

State outlines plan for bridge ramps



Dave Hansen | Staff photographer

The realignment of the Pell Bridge entrance and exit ramps is expected to open land for development in Newport's north end, according to the state Department of Transportation.

The project to eliminate the ramps is expected to cost about \$40 million and be completed by the end of 2022.

By Sean Flynn
Staff writer

NEWPORT — The state plans to eliminate the extended elevated ramps and viaducts leading to and from the Pell Bridge and replace them with a simpler, more efficient bridge ramp design by the end of 2022. City officials are hoping the redesign frees up dozens of acres of land for economic development.

More than 100 people, including engineers and staff from the state Department of Transportation and the consultant firm VHB of Providence, filled the council chamber of City Hall on Thursday night for a public workshop on the \$40 million project.

Jody Richards, DOT's project manager for the Pell ramp redesign, and Peter Pavao, VHB's director of transportation systems, made presentations outlining the goals of the project and its timetable.

People then divided into seven stations to make comments on different aspects of the project including the environmental assessment, land use, noise and community facilities, traffic and safety, wetlands, conservation areas, and historic resources.

Based on the comments people made and the comments DOT receives by March 31, the engineers will develop a series of alternatives, perhaps as many as five or six, Richards said.

Those alternatives will be presented in the late spring of this year during a second public workshop.

After receiving feedback from that workshop, the transportation planners would submit a draft environmental assessment and a 30 percent design plan to the Federal Highway Administration by the fall of this year.

The final environmental assessment would be submitted in late December or somewhat later, with the hope the Federal Highway Administration issues a "finding of no significant impact" by early 2019.

The final design would be submitted to the Federal Highway

BRIDGE A8

Trump's steel tariff plan roils market

Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled plans Thursday to slap hefty tariffs on global imports of steel and aluminum, catching much of his administration by surprise, sending stocks plunging and sparking widespread fears that he was leading the United States into an ugly trade war with China as well as key American allies.

Trump said he would sign an order next week to impose 25 percent tariffs on steel imports and 10 percent duties on aluminum, using his authority under an obscure trade law provision that permits

the president to take sweeping measures in the name of national security.

Trump has long been a critic of U.S. trade policies, and he was elected partly on the promise to revamp the way Washington does business with the rest of the world. On Thursday, Trump assured U.S. manufacturers that they will "have protection for a long time. ... You'll have to regrow your industries. That's all I'm asking."

For months, administration officials with less nationalistic views on trade, such as chief economic adviser Gary Cohn, have tried to dissuade Trump from imposing broad tariffs in response to America's big trade deficit and what the president views as the world taking unfair advantage of the U.S. The shift was reflected in the recent rise in influence of more hawkish advisers who

TRUMP A8

Middletown moves on



Dave Hansen | Staff photographer

Members of the Middletown High School boys basketball team cheer from the bench during Thursday night's state tournament victory over North Kingstown. Full story, B1.

NEWPORT IRISH HERITAGE MONTH

When Irish eyes are smiling

Irish Heritage Month to continue despite organization disbanding

By Laura Damon
Staff writer

NEWPORT — The Newport Irish Heritage Association disbanded last year, but Newport Irish Heritage Month won't fade away in the city.

Four local Irish-American men, Rick O'Neill, Rick Kelly, Jim Mahoney and the late Paul Crowley, founded the Newport Irish Heritage Association in 1977 in a time when they felt their heritage was underrepresented in Newport, according to a previous article in The Daily News.

The association worked to create events besides the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, which started in 1956, to celebrate Irish culture. The movement snowballed to create

Newport Irish Heritage Month, now in its 41st year.

This year, the Museum of Newport Irish History took over the calendar of events, which includes dance demonstrations, tours, lectures, dinners and more.

Mike Slein, president of the museum, said the Newport Irish Heritage Association disbanded because other local organizations sprung up as a result of their efforts and helped to maintain Irish heritage in Newport. The museum is one particular, permanent fixture, Slein said. Other local organizations include the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Newport St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.

The museum, located at 648 Thames St., was established by the late Vincent Arnold in 1996. The storefront to the museum opened in 2011.

"The museum focuses on the

'The museum focuses on the working-class Irish — the Irish immigrants that built Newport from the 1600s to the present.'

MIKE SLEIN

museum of Newport Irish History president

working-class Irish — the Irish immigrants that built Newport from the 1600s to the present," Slein said.

Dancing at the Forty Steps is the official opening event of Newport Irish Heritage Month. On Sunday at 3 p.m., live traditional Irish music and dancers will entertain on the Forty Steps on the Cliff Walk, at the east end of Narragansett

HERITAGE A8



Daily News file photo

Rick and Joan Kelly of Newport help lead Irish dances at the Forty Steps during a celebration to kick off the 2016 Newport Irish Heritage Month. The 41st annual celebration is now underway.

INSIDE today's news
Some things you won't want to miss

>>> AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST raises funds to purchase Little Creek Preserve in Portsmouth. A5
LINEUP IS ANNOUNCED FOR professional tennis legends event to be played in Newport. B1



WEATHER

45 Today, heavy rain and patchy fog. High near 45.

34 Tonight, rain/snow and patchy fog. Low around 34.

Details, A8

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Bridge

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Administration for approval in the spring or summer of 2019. Of the total budget for the project, 90 percent will be funded by the federal government and 20 percent by the state.

If the approval process proceeds as expected, the project would go out for construction bids by the end of 2019 and construction could continue until the end of 2022.

"It's an ambitious timetable, but it's exciting," City Manager Joseph J. Nicholson Jr. said.

All the approaches and exits from the bridge would be brought down to ground level and traffic would move through

roundabouts so traffic would not stop and queue up at traffic lights, according to preliminary design renderings shown at Gurney's Newport Resort in March of 2017, when the current project was announced officially.

Currently, there are very long ramps leading to and away from the Pell Bridge, including the long ramp that bends north

from the Pell Bridge, often called the "road to nowhere," that then curves over Admiral Kalbfus Road and merges into the road across from Newport Grand. This roadway

originally was planned as part of a cross-island freeway that was never built.

"Right now, it's a real spaghetti ball," said David Pedrick of Newport as he viewed a poster board showing an overview of the current ramp system Thursday night. "There has to be a way to get all the traffic flow to work together, instead of competing."

Richards and Pavao said all design options are now open and will be modified as public comment and reactions come in.

Under the conceptual plan announced last year, a 200-space

park-and-ride area would be created on freed-up land near the bridge. A rail shuttle would run along the Newport Secondary rail line from the new parking area to the Gateway Center on America's Cup Avenue.

The plan also calls for a shared pedestrian and bike trail to run next to the railroad track that would run south from the campus of the Community College of Rhode Island to the Gateway Center on Admiral Kalbfus Road.

The off-ramp from the east-bound Pell Bridge lanes that now takes traffic heading toward Farewell Street and downtown would be blocked to all traffic except transit buses. Traffic leading to this ramp now often backs up on

the bridge.

Farewell Street, which runs between two cemeteries, is the "bottleneck," engineers said.

"Having the state engineers hear from community members about local landmarks, different modes of transit and preferences is valuable input into the project," said Sen. Dawn Euer, D-Newport. "This is such an important project, a once-in-a-lifetime project that will impact our city well into the future."

People wishing to submit written comments can send them to: RIDOT, c/o VHB, 1 Cedar St., Suite 400, Providence, RI, 02903. Or, the comments can be submitted online at: survey.monkey.com/r/Pell-BridgeProject.

Heritage

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Avenue. The event commemorates the informal dances held on that location in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"That was their social center," Slein said of the steps where Irish laborers blew off steam. "That's why we re-create it."

The event is free and dependent on the weather.

Asked what particular event he's most looking forward to, Slein, whose great-grandparents were from County Roscommon, Ireland, had difficulty picking one.

But he did mention the trolley tour of "Irish Newport," slated for Saturday, March 10. "The bus tour is interesting and you see the other side of the Irish in Newport," Slein said.

The two-hour narrated tour includes stops at the Forty Steps, Ochre Court, Barney Street Cemetery and an introductory visit to the Museum of Newport Irish History.

The 62nd annual St. Patrick's Day Parade is slated for Saturday, March 17. The parade steps off from City Hall on Broadway at 11 a.m. and continues via Washington Square, Thames Street and Carroll Avenue to St. Augustin's Church. Visit NewportIrish.com for more information.

There are also various recurring events throughout the month.

Guided tours of Fort Adams, a historic fort constructed with Irish labor between 1824 and 1857, will be held every Saturday and Sunday. One-hour tours are held at noon and 2 p.m., weather permitting; the cost is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children. Mention Irish Heritage Month for a discount. Visit FortAdams.org or call 841-0707 for more information.

The Museum of Newport Irish History Interpretive Center will be open Friday, March 9, through Sunday, March 11, and Friday, March 16, through Sunday, March 18, from noon to 5 p.m. on each of those days. Admission is by donation.

For a calendar of Newport Irish Heritage Month events, see Page A4 or visit NewportIrishHistory.org and click on the shamrock.

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Trump

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Trump's skepticism of trade, including Peter Navarro.

Trump's declaration came after a chaotic day in which administration officials hastily summoned steel executives, first said the president would take action, then said he would wait. In the end, he made the announcement in an almost off-the-cuff manner, responding to a shouted question from reporters at a meeting with steel industry officials.

Stocks sank sharply after his remarks, as investors, already nervous about rising inflation and interest rates, began to worry that tariffs would push up prices of goods and lead to tit-for-tat measures from China and others. The Dow Jones industrial average ended down 420 points.

Details of the tariffs, however, were unclear, including whether they would apply to all countries or just primary targets, such as China. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said only that details would be revealed next week.

Trump's impromptu announcement rattled previously scheduled talks Thursday in Washington between administration officials and a Chinese delegation led by Liu He, the Communist Party's most powerful economic official, who arrived this week in a bid to strike a deal and head off a trade war. If preliminary talks had gone well Thursday, U.S. officials were prepared to bring Liu to meet Trump in person, a White House official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe internal plans.

Chinese President Xi Jinping dispatched the trade negotiators in advance of a major Communist Party gathering in March, and after another high-ranking party official made a

share

rushed visit to Washington in early February to meet with Trump and try to smooth over rising tensions over trade and China's relationship with North Korea.

It was unclear whether Trump — who pushed the White House to make the announcement Thursday — was trying to send a deliberate message to China. Either way, it will only further rile Beijing and make retaliatory action a near certainty.

The president has until mid-April to issue his decision on steel and aluminum tariffs under the law the administration is using to impose the punitive measures. Officials are invoking a rarely used and controversial provision that grants the president wide discretion to restrict imports on the grounds of national security.

"With no legal requirement to announce tariffs this week or next, it seems like a slap in the face," said David Loevinger, an analyst for TCW Emerging Markets Group in Los Angeles and former senior Treasury Department official for China affairs.

Administration officials gave no reason for the back and forth, but some analysts speculated that the haphazardness reflected "internal chaos" in the White House. Trump fueled the confusion by tweeting early Thursday: "Our Steel and Aluminum industries (and many others) have been decimated by decades of unfair trade and bad policy with countries from around the world. We must not let our country, companies and workers be taken advantage of any longer. We want free, fair and SMART TRADE!"

The president has been weighing various options to limit imported aluminum and steel, which accounts for about one-fourth of U.S. consumption and has left domestic mills running well below capacity. Imposing tariffs or quotas would represent Trump's most consequential action to date to overhaul

U.S. trade practices.

Domestic producers, along with unions and lawmakers in steel-producing states, have been pressuring Trump to act swiftly. "We're counting on the administration to fulfill the promises it's made," John Ferriola, chief executive of the steelmaker Nucor, said in a televised appearance with Trump on Thursday.

Many other businesses and groups, as well as some administration officials and congressional Republicans, have sought to restrain the president, arguing that such action would hurt some American companies and consumers of steel, and possibly the U.S. economy, and is certain to raise the ire of allies and adversaries alike.

It will open a Pandora's box, said Loevinger. Other countries also will be tempted to take protectionist actions based on national security, he said, and other U.S. industries could seek relief from import competition for that same reason. "It's a real slippery slope," he said.

"I think China is going to take it badly," said Matthew Goodman, a senior adviser for Asian economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The actual impact may not be huge, but the symbolic impact is quite significant. ... The Chinese are going to feel the need to respond with some sort of retaliation."

The Chinese Embassy in Washington had no immediate comment on the planned tariffs. Analysts expect Beijing will not overreact but nonetheless will target U.S. agricultural exports if the tariffs are implemented — products like soybeans, whose farmers are a powerful lobby in Congress and are likely to put pressure on the administration.

Earlier this week European Union trade ministers said they would respond with countermeasures to U.S. tariffs on metals. A representative of Japan's steel industry called the 25 percent steel

tariff "ill advised and naive."

And Canada, which by far is the largest exporter of steel and aluminum to the United States, said Thursday that it viewed as "absolutely unacceptable" any trade limits on the Canadian metals. "Should restrictions be imposed on Canadian steel and aluminum products, Canada will take responsive measures to defend its trade interests and workers," said Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, who has also contended with the Trump administration's ongoing efforts to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement.

At home, news of the tariffs scrambled partisan politics, with leading Democratic lawmakers praising Trump's plans to get tough on trade and Republicans warning of severe consequences. "Tariffs on steel and aluminum are a tax hike the American people don't need and can't afford," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah.

After launching an investigation last spring, the Commerce Department concluded that steel imports were "in such quantities" and "under such circumstances" that they threatened to harm national security, clearing the way for Trump to implement sanctions. The Commerce report urged Trump to consider across-the-board tariffs or targeted penalties on select countries, as well as quotas, or a combination of these.

Analysts and officials from other nations have questioned such a broad reading of "national security," given that U.S. steelmakers produce more than what's needed for the Defense Department and its various military programs. Any sweeping new tariffs are expected to be contested at the World Trade Organization.

WEATHER

COASTAL RHODE ISLAND

Today, heavy rain and patchy fog. High near 45. Tonight, rain/snow and patchy fog. Low around 34.

Saturday, chance of rain/snow and windy. High near 42. Saturday night, breezy, slight chance of showers, then slight chance of rain/snow. Low around 35.

EXTENDED

Sunday, partly sunny and breezy. High near 41. Sunday night, mostly cloudy. Low around 34.

Monday, partly sunny. High near 42. Monday night, partly cloudy. Low around 34.

Tuesday, mostly sunny. High near 43. Tuesday night, mostly cloudy. Low around 35.

MARINE

Today, east wind 25-30 knots, increasing to 30-40 knots. Waves 6-9 feet. Tonight, north wind 30-40 knots. Waves 7-10 feet.

TIDES, ETC.

Today's high tides: 7:52 a.m., 8:14 p.m. Low tides, 1:07 a.m., 1:47 p.m.

Today's sunrise 6:18, sunset 5:37.

Thursday's temperatures: High 60, low 39.

LOTTERIES

Thursday's numbers

RHODE ISLAND

Numbers Midday: 2-4-1-4

Numbers Evening: 5-8-4-4

Wild Money: 3-8-12-14-29

Extra 25

LUCKY FOR LIFE

7-10-26-44-46

Lucky Ball 14

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