

Niantic Bay Boardwalk Reconstruction Progress Report

by R.S. De Santo, President - East Lyme Public Trust Foundation



Foundation for bascule pier and operator's house. January 6, 2011

Amtrak's railroad crossing of the Niantic River, identified as "NAN" by Amtrak, is a bascule bridge – a moveable bridge, sometimes referred to as a drawbridge, with a counterweight that continuously balances the span, or "leaf," throughout the entire upward swing in providing clearance for boat traffic. Bascule is French for seesaw and balance, and bascule bridges operate along the same principle. They are the most common type of movable bridge in existence because they open quickly and require relatively little energy to operate.

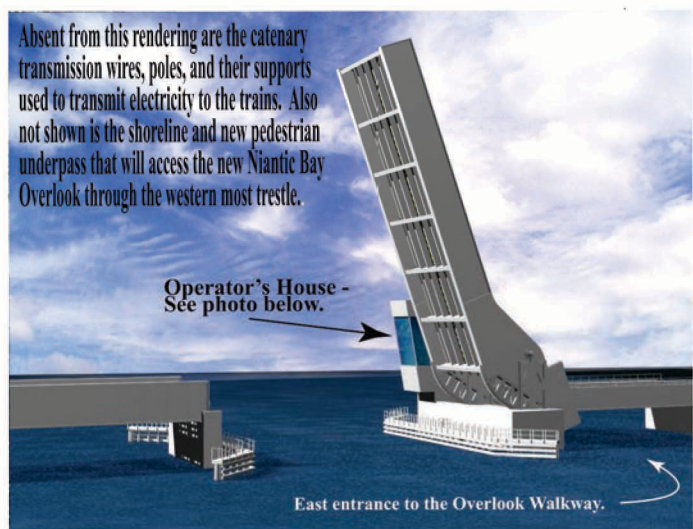
Much detail is involved in the Niantic River railroad bridge replacement, coupled with the new Overlook and its easternmost pedestrian underpass that will lead people and emergency vehicles from Cini Park to the Niantic Bay Park's 1.1 mile walkway.

The bridge's bascule pier foundation on the west side of the Niantic River (seen under construction in the photograph on the top, left side of this page) required 270 truck loads of marine cement delivered continuously between 9 pm Saturday and 4 pm Sunday, December 18-19, 2010. That massive initial pour of 2,700 cubic yards of concrete is seen being smoothed in the photograph in anticipation of a second pour of 630 cubic yards of concrete.

That pour will be followed by a total of 5 such "lifts" that will result in the top elevation of the bascule pier and the base of the stair way to the bridge operator's house at elevation + 12.00 feet. The 100 year flood elevation is approximately + 10 feet. Construction of the bridge bascule lift span and operator's house is expected to start in the spring of 2011.

Amtrak began the Niantic River Railroad Bridge replacement nine months ago. Work has been performed in two twelve-hour shifts, 5 to 6 days per week. The new bridge is anticipated to be in operation starting between June and August, 2012, with completion of all work in May of 2013.

To view the present day, real time status of bridge construction, visit: <http://www.publictrustfoundation.org/earthcam/index.htm>



Absent from this rendering are the catenary transmission wires, poles, and their supports used to transmit electricity to the trains. Also not shown is the shoreline and new pedestrian underpass that will access the new Niantic Bay Overlook through the western most trestle.

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