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# One town's unused bridge is another town's treasure

Belmont has been looking for a bridge to lay over the Tioga River so foot traffic can cross below the Belmont Mill as part of its downtown revitalization campaign.

Dover officials have been looking for a new home for a 154-foot-long pedestrian bridge over the Cocheco River near Washington Street.

Earlier this month, the two communities reached agreement that will move the bridge to its new home in Belmont.



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This walking bridge, which is no longer needed in Dover, will have a new home in Belmont. (COURTESY)

The roofed walking bridge built in 1996, no longer needed now that the new Mary and Tommy Makem Bridge has been built, was removed from the river and is now sitting on land. It was built for about \$150,000, and largely paid for with government grant money, Dover City Manager Michael Joyal said.

When the new bridge was built in 2010, several committees were formed to try to preserve the bridge.

"The city council felt it was best the bridge was repurposed rather than tearing it down," Joyal said.

The city sent word out statewide that the bridge was available, and Belmont responded. For a cost of \$1, Belmont has purchased the bridge and will be moving it in the coming months, according to Belmont Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin.

The Belmont Conservation Commission will be seeking private funding, contributions, and grants to bring the bridge to town, said commission Chair Ken Knowlton.

It will cost about \$12,000 to get the bridge to Belmont, he said, and another \$10,000 will be needed to lower it across the Tioga. The timing of when the bridge will be put in place is still being worked out, Knowlton said.

The bridge will be used in two sections: a 50-foot section will be placed below the mill, and the other section will span a section of the river about a mile downstream where it will serve cross-country skiers and other winter recreation uses as part of the commission's planner river walk area.

Given the quality of the bridge, it was a better buy than building new, Knowlton said.

"It really was fortuitous that this bridge became available; it really fits our need well," he said. "It's extremely well-built."

"We hope it has many days ahead of good service to the people of Belmont," Joyal said.

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