

Snake River Sporting Club Improvement Service District (SRSCISD)

Jackson, WY
<http://www.srsc-isd.com>

April 16, 2023

Dear District Member:

The Snake River Sporting Club Improvement & Service District Board has spent the last several months evaluating various options for the repair/replacement of the Astoria Red Bridge. After reviewing all of the pros and cons of the various options, the Board is planning to approve at next Wednesday's ISD meeting (2pm MST 4/19) a resolution to move forward with the final engineering, permitting, planning and financing for the construction of a new two-lane bridge to serve the District. In advance of adopting this resolution at the meeting next Wednesday, the Board will review again the conceptual design along with the estimated costs and construction schedule. District members and members of the public will have the opportunity in advance of the adoption of the resolution to make any public comment. In addition, any public comment received via email at srsc.isd@gmail.com before 6pm MST 4/18 will be read into the minutes and considered by the Board in advance of the vote.

Many of you have participated in the recent ISD meetings reviewing the various options presented by our consultant, Consor Engineering. The information to be presented on the two-lane bridge this Wednesday (4/19) will not be material different from the materials reviewed at the meeting last Wednesday (April 12th). Please also know that given the complexity of this project, this resolution is the first of many resolutions that the Board will make over the coming months as more details are finalized. Not every detail is worked out and there remains a great deal of work to do. However, at this point the Board has come to the conclusion that a new two-lane bridge is safest and most prudent course of action. The Board recognizes the charm and esthetics of the old bridge and believes that many of these details can be carried over into a modern structure that will serve the needs of the District for generations to come. Given that all of the meetings have been public over the past several months and that many District members have already given extensive feedback, the Board believes this decision is well supported by District members, but at the last meeting, but Board felt that it was prudent to give District members a final opportunity to give comment and feedback on where the Board has landed.

Current Situation

The current bridge has several structural metal trusses that are over 110 years old. Unfortunately, the recent accident severed key members of one these trusses and irreparably damaged others. Consor Engineering considers these elements of the bridge "totaled". In addition, the bridge abutments in the Snake River are over 60 years old. The ISD has engaged specialized underwater inspectors who have determined these abutments have suffered scour and undermining due to the flow of the river. The

abutments have been patched several times in the last several years due to cracking. While these abutments could potentially be upgraded and reused, they are on the backend of their useful life.

Teton County has required since 2015 that the ISD perform annual traffic studies to ensure that traffic coming from the Highway 89 side of the bridge not stack up into the Highway due to volume. These studies indicate that traffic is continuing to grow each year. Teton County requires the ISD to find ways to mitigate this traffic such that it does not create a hazard on Highway 89. In prior years, the ISD has already had to add mitigation measures to the bridge such as widening the approach apron and adding a “stop bar” to mitigate vehicles stacking up waiting on the Highway side of the bridge. As traffic continues to grow, ultimately the ISD will be required to add a traffic light on the Astoria side of the bridge to ensure that there is always a right of way for traffic coming from the Highway 89 side. Such a traffic light would cause meaningful wait times and traffic on the Astoria side of the bridge in the future. Already, the ISD spends significant annual management and financial resources managing the complexity of a one lane entrance into the District. The Board sees few reasons why these complexities and costs won’t continue to grow in the future.

Life Safety and Emergency Access

A one lane bridge by its inherent design provides fewer means of ingress and egress than a two lane design. Even a vehicle that simply has run out of gas, could block a one lane bridge. While a new one lane bridge could be built that would allow most, if not all, emergency management vehicles to access the District, the Board is concerned that for the reasons of redundancy, age of the piers and the growing risk of traffic backing up on to Hwy 89, that a one-lane option is not only perpetuating current risks, but likely compounding risks in the future. The Board has created a sub-committee led by Ross Flax who is going to work with Jorgensen Engineering and other consultants to devise and implement a comprehensive emergency management plan for the community. This ideally will be a plan that integrates the Hoback South Community, the Hoback Bridge and our new bridge into a fully redundant and complete plan. The Board expects and hopes that Teton County and the Bridger Teton Forest will be involved in this comprehensive planning process. Currently, as an example, the ISD does not have a coordinated and written long term plan with these agencies.

Permitting, Future Needs and Impact on Hoback South Neighborhood

Teton County has already placed development restrictions on the SRSC District due to the capacity constraints on the current one-lane bridge design. It is expected that the District’s relationship with Teton County Planning, Fire/EMS, Road and Levy and the Teton County Commissioners will continue to be stressed if the District insists on building and maintaining infrastructure these entities consider inadequate. While there are counter points to the County’s position, the recent bridge closures have had an outsized impact on the Hoback South Neighborhood and it is time for a more comprehensive and coordinated operating and emergency management plan with Teton County and the Bridge Teton National Forest. The District will have a hard time normalizing and finalizing plans with the County and the Hoback South Neighborhood if the District continues to operate antiquated infrastructure. On 3/31/2023, the ISD Board submitted a formal application to Teton County to start the bridge permitting

process. The ISD Board is going to ensure that Teton County approve in writing all aspects of the new bridge design. Further, the Board has engaged Biota Consulting to manage the “wild and scenic” permitting process with the Bridger Teton National Forest that is required regardless of the final bridge design. As a reminder, the portion of the Snake River that flows under the bridge and along the District boundary was designated by Congress as “wild and scenic” in 2009.

Costs, Financing Options

Conzor Engineering is estimating that a new two lane bridge, with two new piers will cost between \$5.5 and \$6.5M. These numbers are preliminary as there are not any final design or engineered plans. This preliminary cost is approximately \$2M higher than a conceptual one-lane option that reuses the existing bridge piers. The Board is aware that an incremental \$2M is a significant burden on the District members. However, these incremental costs will be mitigated by the following:

- Several financing options are being evaluated. It appears the ISD should qualify for lower interest, long term fixed rate loans . In the most positive scenarios, the structure of these government loans programs are currently 3.75% fixed rate and up to 40 year terms. But shorter (5-7 year terms) loans with market rates are also available to the ISD. If spread over time and using the allocation methodology of the District, the impact on individual lot overs of the incremental \$2M expenditure could range from \$600 a year to \$2000 a year.
- The Board expects a meaningful insurance recovery. Unfortunately, due to advise of our legal counsel, the insurance strategy can only be discussed in private, executive session of the Board. But the Board can share that in the prior accident, the District received a high six figure insurance reimbursement that covered all the costs of the District of the prior repair. The damage of this incident is more significant and the claim is therefore expected to be greater.
- The Board has applied for the “BROS” program which is a Wyoming administered but Federally funded bridge replacement program. The Board believe the ISD qualifies for this program. The available dollars of this program or the number of projects already in the program que is unknown at this time and it is not known if the District will be approved for participation in this program. However, if approved, the program covers 90% of a bridge replacement cost with 10% paid by the public entity (ie the ISD).
- The Board is evaluating other programs, grants and options for funding this infrastructure.
- Even under a worst case, one-time assessment regime, an incremental \$2M of infrastructure would be around \$12,500 per lot (or ~\$37,500 per lot for a \$6M project cost). The Board however does fully expect to use all available funding sources and spread the cost out over multiples years.

Aesthetics

The Board recognizes that the current red bridge has a great deal of aesthetic charm and character. Many District members have commented that “driving across the bridge is like coming home”. Or “I relax every time I drive across the bridge”. Astoria Park Conservancy has integrated the bridge into their logo. Certainly the Jackson community at large recognizes and loves the character and

feel of the old red bridge. As some of you may know, this bridge originally was part of the bridge that spanned the Snake River near Wilson on Hwy 22. This section (and a section for the “swinging bridge” closer to Jackson) where relocation from that use to their current locations in the late 1950s. The red color came along later but has been a staple and iconic landmark of the community for a long time. The Board is evaluating truss and design options that preserve as much of the feel of the old bridge as possible. The Board agrees that the District should be a place where we all can slow down and relax a bit. The old – single lane red bridge did that – to a fault! But the Board believes we can retain most of those good elements in a modern and safe new structure.

First, the new design retains the red color. Second, the vertical members (trusses) on each side of the bridge are very similar to the current bridge but without any overhead height limitation. Third, the Board is working with Consor Engineering on designing protective railings on the side of the bridge that are similar in style and patterning of the current bridge, yet are safe and functional. While not shown yet in the renderings, the entrances will retain stone monumentation and signage accents that tie back to the current design. Elements of wood safety railing as in the current design may also be possible. These elements should not add material cost to the design as they are largely functional items that are needed.

Consor is also designing lane width and ingress and egress to encourage traffic calming and low speeds – but also improve viability and safety, particularly when entering HWY 89 from the bridge. Speed limit signs and cross walks will be added on the Astoria side to require that vehicles operate a safe and respectful speeds within Astoria Park and to protect pedestrians and bicyclists who will be increasingly frequenting the park as Astoria expands into its planned future “Phase 2” areas.

Timing & Process

Assuming the resolution passes this Wednesday, the ISD Board will rapidly move into the next stages of planning, design, permitting and final costing. While there a wide number of variables and an **extremely** high likelihood elements could change, the current conceptual plan is to finalize engineering designs and permitting over the next 90-120 days so that potentially in the late fall 2023 or late winter (March/April 2024) the new piers for the bridge could be built. In the mean time, the new trusses could be built off site so that in the summer or fall of 2024 the new trusses could be trucked to the site and mounted on the new piers. **Many, many** items need to come together to effect this timeline, but the Board feels a great deal of urgency to push the schedule as fast as possible.

In addition, the Board is working with Reiman Engineering on potential additional temporary patches to the current damaged bridge that could return more weight carrying capacity to the old bridge and return the bridge to its old height limitation. It is currently believed that these temporary repairs would allow concrete trucks and heavy vehicles to again use the old bridge for the period while the new bridge is under construction. The repairs however would be temporary in design and the old bridge would be fully removed once the new bridge is completed and certified. This process of temporarily buttressing/repairing the old bridge is another significant de-risking element of the process as these repairs should eliminate the need as early as mid summer 2024 for much of the heavy construction vehicles that currently have to use Johnny Counts Road to come across the old red bridge. In a one-lane replacement option, utilizing the old piers, there would be a multi-month period where **all traffic** would have to transverse the Forest Road while the existing steel superstructure was removed and replaced with a new

superstructure. Utilizing the old bridge for access while the new two-lane bridge is built eliminates that life safety and burdensome access issue.

Long Term Planning, Reserve Studies and Insurance Coverages

As the needs of the District continue to grow, the ISD Board has created a subcommittee led by Robin Riske to evaluate all components of long term financial planning for the District's infrastructure. As a reminder, the District owns and operates the water and sewer system, the gatehouse, the Astoria Red Bridge and all the roads in the District. The construction cost of this infrastructure is in the tens of millions of dollars. Much of the infrastructure is relatively new and well maintained, but other components are older. While the reserve study work is still in progress, the Board is going to develop a long term plan to make sure that the District has sufficient funds to maintain or replace infrastructure as it reaches the end of its useful life. Portions of the community road paving is an area that Board will review this budget cycle. In addition, many District members have requested a review of the insurance coverages that the District maintains both for the bridge but also other infrastructure.

Please see the attached initial renderings and routing of the proposed new bridge. The ISD Board is excited about what this new infrastructure brings to the District in terms of safety and functionality, while maintaining most the aesthetic charm and elegance of the old bridge.

We look forward to any public comment before we move forward with this important next step on Wednesday.

Sincerely

SRSCISD Board

Ken Ball
Ross Flax
Robin Riske
Joe Scott
Christopher Swann

The Board may be emailed at srsc.isd@gmail.com





