

**Cape May County  
New Jersey  
Department of Tourism and  
Public Information**



# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 Moore Road  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210-1601  
Telephone: (609) 463-6415 ▪ Fax: (609) 465-4639  
Website: [www.capemaycountynj.gov](http://www.capemaycountynj.gov)  
Diane Wieland, Director

---

---

Contact: Lewis Donofrio, Chief Engineer  
Cape May County Bridge Commission  
609 465-7806  
November 16, 2020

## Middle Thorofare Bridge Rehabilitation Project to Begin

**Lower Township** - Ocean Drive (CR621) Bridge over Middle Thorofare, also known as Two Mile Bridge and sometimes Cold Spring Inlet, is getting a long-awaited facelift with new bridge railings, a new approach roadway guide rail, a new fender system, and major structural steel repairs to the two bascule girders. The project initiated in 2017 will address the deteriorated bridge railing system by installing the current NJDOT standard 4 bar railing system greatly enhancing the safety of the traveling public. The project also replaces the dilapidated fender system with steel and fiberglass-reinforced plastic materials to better protect the bridge's foundation elements from recreational and commercial vessels using the busy navigation channel. Lastly, deteriorated steel elements of the two main bascule girders will be rehabilitated by installing new and supplemental steel plates in critical areas.

Middle Thorofare Bridge is one of five bridges along Ocean Drive in Cape May County owned and operated by the Cape May County Bridge Commission an organization created in 1934 by New Jersey legislature and the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The bridge was opened to traffic in June 1940 and constructed concurrently with its sister draw bridges; Grassy Sound (Middle Twp.), Great Channel (Middle Twp./Stone Harbor), and Townsends Inlet (Avalon/Sea Isle City) along with two fixed low-level bridges; Mill Creek & Upper Thorofare just south of Middle Thorofare Bridge.

MORE

## *Page 2 -- Middle Thorofare Bridge Rehab Project to Begin*

On September 30<sup>th</sup> bids were received and the project was subsequently awarded by the County Freeholders on October 13<sup>th</sup> to South State Inc. of Bridgeton NJ in the amount of \$7,464,106. The project design was completed by WSP of Lawrenceville NJ and Greenman-Pedersen of Lebanon NJ, with construction engineering services to be managed by Pennoni Associates of Haddon Heights, NJ. Funding is provided by a 2018 bond ordinance through a Shared Services Agreement with the County Board of Chosen Freeholders and \$3,293,469 in NJDOT Local Aid State grants received in a three-year period.

Work will begin in the next week or two with Phase 1 of the bridge railing replacement. The bridge roadway will be reduced to a one-lane alternating traffic pattern through the use of temporary traffic signals and traveling motorists should add additional time to their daily commute. Tolls will be collected during the project. Fender work is expected to get underway in December and continue throughout the winter months into spring 2021. With an average of 5500 bridge openings per year, the fender work is being closely coordinated with the US Coast Guard and the local fishing industry to minimize navigation impacts through the 50 ft. wide channel beneath the bascule span. The bridge's operating schedule will be modified beginning December 1<sup>st</sup> continuing through February 28<sup>th</sup> and mariners should monitor U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners issued weekly. The project will require periodic overnight road closures at the bridge which are necessary for the contractor to complete fender piling installation beneath the bascule span and setup/removal of the concrete barrier curbs which protect the public while the new bridge railing is being installed. The project's overall completion date is December 2021 however no long-term lane closures are permitted from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

At 80 years old, the Middle Thorofare Bridge is programmed for replacement as part of the County's Comprehensive Bridge Improvement and Replacement Plan released in August 2020. The larger-scale project replaces 3 bridges, 1 culvert, and approximately 2.75 miles of roadway from the Garden State Parkway to Madison Avenue in the Diamond Beach

MORE

*Page 3 -- Middle Thorofare Bridge Rehab Project to Begin*

section of Lower Township. The Local Concept Development Phase is seeking final approvals from NJDOT before beginning the Preliminary Engineering Phase. Federal and State funding is actively being sought by the County at the present time however a new bridge is likely a few more years away. When asked, why do all this work when the bridge is going to be replaced? The answer is simply safety to the traveling public and protection of the bridge's core elements until the structure is eventually replaced.

For updates on the rehabilitation construction activity please visit [www.followthegull.com](http://www.followthegull.com) .