



*Preserving America's Heritage*

June 9, 2011

Ms. Damaris Santiago  
Environmental Engineer  
Federal Highway Administration  
Massachusetts Division  
55 Broadway, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02142

Ref: *Proposed Replacement of the Mitchell River Drawbridge  
Mass DOT Project File No. 603390  
Chatham, Massachusetts*

Dear Ms. Santiago:

On May 17, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) held its second consulting party meeting to consider the effects of replacing the Mitchell River Drawbridge in Chatham, Massachusetts. The meeting was attended by Carol Legard, the ACHP's FHWA Liaison, who found the information presented and the ensuing discussion among consulting parties to be very informative and productive. We very much appreciate having this opportunity to hear directly from the project development team, members of the Chatham Board of Selectmen, and the other Section 106 consulting parties. We also appreciate FHWA's changing its preferred alternative to Alternative 3, which would, we agree, be a more context sensitive design. This letter is in response to your invitation to provide FHWA with our comments on the bridge alternatives evaluation and life cycle cost comparison, including the May 2011 addendum to that analysis.

Based on the information provided, and comments submitted by other consulting parties, it appears that two alternatives have fallen out as the preferred alternatives. These are Alternative 1B (timber structure with a 25' navigation Channel and concrete bascule pier) and Alternative 3 (timber superstructure on a concrete and steel substructure). While we appreciate the compromise offered in FHWA's support for Alternative 3, we must agree with the consulting parties supporting Alternative 1B as the best alternative from a preservation perspective. With the life cycle costs being nearly the same, and the strong preference among preservation organizations for retaining an all timber bridge at this location, we encourage FHWA to adopt Alternative 1B as the preferred alternative. In addition, we recommend that FHWA develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that focuses on your commitment to context sensitive design.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Thank you for inviting the ACHP's comments regarding the project. If you have any questions or require further assistance, feel free to contact Carol Legard, our FHWA Liaison, at 202-606-8503 or [clegard@achp.gov](mailto:clegard@achp.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlene Dwin Vaughn". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Charlene Dwin Vaughn, AICP  
Assistant Director  
Federal Permitting, Licensing, and Assistance  
Office of Federal Agency Programs