

Skowhegan Bridge Feasibility Study

Public Meeting
September 28, 2021

Skowhegan Skowhegan

Skowhegan
Maine

Meeting Agenda

- Opening and Introductions
- Current Status and Next Steps
- Purpose and Need
- Previous Public Input
- Explanation of Alternatives
- Draft Recommendations
- Public Input
- Adjourn

Purpose of Meeting

To provide feedback on the Draft Recommendations so the Town Select Board can make a determination whether or not to formally request that MaineDOT advance the new bridge project to the next phase: environmental evaluation

Next Steps

- Finalize the Report
- Town Board of Selectmen make recommendation to MaineDOT to advance – or not to advance – the work
- If advanced, MaineDOT begins Environmental Evaluation (Includes cultural, social and economic resources), pending available funds
- Depending on results of Environmental Evaluation, a final bridge alternative can move ahead for funding

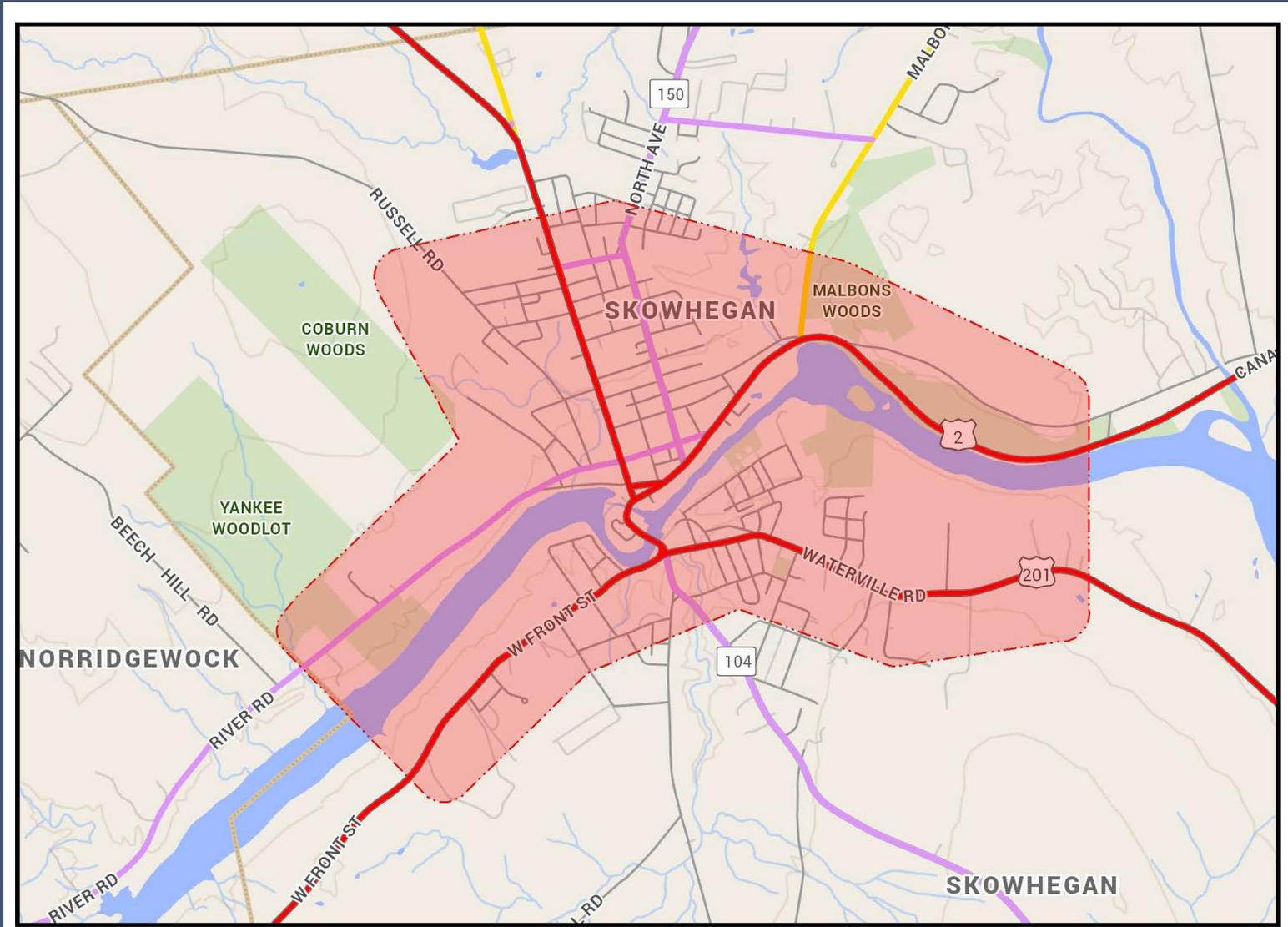
Study Comments/Survey

- Town of Skowhegan Website
- Town of Skowhegan Facebook page

Study Team

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Christine Almand | Town of Skowhegan |
| Gregory Dore | Town of Skowhegan |
| Joel Greenwood | Town of Skowhegan |
| Nate Howard | MaineDOT (Planning) |
| Martin Rooney | MaineDOT (Planning) |
| Ed Hanscom | MaineDOT (Planning) |
| Jason Stetson | MaineDOT |
| Kristen Chamberlain | MaineDOT |
| Haley Jaramillo | MaineDOT |
| Mark Hume | MaineDOT |
| Tom Errico | T.Y. Lin International |
| Shawn Davis | T.Y. Lin International |
| Carol Morris | Morris Communications |
| Kevin Hooper | Kevin Hooper Associates |
| Dana Valleau | TRC |
| Jessica Murray | TRC |

Study Area



Study Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a transportation system that will connect Routes 2 and 201 across the Kennebec River in Skowhegan and support improved regional mobility for people and freight.

The preferred alternative will most effectively mitigate safety and congestion issues in the downtown area while having the least projected impact to local commerce.

The proposed action will also improve the resiliency and redundancy of the regional system and enhance regional safety.

It will be supported by reasonably available local, state, and federal funding.

Activities Since 2020 Public Meeting

- June 25, 2020: Public Meeting
- August 4, 2020: Study Team Meeting (Analysis Update and revised Comparison Matrix)
- August 25, 2020: Coordination Meeting with *Run of River*
- September 1, 2020: Transmitted Draft Feasibility Analysis Report
- September 4, 2020: Study Team Meeting
- November 2, 2020 :TYLI Submitted revised cost estimates to MaineDOT
- December 23, 2020: MaineDOT provided comments regarding cost assumption
- December 29, 2020: MaineDOT/TYLI review meeting
- January 12, 2021: MaineDOT Criteria For Traffic Conditions during potential Construction
- February 1, 2021: TYLI transmitted revised cost estimates and comparison matrix
- February 5, 2021: MaineDOT/TYLI review meeting
- April 5, 2021: TYLI transmitted revised cost estimates and comparison matrix
- April 8, 2021: Study Team meeting.
- June 8, 2021: Bridge Committee Meeting

What we heard from the online surveys

- **Noted concerns regarding existing bridge**
 - Traffic congestion during peak travel periods
 - Concentrates traffic to one point of entry – bad traffic flow downtown
 - Too many trucks make downtown unattractive to shoppers
 - Safety issues - emergency service issues
 - No redundancy with only one bridge
- **How should this be solved?**
 - Add a second bridge: 80%
 - Widen existing bridge: 10%

What we heard at the first Public Meeting

■ Key concerns that could be addressed

- Better Safety
 - Chance of spills from trucks
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Better emergency response
- Better Mobility
 - Increased redundancy (another way across the river if bridge is blocked)
 - Reduce traffic congestion
 - Improve downtown traffic flow
- Fewer trucks
 - More attractive downtown experience

■ Concerns that could be created

- New bridge might not have the intended effect
- Impact on local roads and intersections
- Property taken off the tax rolls
- Impact on trail designs

What we heard at the second Public Meeting

■ Noted concerns regarding Alternatives

- Impacts to the Front/Main intersection
- Impacts to businesses with widened existing Route 201 bridges
- ATV's should be considered for new bridge crossings
- Truck traffic impacts to downtown
- Impacts to the *Run of the River* project

■ Comments on Alternatives

- Locate bridge that lessens downtown traffic
- Why is a bypass not included (Alternatives do not include a Bypass per Town/MaineDOT agreement)
- How will the project be funded (short-term improvements may be funded through current funding strategies. Long-term will likely require federal involvement)

2045 Alternatives Being Considered

No-Build: No changes to the existing roadway system except for programmed improvements noted below:

- Installation of a Traffic Signal at Madison Ave./Elm St.
- Adding a right-turn lane on W. Front St. at Main St.

Alternative 1 - Transportation System Management (TSM) Improvements:

Implement roadway improvements that mitigate existing mobility and safety deficiencies.

Alternative 2 –Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Alternative 3 – Upgrade Existing Crossing: Widen the existing Island Avenue Bridges.

Alternatives Being Considered

Alternative 4 - New Downstream Crossing: Provide a new river crossing with roadway connections between Route 201 and Route 2 approximately 1 mile south of downtown Skowhegan.

Alternative 5 - New Downtown Crossing: Provide a new river crossing with roadway connections in the immediate downtown area downstream of the existing Island Avenue Bridges.

Alternative 6 - New Upstream Crossing: Provide a new river crossing with roadway connections upstream of the existing Island Avenue Bridges.

UPGRADE EXISTING CROSSING

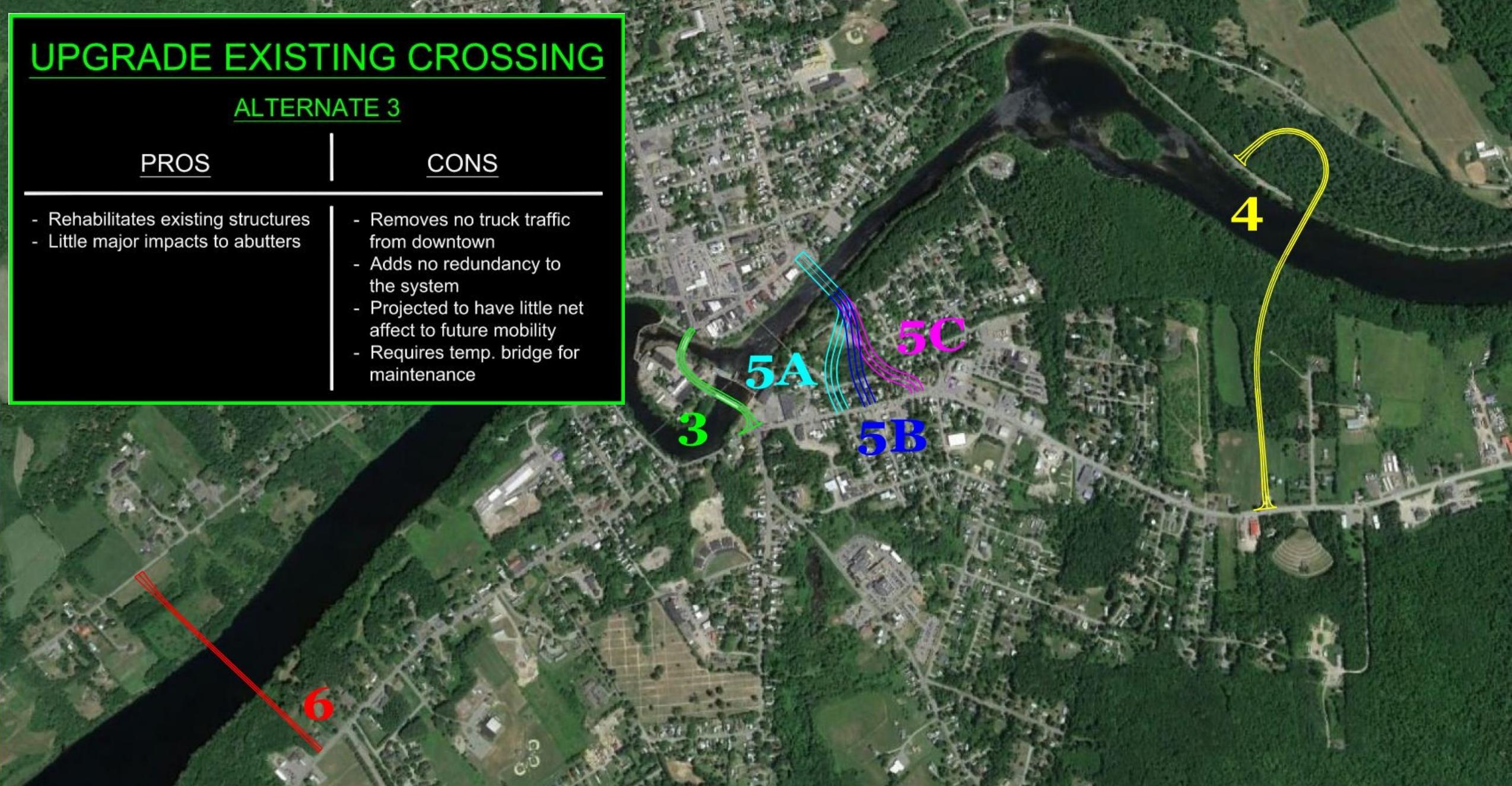
ALTERNATE 3

PROS

- Rehabilitates existing structures
- Little major impacts to abutters

CONS

- Removes no truck traffic from downtown
- Adds no redundancy to the system
- Projected to have little net affect to future mobility
- Requires temp. bridge for maintenance



DOWNSTREAM CROSSING

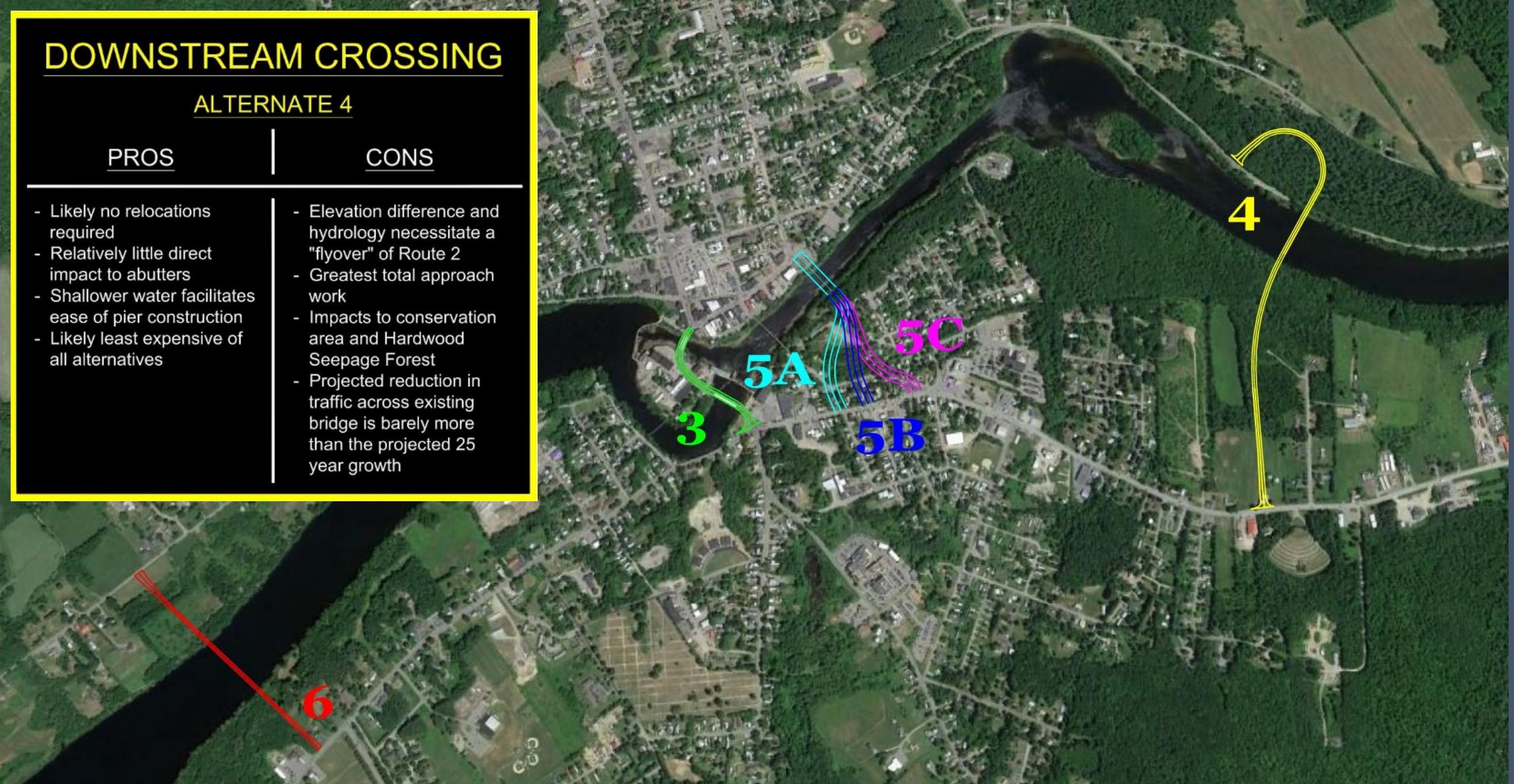
ALTERNATE 4

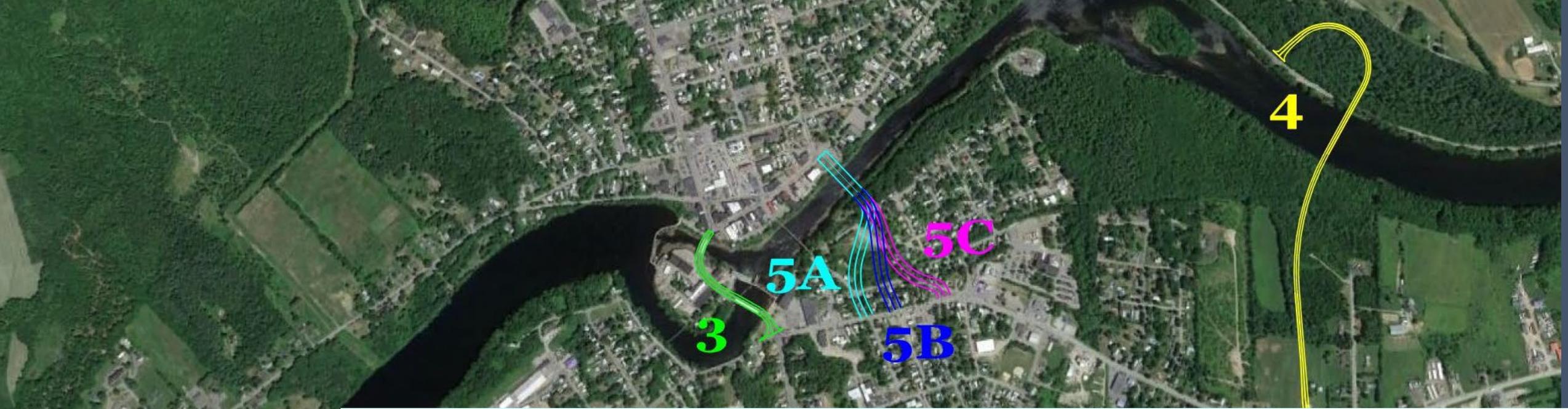
PROS

- Likely no relocations required
- Relatively little direct impact to abutters
- Shallower water facilitates ease of pier construction
- Likely least expensive of all alternatives

CONS

- Elevation difference and hydrology necessitate a "flyover" of Route 2
- Greatest total approach work
- Impacts to conservation area and Hardwood Seepage Forest
- Projected reduction in traffic across existing bridge is barely more than the projected 25 year growth





DOWNTOWN CROSSING

ALTERNATE 5

PROS

- Shortest structure of the three new crossing alternatives
- Thru Arch Bridge to eliminate pier in river per Town
- Shortest total approaches
- Greatest (by far) projected reduction of traffic across the MCS Bridge of the three new crossing alternatives
- System redundancy

CONS

- Steep river banks
- Impacts to 4(f) property (Veteran's Park) which could result in relocation of park
- Will require greater abutter acquisition (could result in up to six building acquisitions)
- May impact one historically eligible property on the south of the river
- Will result in impact to historic district on the north side of the river
- Likely the most expensive of all three new crossing alternatives

UPSTREAM CROSSING

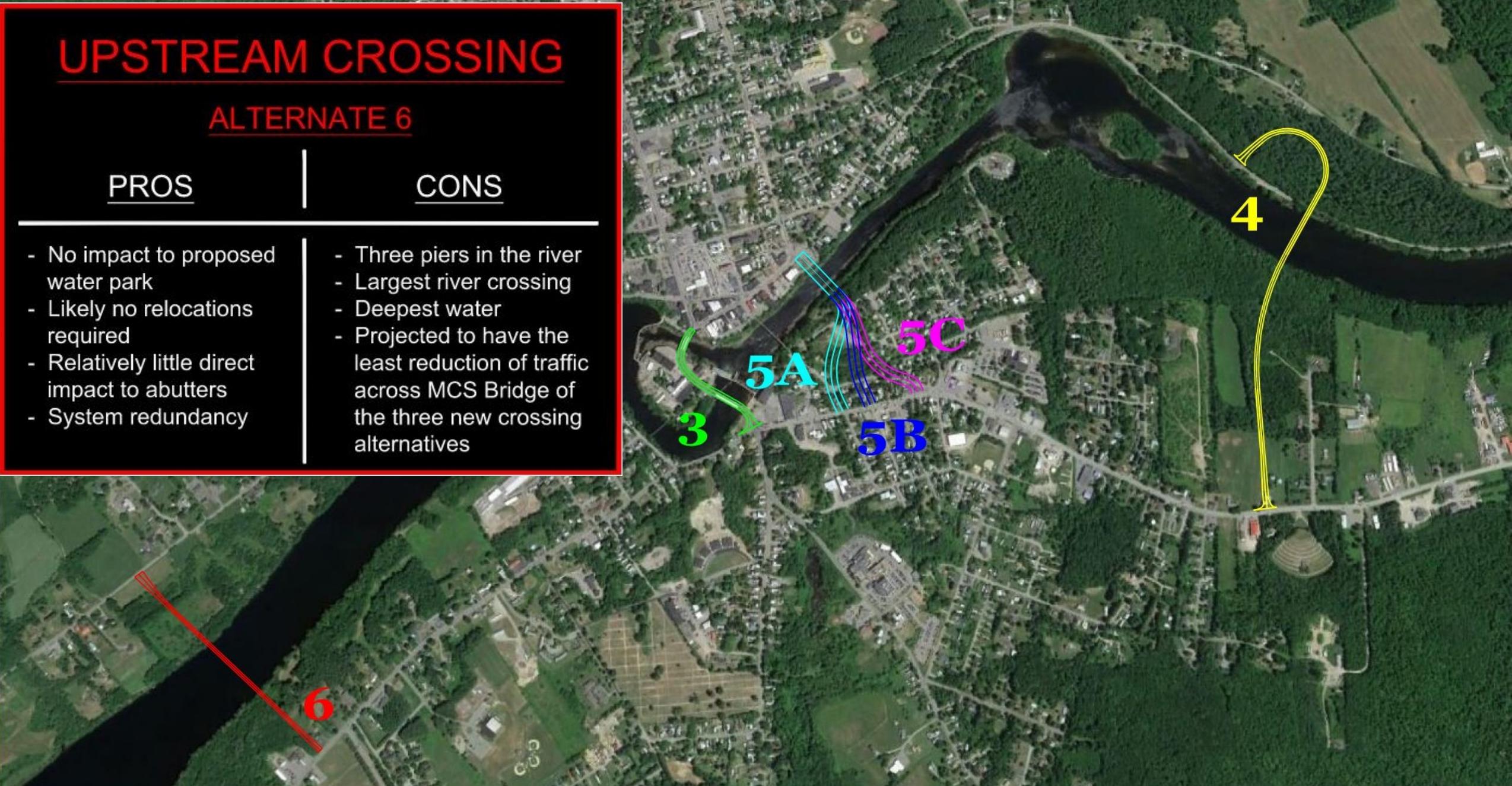
ALTERNATE 6

PROS

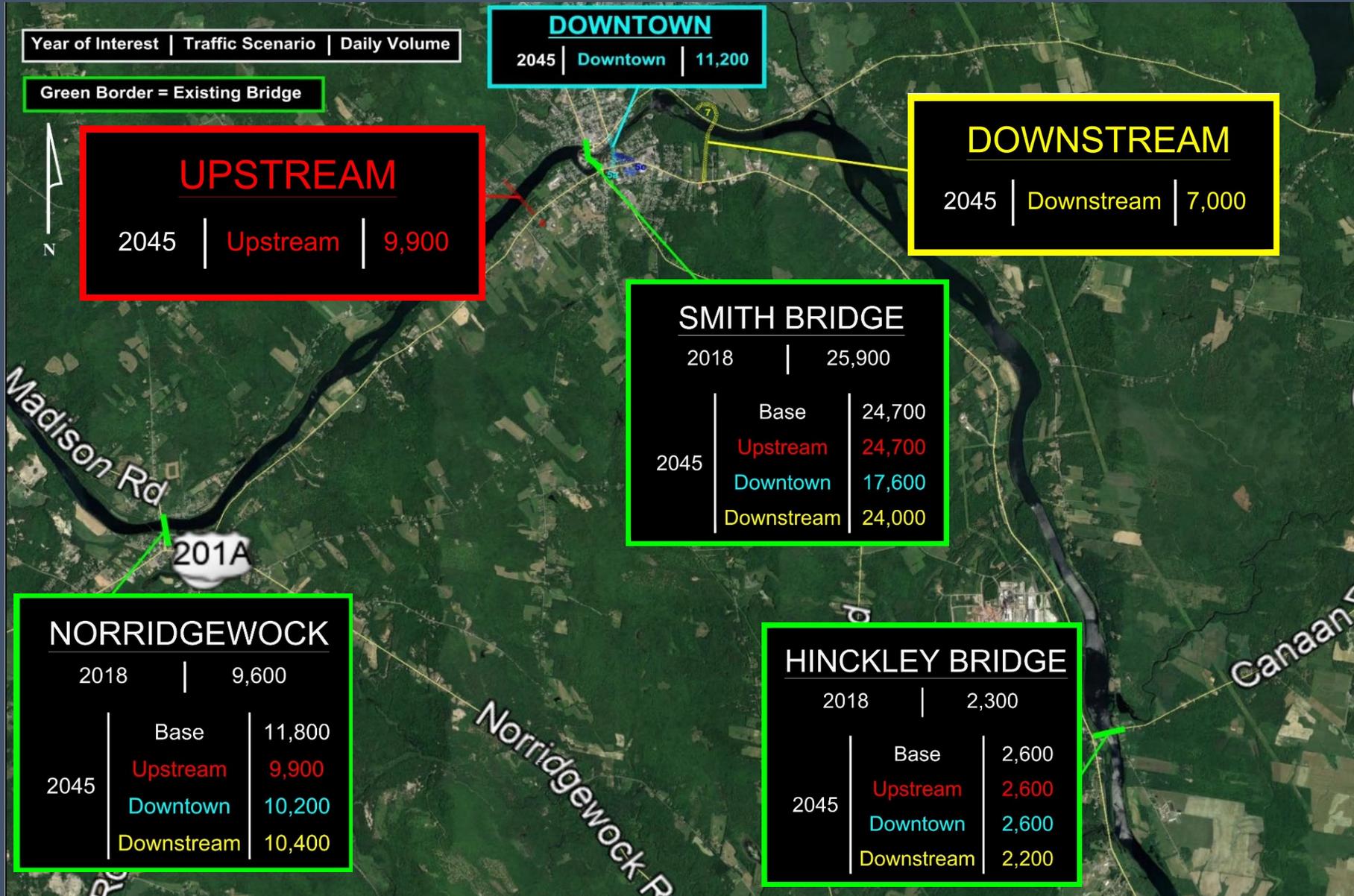
- No impact to proposed water park
- Likely no relocations required
- Relatively little direct impact to abutters
- System redundancy

CONS

- Three piers in the river
- Largest river crossing
- Deepest water
- Projected to have the least reduction of traffic across MCS Bridge of the three new crossing alternatives



Future Traffic Volumes



No-Build

| NO-BUILD COMPARISON MATRIX SUMMARY | |
|---|----------------|
| Impact Description | Outcome |
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | No |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | No |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | No |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | No |
| Impact to River Recreation | No |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | No |
| Property Impacts | No |
| Environmental Impacts | No |
| Historic Resource Impacts | No |
| Benefit/Cost | N/A |
| Meet Purpose and Need | No |
| Cost | N/A |

Alternative 1 – Transportation Demand Management

| ALTERNATIVE 1 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT COMPARISON MATRIX SUMMARY | |
|---|----------------|
| Impact Description | Outcome |
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | No |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | No |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | No |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | No |
| Impact to the River Recreation | No |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | No |
| Property Impacts | No |
| Environmental Impacts | No |
| Historic Resource Impacts | No |
| Benefit/Cost | N/A |
| Meet Purpose and Need | No |
| Cost | N/A |

Alternative 2 – Transportation System Management

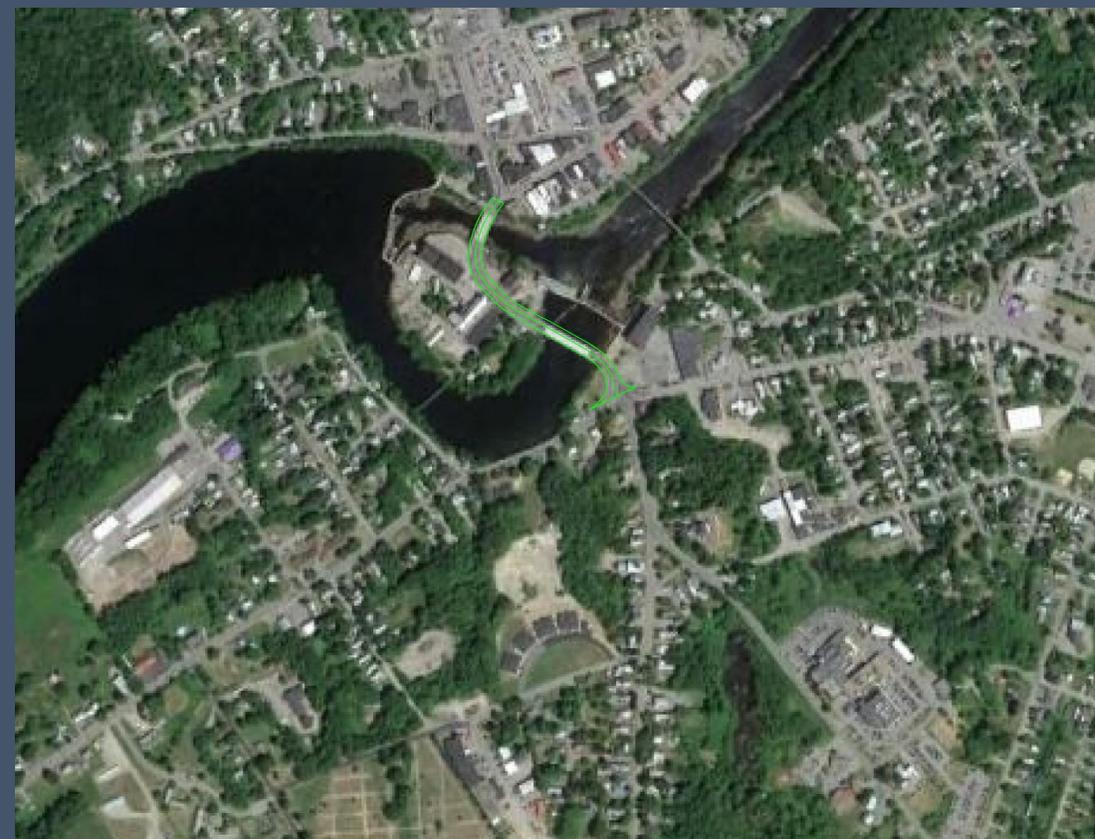
ALTERNATIVE 2 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT COMPARISON MATRIX SUMMARY

| Impact Description | Outcome |
|--|---|
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | Minor reduction in delay at Island/W. Front/Main, Madison/Elm and Madison/High intersections |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | No |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | No |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | Some improvement in mobility associated with intersection improvements |
| Impact to the River Recreation | No |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | Some enhancement as part of improvement concepts, but wider intersections make crossings more difficult |
| Property Impacts | Some impacts with intersection widening at Madison Avenue and Water Street |
| Environmental Impacts | No |
| Historic Resource Impacts | Some Impact to Downtown Historic District with wider intersections |
| Benefit/Cost | 10.3 |
| Meet Purpose and Need | No – although some mobility improvements would be expected |
| Cost | \$200,000 |

Alternative 3 Improve Existing Bridges

ALTERNATIVE 3 IMPROVE EXISTING BRIDGES COMPARISON MATRIX SUMMARY

| Impact Description | Outcome |
|---|---|
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | Some reduction in delay at Island/W. Front/Main and Madison/High and Elm intersections |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | No |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | Some improvement as a wider bridge provides additional width for managing traffic |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | Some improvement in mobility associated with intersection improvements and increased bridge lane capacity |
| Impact to the River Recreation | No |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | Some enhancement as part of improvement concepts, but wider intersections make crossings more difficult |
| Property Impacts | Some impacts with bridge/intersection widening at Water Street and at Island/W. Front/Main |
| Environmental Impacts | No |
| Historic Resource Impacts | Some Impact to Downtown Historic District at Madison/Water intersection |
| Benefit/Cost | 0.79 |
| Meet Purpose and Need | No – although some mobility improvements would be expected |
| Cost | \$36.6M |

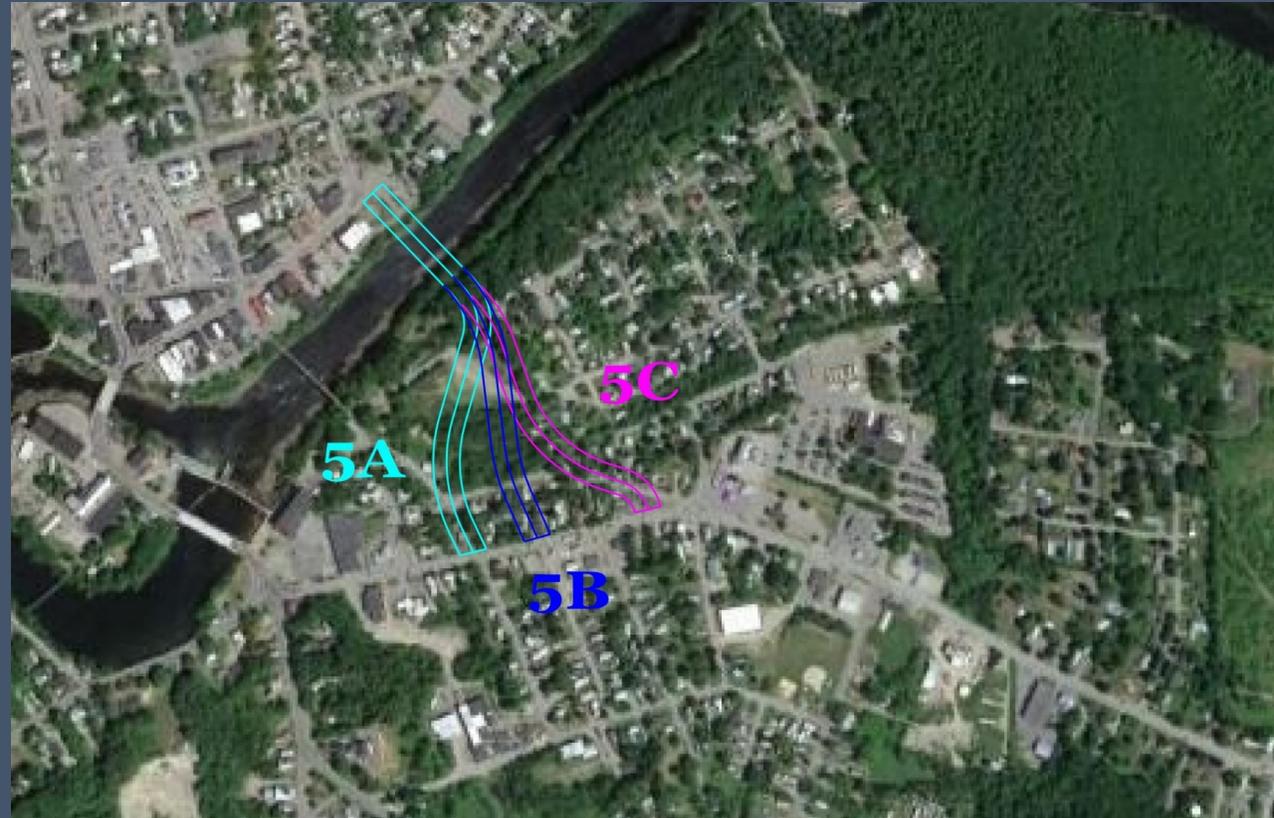


Alternative 4 – Downstream Bridge Crossing



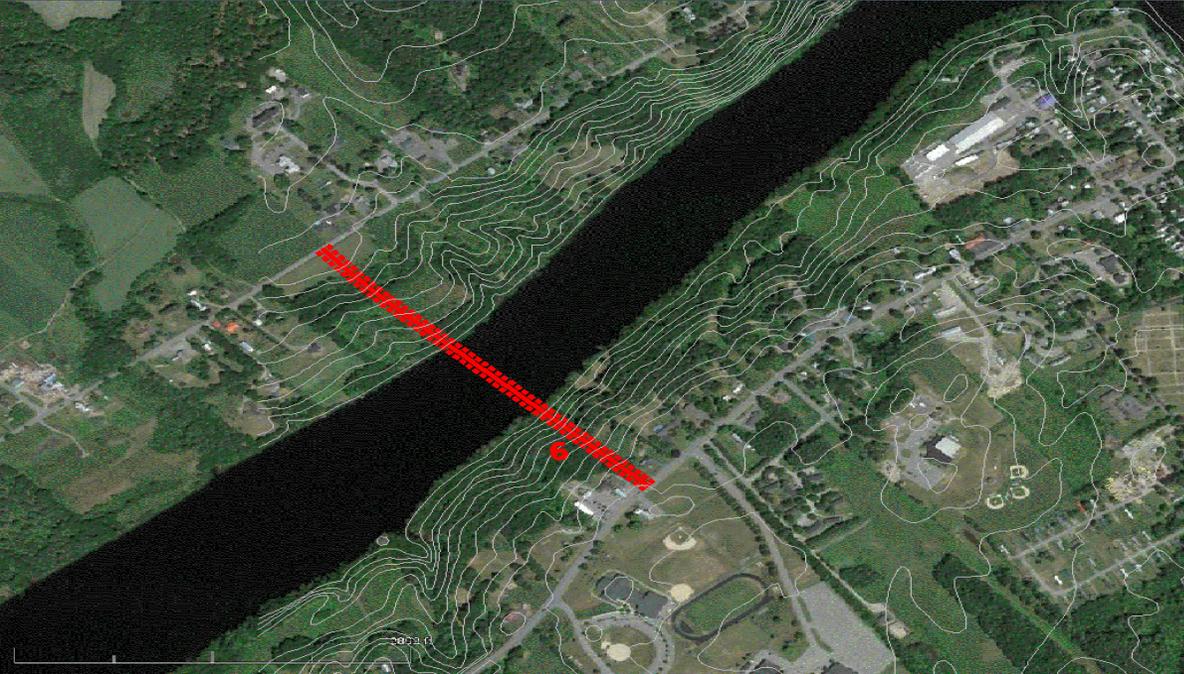
| ALTERNATIVE 4 DOWNSTREAM BRIDGE CROSSING ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX | |
|--|---|
| Impact Description | Outcome |
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | Some reduction in delay at Island/Front/Main and Madison/High intersections |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | Yes, 200 less daily trucks |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | Yes |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | Some improvement, particularly by the removal of trucks, but volumes will not be reduced significantly (-18% average in peak hours) |
| Impact to the River Recreation | Some Impact – but not at key Run of the River water feature |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | No |
| Property Impacts | Some property impacts on the south side approaching Route 201 |
| Environmental Impacts | Yes |
| Historic Resource Impacts | No |
| Benefit/Cost | 0.79 |
| Meet Purpose and Need | Partially meets purpose and need |
| Cost | \$25.5M |

Alternative 5b – Downtown Bridge Crossing



| ALTERNATIVE 5 DOWNTOWN BRIDGE CROSSING COMPARISON MATRIX | |
|--|--|
| Impact Description | Outcome |
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | Greatest reduction in delay at Island/W. Front/Main intersection |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | Yes, 300 less daily trucks |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | Yes |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | Traffic volumes will decline within the Downtown by an average of 37% in peak hours |
| Impact to the River Recreation | Impacts the <i>Run of the River</i> Project |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | Some improved connectivity between downtown and south side of town and reduced traffic in Downtown |
| Property Impacts | Yes |
| Environmental Impacts | Yes |
| Historic Resource Impacts | Yes, both Downtown and property on south side at Route 201 intersection |
| Benefit/Cost | 0.92 |
| Meet Purpose and Need | Yes |
| Cost | \$55.3M |

Alternative 6 – Upstream Bridge Crossing



ALTERNATIVE 6 UPSTREAM BRIDGE CROSSING COMPARISON SUMMARY MATRIX

| Impact Description | Outcome |
|--|---|
| Improves Congestion at Key Intersections | Some reduction in delay at Island/W. Front/Main intersection |
| Reduces Truck Traffic Through Downtown | No |
| Improves River Crossing Redundancy | Yes |
| Improves Downtown Mobility | Little to no improvement |
| Impact to the River Recreation | No |
| Potential to Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions | Little or no improvement, although connectivity to school campus enhanced |
| Property Impacts | Some impact |
| Environmental Impacts | Yes |
| Historic Resource Impacts | No |
| Benefit/Cost | 0.77 |
| Meet Purpose and Need | Partially meets purpose and need |
| Cost | \$30.5M |

Draft Recommendations

Short-Term Improvements

- **Main Street/Island Avenue/West Front Street/Waterville Road** - Convert the Island Avenue YIELD controlled right turn to signal control.
- **Madison Avenue/Elm Street/Commercial Street** – Install traffic signal and implement lane adjustments per current MaineDOT project.
- **Madison Avenue/Pleasant Street/High Street** – Modify intersection for single Madison southbound through lane and a dedicated left lane onto High Street per current MaineDOT project.
- **Commercial Street/Water Street/Court Street** - the following safety mitigation measures are suggested:
 - Replace the YIELD sign with a STOP sign on the Water Street approach.
 - Install Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB) at crosswalk locations.
 - Incorporate geometric modifications to tighten intersection with the understanding that large trucks must be accommodated.

Draft Recommendations

Long-Term Improvements

Based on the Alternatives Analysis and Purpose and Need it is recommended that **Alternative 4 (Downstream)** and **Alternative 5b (Downtown)** be considered for environmental study and potential permitting (Includes cultural, social and economic resources).

Federal funds for project implementation require a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study. The NEPA work includes and builds on the work performed in this study.

Public Input

Key question to be answered tonight

Should the Select Board formally recommend to MaineDOT to move on to next steps: environmental analysis for Alternatives 4 and 5b?

Select Board is looking for strong support one way or the other.

Study Comments/Survey

- Town of Skowhegan Website
- Town of Skowhegan Facebook page