



MIDDLE ST. BRIDGE PROJECT

Project Overview:

Since the 1890s, there has been a stone arch span connecting Newburyport and West Newbury to one another- splitting the Artichoke Reservoir into its Upper and Lower halves. The age of the Middle Street Bridge showed in 2018 when erosion and stability issues came to a head and it had to be closed. Since then, the Town of West Newbury and the City of Newburyport have been working to secure state funding for the replacement of the Bridge. Project estimates factor in \$3,315,000 for construction costs; \$550,000 for design and permitting; a construction contingency of \$331,500; \$110,000 for a resident engineer; and \$60,000 for construction engineering services – for a total price tag of \$4,366,500. The initial goal was for the Bridge to be fully constructed by June 30, 2023, but the length of the required permitting processes (including delays related to COVID-19) made this goal impossible. The search for state funding has also taken time. Meanwhile, West Newbury has continued to be in regular communication with the City of Newburyport, through the Mayor's office and the Department of Public Services, regarding continuing efforts to secure project financing. Newburyport Mayor Reardon's proposed FY25 Capital Program, which includes the Middle Street Bridge (a/k/a Plummer Springs Bridge), will be taken up by the City Council during its budget workshop to review the proposed FY25 DPS budget and capital articles.

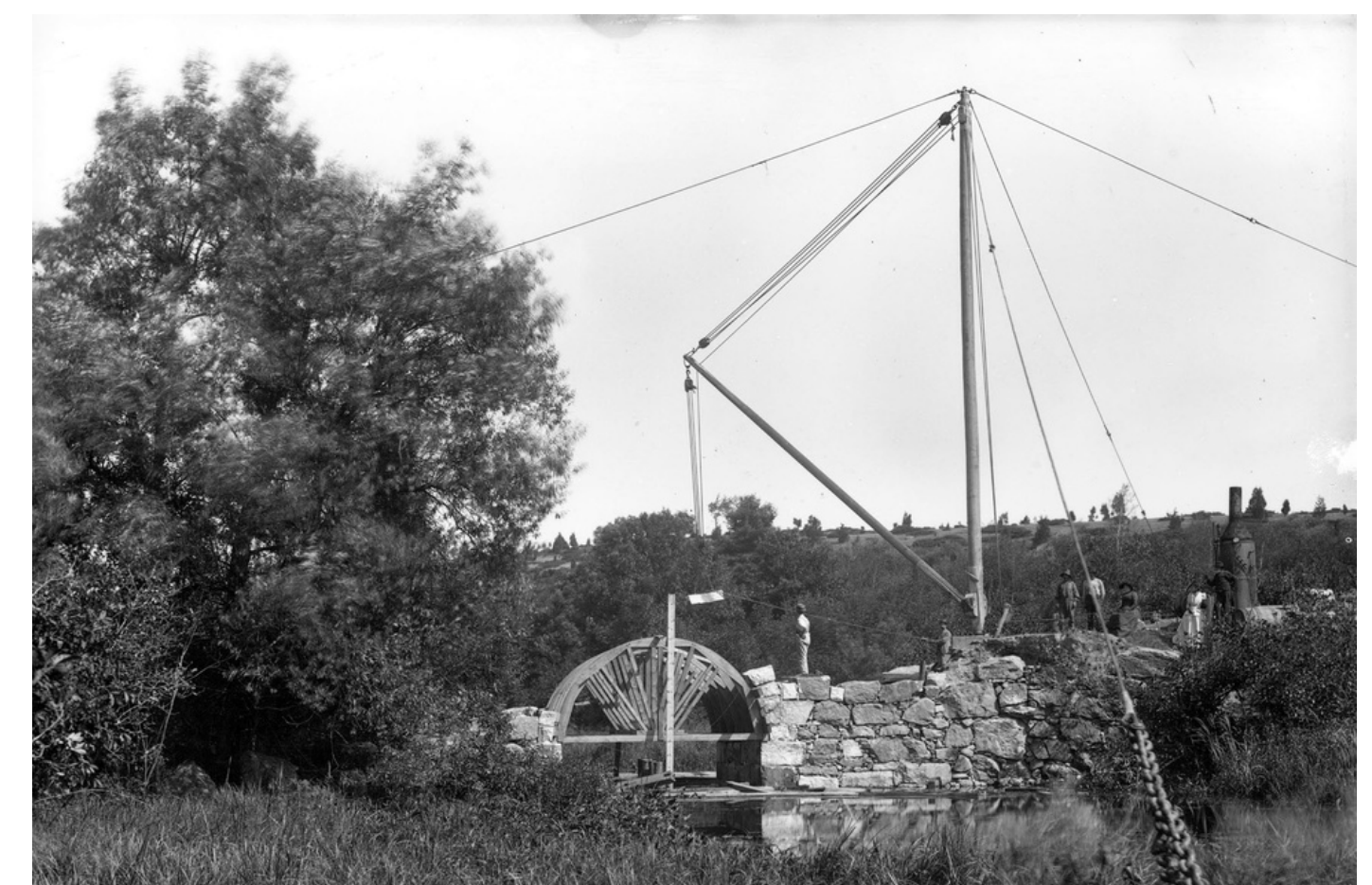
Recent Developments:

In early 2023, the Middle Street Bridge project became fully permitted after a lengthy process. Due to the work taking place within sensitive environmental areas, including a public drinking water source, the project required permitting from MassDEP, MassDOT, Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (under MA Environmental Policy Act, or MEPA), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and both the West Newbury and the Newburyport Conservation Commissions. It is now, in the words of the Town Manager, "shovel ready", and can be put out to bid once full funding for project construction is secured.



Above: An SUV traversing the Bridge prior to closure.

Below: Historical image of the construction of the Middle Street Bridge.



Images of the collapsed bridge.

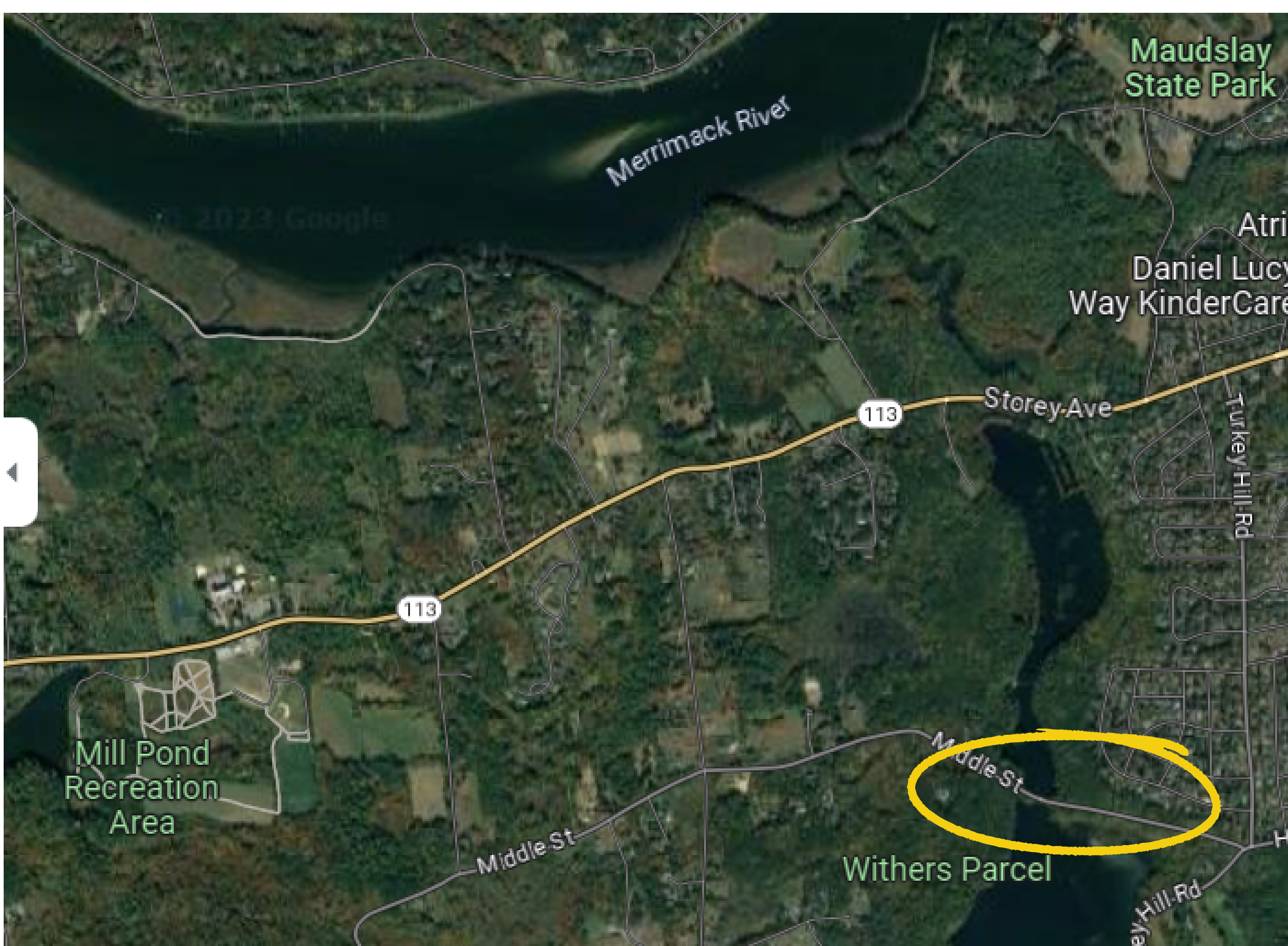


Upcoming Steps:

To help defray construction costs of a new bridge, we submitted a MassWorks grant application prior to the June 2, 2023 deadline. Thanks to a thorough application and letters of support from close to 40 residents, West Newbury was awarded the grant for \$1,000,000! More recently, we learned that this project also received a \$500,000 Small Bridge Grant from MassDOT as a result of another application, submitted in June. We are still very grateful for the outpouring of community support. Even with this tremendous state support- totaling \$1.5 million in recent grant funds and roughly \$550,000 in state grant funds previously awarded to West Newbury and Newburyport (expended to get the project fully engineered and permitted) *plus* \$250,000 in state grant funds awarded to Newburyport, *plus* the Town Meeting allocation of \$600,000, there is still a sizable shortfall in available construction funding. Town officials are working hard to fill this gap so the Middle Street Bridge can be put out to bid and finally rebuilt.

How You Can Help and Where You Can Find Out More:

Continue to make your voices heard through letters of support and concern, by constructively participating in dialogues. Check back with the "Town Projects" webpage to stay apprised of the situation as we head into 2024.



The yellow circle encompasses the Bridge, with the Upper and Lower Artichoke Reservoirs on either side.