isn't issued until December 4, 2017, can the Bid Opening be extended beyond December 8, 2017?

Answer: VTrans will look to get Addendum #1 posted by November 27th or 28th before the inquiry period ends.

Question 16: With there being a lot of work and submittals and a hard bridge closure period of 150-days there is concern of decisions and submittals being resolved in a timely manner.

Answer: This project is in-house which will help speed up the process for submittals and decisions not having to also go through a consultant. The use of Doc Express has also helped with expediting submittals, but all effort will be taken to ensure quick turn arounds.

Question 17: Why are only questions and answers related to the Pre-Bid Meeting posted online but other inquiries are emailed separately to contractors and not shared with all?

Answer: This is standard practice for both Vermont and Quebec. This is a competitive bidding process and inquiries are not disclosed to all parties as they may provide certain information that could provide an advantage to other bidders if revealed. This has been a question in the past and may be reviewed at a higher-level in the future but not for this project.

Question 18: Crossing border requirements.

Answer: United States personnel shall have proper identification (license, passport) and proof of citizenship. The border stations will be closed during the project, but Border Patrol personnel may randomly stop by and ask for this information. All necessary paperwork will be required if traveling across the border at other entry points to the site. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) requests 48 hours' notice for new personnel planning to work on site.

Canadian personnel will need to be cleared by Steven Long of CBP to work on the project. This will require showing up at the United States border station for inspection, a background check, and letter from Contractor of work to be done and worker being paid with Canadian dollars in order to obtain a V-1 work visa. This is typically issued for 6 months but can be issued for up to one year.

Canadian felons cannot work in the United States and therefore not on this project. United States felons will be permitted to work on the project and will be able to work on the Canadian side of the project but will not be able to travel back and forth between the two countries outside the project limits.

Question 19: For equipment, such as a crane, can trees outside the ROW be selectively cut for construction operations?

Answer: The Resident Engineer will approve the necessity of such cutting operations and approval will need to be granted from relevant parties. This includes Property Owner's, General Services Administration (GSA), or the Ministère des Transports.

Question 20: Town Highway 39 (Chemin Cushion Road) is now closed and can be used as a potential staging area. What are the restrictions on the historic and archaeologically sensitive areas?

Answer: Town Highway 39 may be used as a staging area as long as access to the shed along the roadway is maintained for the adjacent property owner. The archeological and historic resource lines have been revised in Addendum #1 and moved almost completely beyond the State and Town ROW. The Contractor will still need to get permission from any property owners to utilize areas outside the State and Town ROW. Cindy Ryan is the contact for any property owned by the General Services Agency (GSA).

No disturbance should occur to any archaeologically sensitive areas both inside and outside State and Town ROW. Construction, tree cutting, and staging can occur in historic areas but only within State and Town ROW. **See Addendum #1 – Plan Sheets 84 and 85.**

Question 21: If any border station gates need to be moved is that the responsibility of the Contractor?

Answer: The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and/ or the General Services Agency (GSA) shall be contacted if the gate on the U.S. side needs to be removed. CBP/ GSA will be responsible for removal and relocation as they deem necessary.

Question 22: With Town Highway 39 (Chemin Cushion Road) closed is there any alternative routes to the project if the low clearance and curve at the railroad overpass of Bridge #1 on VT 105A presents any issues?

Answer: The East Richford Slide Road intersects with VT 105A after Bridge #1, but it also has its own railroad overpass with a height restriction of 12'-0". Johnson Road also intersects with VT 105A after Bridge #1, but it is unclear the condition of the road and whether it presents its own challenges. An alternative route through Canada may need to be considered depending on equipment and materials traveling to and from the project site.

Question 23: What is the traffic at the bridge?

Answer: As shown on the Contract Plans the traffic count for 2018 is projected at 210 in 2018. This value is very conservative as it considers peak periods and holidays, as well as interpolated from nearby roadway networks. Regardless of traffic volume, one lane of alternating traffic must be maintained at all times outside the bridge closure period.

Question 24: Does this project fall under the Buy America provisions?

Answer: This project shall be subject to Buy America provisions of 23 C.F.R. § 635.410 of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding the domestic manufacturing process for any steel or iron products (including protective coatings) that are permanently incorporated in any project funded under Title 23. Note that these provisions do not apply to protective coatings applied in the field. Policy and guidance can be found at link: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/cqit/buyam.cfm>

See Addendum #1 – Special Provision No. 153.

Question 25: Can the bridge be closed outside the 150-day closure period?

Answer: **See Question 1.**

Question 26: Are there any issues regarding the International Boundary Commission (IBC)?

Answer: The IBC has signed off on the project with the understanding that there will be no permanent construction that would result in a change to the current 20-foot boundary vista. All signs owned by the IBC have been removed from the project and will be installed by them once the project is complete.

Question 27: When does the Contractor have to inform necessary parties of bridge closure period?

Answer: A certified letter must be submitted by the Contractor to the VAOT Construction section a minimum of 21 days before the **Begin Construction** date. Ideally, the Contractor will provide as much notice of the anticipated bridge closure period, but they must provide at least 14 days' notice prior to the **Bridge Closure** date to the parties identified in the Special Provisions. There shall also be a Pre-Closure meeting a minimum of 7 days before the bridge closure period. **See Special Provision No. 24.**

Question 28: Can the Contractor work holidays?

Answer: The Contractor will be allowed to work holidays with no restrictions during the bridge closure period. Outside the bridge closure period, the Contractor will need to be granted special authorization to work on holidays and Sundays. **See Special Provision Nos. 24 and 35.**

Question 29: Will there be any special consideration to recreational users of the river?

Answer: The border crossings will be closed during construction therefore there will be no signage indicating users to check it at the stations. The Northern Forest Canoe Trail is aware of the project and should be spreading the word of impending construction. The Contractor will not be responsible for any specific signage or protection, but users still may attempt to pass at their own risk.

Question 30: Is this project being paid for in U.S. or Canadian dollars?

Answer: All bids and payment will be in U.S. dollars.

Question 31: Can Contractors visit the existing bridge site?

Answer: Yes, just be sure to check in at the United States Custom and Border Protection station and tell them why you are there. You may be required to show forms of identification. If coming from Canada you may need to check in at both the U.S. border station and the Canada border station.

Question 32: How do Contractors get the Pre-Bid Meeting Questions and Answers?

Answer: All the questions and answers will be provided in a summary on the VTrans Contract Administration website.

Question 33: Are there any clearances required from the U.S. or Canada to move equipment?

Answer: All Vermont permit requirements for transportation of equipment and goods will be in place. In-transit manifest, may be allowed. Tools for work will be allowed reciprocally from both the U.S. and Canada.

Question 34: Do we have reenter the same port for the movement of commercial goods?

Answer: If goods are brought from Canada for commercial purposes from Canada need a permit and go through broker ahead a time. This requires formal entry and applying for permit. Contact Steven Long at CBP for application for permit and then cross through Richford port. Permit is good for crossing multiple times. Richford is permit port only.