

Resolution 2-05/06

Passed 8-0 on 9/19/05

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CITY OF PORTLAND
IN THE CITY COUNCIL

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JAMES I. COHEN (5)

**RESOLUTION RE: RECONSTRUCTION OF
WESTBROOK STREET BRIDGE IN PORTLAND
BY THE MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, the City of Portland was informed that the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) was preparing to reconstruct the Westbrook Street Bridge located in Portland, which Bridge crosses the Turnpike; and

WHEREAS, City of Portland officials worked cooperatively with the professional staff of the MTA to determine the best engineered approach to minimize the adverse impact on the residents and users of Westbrook Street during reconstruction of the Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the three alternatives considered were (i) to build a temporary bridge, (ii) allow the Bridge to remain open during reconstruction or (iii) close the Bridge during reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, building a temporary bridge was too expensive and would adversely affect wetlands, and allowing the Bridge to remain open during reconstruction would result in a project cost increase estimated to be at least \$400,000 more than the cost if the Bridge were closed during the reconstruction period; and

WHEREAS, City of Portland Public Works officials identified a reasonable detour plan to permit closing the Bridge during reconstruction which was agreed upon by public safety officials from area communities, including Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook; and

WHEREAS, the MTA engineers and other professional staff, in conjunction with input from Portland and Westbrook professionals, concluded that of the three possible alternatives for repair, closing the Bridge completely was the most feasible as it was the most efficient, least costly and least disruptive to residents and traffic; and

WHEREAS, MTA presented the decision to close the Bridge completely to City of Portland and the City of Westbrook officials last January; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland officials and the residents most affected by the closure, those in the Stroudwater area, accepted the decision and have planned accordingly; and

WHEREAS, subsequently, the MTA recently determined to reject its original plan to close the Bridge and to make repairs by closing one lane at a time, thereby keeping the Bridge open during reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, this alternative will extend the repair time for the Bridge by at least 12 months, increase costs and will contribute to significant traffic congestion problems on Congress Street in Portland and Main Street in Westbrook; and

WHEREAS, the Portland City Council has concluded this plan is contrary to that to which City and MTA staff had agreed, and will contribute to motorist and pedestrian safety hazards and raises substantial concerns for its residents;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Portland City Council objects to reconstruction of the Westbrook Street, Portland Bridge by the MTA by the means of permitting single lane traffic, and demands that the MTA complete the work as originally agreed by closing the Bridge during re-construction, permitting the work to be done quickly and with the least disruption and hardship on our residents and motorists.