

**City of Rochester Hills  
Department of Planning**

**THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT  
September 4, 2009**

<b>Certificates of Appropriateness</b>	
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Road Commission for Oakland County
<b>LOCATION</b>	Tienken Road - Stoney Creek Bridge
<b>SIDWELL</b>	N/A
<b>FILE NO.</b>	HDC 09-002
<b>ZONING</b>	N/A
<b>STAFF</b>	Derek L. Delacourt, Deputy Director
<b>REQUEST</b>	Certificate of Appropriateness - Removal Certificate of Appropriateness – New Construction
<b>HISTORIC DISTRICT</b>	Stoney Creek

**SUMMARY:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal and replacement of the existing Stoney Creek Bridge. The bridge is located within the national registered Stoney Creek Historic District and is subject to the review of the City's Historic Districts Commission. It has been determined that the bridge is a noncontributing resource within the District; however, the location and size of the bridge play an important role to the District. The location of the bridge makes it a natural entrance point for the "village" and the narrow size of the bridge helps calm traffic entering the area. Due to these factors, even though the bridge is noncontributing, the existing bridge and its replacement play a role in protecting the character and integrity of the district.

**PEDESTRIAN FACILITY:**

The existing bridge does not have a pedestrian component, for years this has created a dangerous situation for pedestrians and bicyclists. It was determined early in the process that any replacement bridge should include a pedestrian crossing that is viable and useable by everyone. The current bridge proposal proposes an attached pedestrian crossing, that is minimal in width and at this time appears to meet all applicable standards for incorporation into the bridge project. At previous meetings there were several discussions regarding detaching the pedestrian facility. Based on the pathway's current proposed width of approximately 8', including barriers and rail, and the incorporation of the vintage railing, it is Staff's opinion that the current design meets the

requirements of the Standards. The City Engineer, as requested, investigated and presented alternative designs and costs estimates for detached pedestrian facilities. Utilizing an existing refurbished bridge those estimates exceeded \$200,000 dollars. Designs demonstrating a bridge separated by 11 feet and one separated by over 30 feet were both investigated. In addition to the cost, both designs have a greater negative impact on the vegetation east of the bridge than what is proposed. The pathway east of the bridge will extend to the end of the proposed guardrail associated with the project, and it will be the City's responsibility to determine how to connect the pathway further to the east. The applicant is proposing a retaining wall east of the bridge, the wall is being used to limit as much as possible the elimination of vegetation associated with the project. Details of the retaining wall are included in your packet.

### **BRIDGE DESIGN:**

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) has appeared before the HDC on several occasions to discuss the proposed bridge. From the onset, the number one concern of the HDC has been the width of the proposed bridge. The RCOC has made every effort to meet that goal. The original bridge concept was 54 feet in width; the current proposal is 40 feet. The bridge is proposed as two 2-foot shoulders, two 12-foot travel lanes, a connected 7.5-foot pedestrian path and associated guard rail and path railings. The total bridge width is approximately 40 feet, a less than 12 foot increase in width, including the pedestrian path. The guard rail is shown on the plans as two tube type railing instead of the standard concrete "jersey barrier"; this is proposed to provide a more open feel to the bridge. The two tube rail will connect with 8 foot concrete endings and standard B-type guard rail approach endings. Also, the RCOC was successful in tracking down railing similar, if not identical, to the railing seen in photos of earlier versions of the bridge. This vintage rail will be used on the south side of the pedestrian facility (please refer to the attached plans and details for a complete review of the bridge and associated improvements). All railing is proposed to be standard galvanized rail that will fade to a soft gray color over time. Powder coating or painting the rail was investigated; however, due to chipping and maintenance issues Staff is recommending the standard galvanized.

### **TRUCK TRAFFIC:**

At previous meetings the HDC expressed concern because the new bridge does not restrict truck traffic. In discussions with the RCOC, it was determined that the current bridge is restricted due to its structural deficiency, not in an effort to limit the amount of trucks through the area. The existing bridge was designed to the full legal loading limit at that time, the same as the current bridge is being proposed. No information has been presented indicating that the difference in loading limits between the proposed bridge and the existing bridge will increase the negative effect on the District. Staff understands, and agrees, that truck traffic through the District, both volume and speeds, is a concern and should be addressed. However, Staff does not believe that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards support an arbitrary restriction on weight limits. It is Staff's opinion that the appropriate avenue is to request that City Council apply for the appropriate Traffic Control Orders (TCOs) and associated studies from the RCOC to reduce both truck volume and speed (please refer to the attached letter from the City Attorney regarding his opinion).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the request to remove the existing bridge and install a new replacement bridge. Also, the City's Preservation Consultant has reviewed the proposed bridge and recommends approval (please refer to the attached letter for full review comments).

**ANALYSIS:**

1. The applicant is seeking approval for two Certificates of Appropriateness, the first for the removal of the existing Stoney Creek Bridge. The second is for the proposed replacement bridge.
2. The applicant has demonstrated that the existing bridge is structurally deficient and in need of replacement.
3. The existing bridge is a noncontributing resource.
4. The proposed bridge is approximately 40 feet in width, less than 12 feet wider than the existing structure.
5. The proposed bridge incorporates two 2-foot shoulders, two 12-foot travel lanes, an attached 8-foot pedestrian facility and associated improvements.
6. The bridge appears to meet Standards 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which read:
  9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
  10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **CERTIFICATE(S) OF APPROPRIATENESS**

### **Removal**

**MOTION** in the matter of HDC File No. 09-002 (Stoney Creek Bridge Removal) regarding the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing Tienken Road Bridge over Stoney Creek, the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES** a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following Findings:

#### **Findings:**

1. The existing bridge is a noncontributing resource in the Stoney Creek District.
2. The bridge does not contribute to the character of the District and is not eligible for the National Register.

### **New Construction**

**MOTION** in the matter of HDC File No. 09-002 (Tienken Road Bridge over Stoney Creek Replacement) regarding the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new bridge addition, the Historic Districts Commission **APPROVES/DENIES** a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following Findings and Conditions:

#### **Findings:**

1. The subject site is a noncontributing resource within the Stoney Creek Historic District located in the City of Rochester Hills.
2. The architectural features, design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed are consistent with those of the Stoney Creek Historic District, and do not have a negative impact on the District.
3. The proposed bridge replacement is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Numbers 9 and 10.
4. The new bridge does not destroy historic materials that characterize the District. The new bridge is different from the old and is compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the District. The design of the bridge protects the historic integrity of the District and its environment.
5. The new bridge is designed in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the Historic District and its environment would be unimpaired.

Conditions:

1. The proposed bridge construction and associated improvements shall be consistent with plans dated received from the Planning Department August 20<sup>th</sup> 2009.
2. The bridge shall be two 12-foot motor vehicle travel lanes only.
3. Paved shoulders for the bridge shall be a maximum of two feet in width.
4. The attached pedestrian facility shall be a maximum of 8 feet in width.
5. The total bridge improvements shall be a maximum of 41 feet in width, as identified in the submitted plans.
6. Bridge guard rail shall be the two tube type, attached to eight foot concrete endings with standard type-B rail approach endings as identified on the submitted plans and details. All railing and posts shall be galvanized.
7. Pedestrian rail shall be consistent with the vintage R-4 railing details included in the project submittal. The railing shall be galvanized.
8. The plans shall be revised to relocate the foot of the proposed retaining wall to a distance to be approved by the City Engineer.

Attachments: Application  
09-02-09 Kidorf Preservation Consulting Letter  
08-19-09 Staran Letter