Fitzgerald, Officials Celebrate Ribbon Cutting of Kenmawr Bridge

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald today was joined by PA Senator Jay Costa, Jr., Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, P.E., District Executive of PennDOT Engineering District 11-0, and Katharine Kelleman, Chief Executive Officer of the Port Authority of Allegheny County in cutting the ribbon on the newly-replaced Kenmawr Bridge. The brief ceremony celebrating the completion of the 18-month project also included officials from Rankin and Swissvale boroughs and representatives from the teams involved in the construction of the new bridge.

“This has been an important project for the eastern part of the county. Thank you to all of the stakeholders who came together to ensure this project got done,” said Fitzgerald. "Its disrepair impacted residents, commuters, the Port Authority and the railroad. Finally, we have a structure that not only meets all of our existing needs, but also plans for the future."

The Kenmawr Bridge carries South Braddock Avenue over the mainline tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The old bridge was closed on May 17, 2020 for demolition. The previous single-span bridge was built in 1910. The 26.5-foot wide and 75-feet long structure was owned and maintained by the railroad. It was in poor condition with one sidewalk removed and the other extremely restricted. The structure had a 6-ton weight limit at the time of its closure. The bridge’s average daily traffic is 16,800 vehicles.

“I'm glad that I was able to bring stakeholders together to address the concerns that Rankin and Swissvale had with the disrepair of the bridge and roadway,” said Costa. “Because everyone came to the table to help determine the best path forward, we have a new bridge and roadway that better serve our communities and the residents who live here and travel this way. That cooperation also led to the entities sharing the cost of the project as well as future maintenance responsibilities. This is just one more example of the successes we see when we work together.”

The new bridge, which will be owned and maintained by Allegheny County, is a two-span bridge. It has two 14-foot traffic lanes and two 5.8-foot sidewalks. It is 122.25 feet and has a vertical clearance of 21.13 feet. The $12.5 million project also included drainage improvement, guiderail, barrier, curb and sidewalk updates, highway lighting, signals, signage, pavement marking and other minor construction. The project team was led by PennDOT District 11-0. Project work was done by Golden Triangle Construction, LLC (contractor), SAI Consulting Engineers (consultant designer), RIG Consulting, Inc. and CDM Smith Inc. (construction consultant/inspection support), and Michael Baker International and Construction Consultant Services, Inc (construction consultant services/construction management support).

“This project highlights what collaboration and great partners can accomplish in the transportation world,” said Moon-Sirianni. “PennDOT is proud that we could deliver this key transportation project that is not only vital for the local communities and motorists in the east suburbs, but critical for the Port Authority of Allegheny County and the Norfolk Southern Railroad, all while minimizing traffic impacts during construction.”

The new structure has greater clearance than the old one to provide the minimal acceptable vertical clearance for the railroad. The bridge was also lengthened to accommodate any future expansion plans.
by the Port Authority for the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway. The newly constructed bridge opened on July 1, 2021. Since its opening, crews have completed the sidewalks and Port Authority ramp, and have also worked on slope grading. The remaining painting of abutments and walls and slope stabilization work is expected to be completed in late October.

“Our Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway is among the most important transit corridors in western Pennsylvania,” said Kelleman. “Through this collaboration, we’ve protected future opportunities to connect this asset with more communities and riders.”

Moving forward, Allegheny County will maintain the new bridge deck roadway, structure, curbs, sidewalks (except for snow, ice, and debris removal), barriers, railings, protective fencing, drainage facilities, south approach roadway, and adjacent retaining walls. Swissvale Borough will maintain the north approach roadway and retaining wall along the new left turn lane; it will also be responsible for snow, ice, and debris removal on the bridge sidewalks. Swissvale and Rankin boroughs will maintain the street lighting within their respective municipal limits.

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