



To: Stephen Soma
Project Manager

Date: May 8, 2019

From: Nate Lash
Howard Stein Hudson

HSH Project No.: 2018110

Subject: Massachusetts Department of Transportation
I-195 to Route 18 Interchange Rehabilitation Project, MassDOT #606527
Public Information Meeting
Meeting Notes of March 14, 2019

Overview

On Thursday, March 14, 2019, team members for the I-195 to Route 18 Interchange Rehabilitation Project held the project's 25% Design Public Hearing at the main branch of the New Bedford Public Library. The 25% Design Public Hearing was the second public meeting in New Bedford for the project, the first of which was held on January 22, 2019 and provided the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed New Bedford I-195 to Route 18 Interchange Rehabilitation Project. In part based on feedback heard by the project team from attendees at the first public meeting and the public at various community pop-ups, the project team has developed the 25% design for the project. The purpose of the design public hearing was to formally present the 25% design plans to the public and gather input on the design and construction plans.

MassDOT Project Manager, Stephen Soma, welcomed attendees to the meeting before Nate Cabral-Curtis, Public Involvement Manager at Howard Stein Hudson, discussed the project goals and background, stressing that there will be no permanent takings as part of the project, and summarized the project public outreach efforts to date. Greg Blake from CDR Maguire discussed the existing conditions in the project area and detailed the planned improvements including their design and the timeline of construction. Mark Kolonoski of HNTB gave a brief overview of the project team will comply with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes and presented the anticipated project schedule before the floor was opened up for questions.

Questions and comments mostly focused on the project improvements, existing pedestrian safety issues within the project area, planned detours for vehicles and large trucks, expected traffic increases on local streets, and construction impacts to the Hayden-McFadden School and nearby houses such as the presence of lead and dust. The project team shared that the detour routes and traffic plans are still in the design phase and the project will use a negative pressure containment system, much like the one used on the Tobin Bridge Rehabilitation Project, to trap and remove any lead from the project so as to not compromise air quality in the area.

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Opening Remarks

C: Steve Soma, *MassDOT*: Good evening, everyone. My name is Steve Soma. I am the project manager for the project you are going to hear about tonight. First off, welcome and thank you for coming out. I know that this is tough to do around dinner time. I know that some of you were here at our first meeting in January. Welcome back.

I will start with some introductions to my left.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis, *Howard Stein Hudson*: Hello, I am Nate Curtis and I am the project's public involvement specialist.

C: Mark Kolonoski, *HNTB*: Mark Kolonoski, the project's environmental planner.

C: Greg Blake, *CDR Maguire*: And I am Greg Blake, project manager of the project design team.

C: Steve Soma: We also have Bob Wheeler from MassDOT District 5 and Hung Pham from our environmental team.

¹ Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1.

Before we kick off, I want to read something from the right-of-way folks because they could not make it tonight. The project is in a state right-of-way. There are no takings to speak of, but I need to read this anyway.

The Right of Way Bureau is responsible for acquiring all of the necessary rights and private and public lands for the design, construction, and implementation of this project. The current design plan indicates that no right of way will be required. However, if that changes, affected property owners will be contacted by personnel from the Right of Way Bureau or consultants representing MassDOT Highway. The procedures used must comply with state and federal regulations governing the acquisition process. Affected property owners' rights are protected under our Massachusetts general laws, primarily Chapter 79. If the project is receiving federal funds, the property owners' rights are further defined under Title 3 of the Real Property Acts of 1970 as amended.

With that said, I am going to turn it over to Nate.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Thank you, Steve. Could we have the translators offer their services before we begin?

Q: Beyanid Cole: Hello, I have an announcement regarding interpretation services. Does anyone need Spanish interpretation? [Message repeated in Spanish]

A: Community Member: Sí.

Q: Maria Carvahlo: And does anyone need Portuguese interpretation? [Message repeated in Portuguese]

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Thank you. Are we all set for Spanish translation?

A: Beyanid Cole: We are all set.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Great. Additionally, we have the 25% Design Public Hearing Packet and fact sheet available in English and Spanish on the back table.

Presentation

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Good evening everybody. We have covered welcome and introductions. We are going to talk about what a 25% design public hearing is, we will give you an overview of the

project, talk about the scope, construction phasing and impacts, give you our timeline and next steps, and then we will have plenty of time for a public question and answer session.

The 25% design public hearing is a formal presentation of project plans. We had a public information meeting here in this room in January. It was similar to what you will hear tonight but we have a bit more detailed information about construction phasing and detour routes. You heard Steve read the right of way statement. That is a legal requirement. If you look at the packet, you will see there is a right of way statement in there. Full disclosure: we do not think we need to take any right of way with this project. We think everything remains within the state right of way in a permanent setting. It is a legal requirement for us to read that statement, so do not panic if you see that. There will be additional public input available after this meeting as the design progresses towards 75%. If you look at your hearing packet, there is a mail-in sheet on the back which you can tear off, fill out, and mail to the Highway Division within 10 business days.

The project team is headed up by MassDOT Highway Division. They have identified the need for this project and are the project proponent. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is responsible for oversight and NEPA compliance which Mark Kolonoski will speak about towards the end of the presentation. CDR Maguire is the project designer and lead consultant for consultant team which includes HNTB and Howard Stein Hudson. The City of New Bedford is our partner in this project. They have been very good to us and we appreciate their help in getting the word out about this project.

The project goals are to address poor conditions on the aged structure and improve safety throughout the I-195/Route 18 interchange. We are looking to design a construction plan that will minimize and mitigate impacts to the traveling public and communities surrounding the interchange. We are looking to work towards the federally mandated goal to reduce the amount of structurally deficient deck area in Massachusetts. We have an estimated project budget of \$120 million. We think that is how much the project will cost as we go into the 25% design.

This is the project area. I am sure you all are more familiar with it than I am. Here is the Market Basket. You can see I-195 running east from Fairhaven and coming in from Fall River to the west. The railroad line runs diagonally through the project site. You can also see Route 18 running north and south. Anything you see in the orange color falls within the project limits of work. You will hear more about this from Greg in a little bit but most of the work in the area near Route 18 is drainage related while the roadway work is mainly on I-195.

We know we are working in one of New Bedford's most densely populated neighborhoods. Nearby are homes, businesses, places of worship, Hayden-McFadden Elementary, parking lots used by

New Bedford Public Schools, a skate park, the Agnes Braz/Hope Bean Memorial Building, and the Acushnet River. Since the public information meeting in January, we have had a briefing specifically for faculty and staff of Hayden-McFadden Elementary as well as leadership within the New Bedford Public School system. The project has a goal of reducing stormwater outfall that takes dirt and chemicals into the Acushnet. Greg will touch on that further in a little bit.

This is an important interchange. I-195 is a designated evacuation route. It links New Bedford, Providence, Rhode Island, and the Cape. Route 18 is also an important roadway, connecting the downtown area with points north. The interchange was constructed in 1965 and it shows it. It needs this rehabilitation. There are substantial volumes of vehicles that use this interchange. Over 75,000 go through on I-195 during an average 24-hour period. 36,000 per day go through on Route 18 and about 50,000 per day use the ramps to go between the two roads.

This list will give you a sense of what we have done to try and get people's attention for this project. We take public outreach very seriously. We had a public information meeting here back in January. We have a project website. We distributed flyers in a 400-yard radius around the interchange which you can see in yellow as well as to any houses or businesses in the purple color as far west as Mount Pleasant Street. We have also distributed flyers at the Hayden-McFadden Elementary and Keith Middle schools during pick-up. We have made materials available at the New Bedford Public Library and posted flyers on the SRTA Route 4 buses which travel below the interchange. We have mailed 113 letters to stakeholders in advance of these meetings and we sent meeting notices via email to over 180 stakeholders. We have also touched almost 700 people through informal meetings and community pop ups at places like Market Basket and Kyler's Catch Seafood Market. We have had smaller briefings with New Bedford city staff, the New Bedford Age Friendly Coalition, New Bedford Public Schools, the Port Authority, Sid Wainer & Sons, and SeaStreak. Our media outlets have been The New Bedford Standard Times in English, The Portuguese Times and O Jornal in Portuguese, and we have gone on the radio with Spanish announcements on WKKB Latina 100.3FM.

At this point, I want to turn it over to Greg Blake who will take us through some of the technical details of the project.

C: Greg Blake: Thank you, Nate. As Nate mentioned, my name is Greg Blake and I am a project manager with CDR Maguire Incorporated, the lead design firm on the project. We have a nice team of landscape architects, structural engineers, and geotechnical engineers. We also have a good team of folks working with us. HNTB is leading the environmental front and Howard Stein

Hudson leading the public outreach. I am excited to work on this project. It is a unique one which I will get into in a minute.

As Nate mentioned, this structure was built in 1965 and is roughly 54 years old. There is a lot of deteriorated steel, spalling concrete, and exposed reinforcing. This can be seen throughout the interchange and I am sure you folks who live around here see it every day. Ramp F and sections of the bridge have been identified as functionally obsolete. This is a term used in the design world that means portions of it do not meet design criteria or standards anymore. It met design criteria in 1965 but those standards have evolved and improved to increase safety. Most other portions of the interchange, especially Ramp C and the elevated portions, are in poor condition.

I am sure as you all travel through the interchange you know the existing safety conditions well. I-195 westbound between the Route 18 on and off-ramps (D and C) is a high crash location due to a limited weaving area. From 2012 to 2014 there were 41 crashes reported in this little area due to the narrow lanes and short weaving opportunity. The interchange has a whole does have an elevated crash rate compared to other sections of I-195 heading east towards the Cape and west towards Fall River. In addition to all that, at ground level there are some flooding issues. Part of that has to do with Copper Brook that runs through the interchange underground towards Logan Street in addition to all the drainage that comes down from roadways and ramps. You also have existing drainage systems throughout the city streets that are all connect and interweaved. Today, when it rains, the systems cannot handle it and we have flooding issues. Part of the project will address those issues.

The scope of the project is to replace 1,350 feet of the viaduct. One of the largest pieces of the elevated structure near the Hayden-McFadden School, because of its proximity to the school and height requirements to go over the rail tracks, will need to remain in place. It will be rehabilitated rather than replaced. The rest of the elevated pieces of the interchange will be coming down and replaced and the roadway and ramps will be put back up on earth embankments. As I mentioned, the bridge piers and abutments of the viaduct portion that remains by the school will all be rehabilitated and repaired to meet today's design codes. Ramp C and Ramp F will be replaced and put up on earth embankment. Part of the I-195 mainline near the on- and off-ramps where we have insufficient acceleration and deceleration lengths, those will be widened and lengthened to make them safer. Getting back to the stormwater, we will be separating out all the different systems so it will help with the drainage down below at ground level.

This is a nice graphic to show the puzzle and different pieces of all the things we will be doing. It is a hard project to talk about because there are so many different pieces to it: reconstruction, rehabilitation, things going up, things coming down, drainage, and so forth. We will be reconstructing the areas in yellow. The yellow areas on the mainline will be widened and the median will be replaced. All the parts of the interchange that are currently at grade will be reconstructed. The portion of the viaduct by the school is shown in green. That will remain but it will be rehabilitated with new steel stringers and will also be widened to the north. The blue color shows what will be widened along the mainline to make the tapers and to extend the acceleration and deceleration lanes to make it longer, wider, and safer. The portions that will be taken down and put back up on earth embankment is shown in purple. Some of Ramp C and a large portion of Ramp F as well as the purple sections of the mainline will be put up on earth embankment. The bridges that will be replaced totally are shown in orange over Route 18 northbound and southbound and the ramp over Weld Street. It will be all new bridge structure.

In dark blue you see the stormwater system upgrades. We will have retention ponds to control the flow and clean the water. That will improve the water quality as it heads to the Acushnet River. Right now, Copper Brook meanders its way down the project area. We will install a 36-inch pipe and carry it down Route 18 to its outlet at Logan street. All the rain that falls on I-195 and the ramps will be separated from the city system and contained in its own system which will take it out to the Acushnet near Wamsutta St. This will help regulate the flows.

So, that is the big picture of everything that is going on. Slide 15 shows a table of all the benefits associated with the project. Replacing the superstructure and rehabilitating the substructure would bring the bridge up to state and federal weight, design, and safety requirements. Rebuilding the ramps with highway embankment and improved geometry will reduce crash rates and improve traffic flow, decrease maintenance costs, and formalize pedestrian travel routes. Widening the auxiliary lanes and extending the length of on- and off-ramps will have one of the bigger benefits of the project. It will increase the weaving and merging areas as you come up from Route 18 northbound on Ramp D to head westbound on I-195 as well as coming westbound on I-195 to try to take the off-ramp to 18 southbound. It will also reduce the crash rates and improve traffic flow.

We will widen the breakdown lanes on mainline I-195 eastbound and westbound. That is another huge benefit for this project. It will increase safety for stopped vehicles, enhance travel lane drainage, and provide extra snow storage. The new stormwater drainage system will improve the drainage pathways and water quality and reduce the flooding. We will replace the aged and damaged guardrails which will be brought up to date with modern roadside barriers as well as

the median barriers. We will install new road signage which will enhance daytime and nighttime visibility for a lot of the signs that have old reflective surfaces and are hard to read.

Along with the project are some opportunities for visual enhancements. For the retaining walls that will be going up along the earth embankment structures, there are number of different surface types, styles, and textures to choose from. Slide 16 shows the existing support columns by the school and a rendering of proposed columns from a project Nate is working on up in Chelsea north of Boston. The piers on that project are a good opportunity for graphics or street art and you can see the different striations and patterns of the concrete. We see how something similar could be done with this project with the existing columns as well as two additional columns that will be added. We have some existing street art down on Belleville Avenue. We have some opportunities for murals or wall paintings to spruce up the retaining walls.

Now we will walk you through the construction impacts. As Nate mentioned, there are no anticipated takings of private property. It is all contained within state right of way and we anticipate it will stay that way. There are no permanent impacts to city streets anticipated but there will be some temporary disruption as construction occurs and some of the equipment and machinery occupies some of the side streets. As drainage is installed and utilities relocated, there will also be some temporary disruptions to local streets.

We cannot say this enough: the two lanes of traffic in each direction on I-195 will remain consistently open throughout all four stages and the entire duration of the project.

In Phase 1, in order to make some room for everything else to fit, we will be working in the center of the highway to dismantle the center median that is out there today. That will allow us to shift the lanes and keep two lanes open in each direction. A lot of time in the 12-month long Phase 1 will be site preparation, utility relocation, and installation of new columns. That will help set the stage for Phase 2. Again, there will always be two lanes east and westbound on I-195.

In Phase 2, traffic shifts to the southern part of the bridge so the I-195 eastbound and westbound lanes are right next to each other and there are two lanes open in each direction. For this entire 9-month period, Ramp C and Ramp D are closed and all the construction to the northside will be occurring. Here are the detour routes for Phase 2. If you are heading westbound, instead of getting off at Ramp C, you will take the previous exit up to Coggeshall Street and then take a left onto Route 18 southbound. If you are coming north on Route 18 and want to go west, continue up to Coggeshall Street, turn right, and take the exit onto I-195.

A lot of studies have been done on this project over the last few years. Some of them looked at the traffic signals along Coggeshall with the understanding that a lot of traffic would be diverting to this street once the ramps close. There is a temporary traffic signal timing plan for Coggeshall Street which is built into this project. As construction begins, that will be in place to accommodate the extra vehicles coming through this area.

In Phase 3, similar to Phase 2, traffic studies were done to make sure that the extra vehicles coming through would be accommodated on the detour routes. For this 8-month phase, all mainline traffic that was on the southside of the roadway will be shifted up to the northern side. We still have two lanes in each direction and all the work will take place to the south. Ramp F will be closed as well as the Weld Street slip ramp off Route 18. The detour for the Ramp F closure is to get off at Penniman Street, turn left onto Purchase Street, and then turn right onto Coggeshall Street to take Route 18 south. Again, there is temporary traffic signal timing planned for Coggeshall Street. As this phase kicks off, the signals will be adjusted to help move traffic through.

In Phase 4, with all the work down to the south and the north, everything is zipped back together. The eastbound and westbound lanes on I-195 will be shifted and separated again with a new median barrier. As with every project, the streets in the area that have been impacted during construction need some attention. Route 18, Weld Street, Cedar Grove Street, and the portions you see in yellow on Slide 21 will all be micromilled and paved or reconstructed to make everything look nice and pretty. You can see this thin blue line which is the existing sidewalk that runs along the west side of Route 18 and along the Weld Street ramp and that will be reconstructed as well at the end of the project. We anticipate Phase 4 will last about five months.

One of the questions that came up in the public information meeting was about what would be done regarding advance warning signage on I-195. In addition to all of the signage that will be set up around the local area of the project, we will have advanced signage based on MUTCD, the handbook for traffic, placed out near the Route 140 interchange to direct folks wanting to get downtown from the west to take the off-ramp onto 140 south. And for folks coming from the east, there will be signs directing them to take Route 240 and Route 6 to get downtown. We may look into additional signage further to the east and west and as we get further into the design, that will be evaluated.

And now I will turn it back over to Nate.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Thank you, sir.

We know that people are really concerned about the impacts from construction. As Greg said, we cannot overemphasize the fact that two lanes of traffic will be maintained in each direction of I-195 throughout the duration of the project. You saw on Greg's slides how sometimes the travel lanes are shifted to the south or north sides of the bridge. Regardless of where those lanes are shifted to, there will always be four lanes open.

Signage and median barriers will be installed to ensure driver and worker safety. There may be times when crews work some nights and weekends to shorten the duration of construction and lessen its impacts on the commuting public. You saw how some ramps will be closed for some extended durations to allow them to be removed and replaced on the earth embankment.

Signed detours will be in place during those ramp closures, as Greg discussed, to guide people around them. We will not be designating a detour for through travel on I-195. The goal is to keep I-195 through traffic on I-195 where it belongs and not detouring through New Bedford. There will be alternative routes available for people who voluntarily get off the highway. In case people get confused and get off the highway thinking they need to because they are in a construction zone, there will be signs to guide them back to where they need to be. And police details and flaggers will be utilized as appropriate, especially during lane closures, to help keep everyone safe.

We know that the project is right up against a lot of things including homes and the Hayden-McFadden School. Folks may remember Slide 24 from the public information meeting. This is a photograph of a negative pressure containment system which we will wrap around any part of the bridge that is undergoing construction. It creates a zone inside the plastic contained space where the air pressure inside is lower than that outside so any dust or particles will not get out into the neighborhood. It stays inside the Tyvek shield. We have used it on the Tobin Bridge in Chelsea, and it is very effective. There will be a lead abatement plan which the contractor has to create. We will provide temporary drainage so that water is not spilling onto local streets from the highway. And, of course, public outreach will continue during construction. I also wanted to show you a power shovel with a hydraulic shear on it. This photo is from a job less than a mile from my house. One of the ways that dust and lead is kept out of the environment, is the use of hydraulic shears. The contractor comes in with what amounts to a giant pair of hydraulic scissors on the end of a big machine. It cuts the girder, puts it on a truck, and it is then disposed of properly off site. During demolition activities, water will be used to minimize dust emissions per MassDOT and OSHA regulations. Removed steel is recycled off-site. No steel will be recycled on site. It gets trucked away and dealt with at an appropriate location, not here in your community.

One of the things we talked about in the public information meeting is impacts to the school parking lot and skate park under the viaduct. Right now, there will be no permanent loss of either one. However, we expect, for safety of the public, that we will need to close that space for the duration of construction due to things being moved overhead and equipment staging and overhang. We think that right now, it will be closed for the duration of the project but will reopen after construction. Based on your comments tonight, the team can explore keeping portions open during construction, but it is likely that doing so would add complexity and duration to the project staging. There is a trade-off to be made.

And at this time, I will invite Mark to talk about the environmental review and the project timeline.

C: Mark Kolonoski: Thanks, Nate. My name is Mark Kolonoski. I am the environmental planner working on the design team. I would like to talk briefly about environmental compliance and regulations.

The project is being funded with federal dollars. As such, the project needs to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. What that means is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will review all potential environmental and community impacts and ensure that we, the design team, have done everything we are capable of to avoid and minimize those impacts and have the smoothest project in construction as we can possibly have. There is a suite of other regulations that we need to comply with, but really, there are not a lot of environmental resources within the project area. There are no wetlands we are going to fill. In fact, there will be an improvement to the stormwater system. It is really about those community impacts that Nate was talking about and working with the abutters and stakeholders, and you, the community, to make sure you are aware of what is being designed, what is planned, and what the schedule is. That is what we are concerned with. That is why Nate and the team have worked so diligently up until tonight to be out here, engage the public, and make people in the community are aware. And that is not to check a box but because we want that project to proceed as smoothly as possibly for the community, for MassDOT, and for all stakeholders.

Quickly I want to take about milestones and next steps. We have had a series of pop ups and stakeholder engagement events leading up to tonight. There was the public information meeting in January which it sounds like some of you attended. We will take the comments that we hear tonight. If you do not want to share them tonight, please send us your written comments on the form on the back of the packets. The team is also available via email at any time. We will take those comments, evaluate what can be implemented, what is reasonable, and come back in the

fall to present our updated design which will be referred to as the 75% design. The project right now is schedule to advertise in the spring of 2023. It seems like a long way off right now – I promise you it really is not. It will go by quickly. There is a lot of work to do and construction is slated to commence in 2023 and continue until completion in 2025.

With that, thank you very much. Here is the contact information on Slide 29. And now, we will move into our question and answer session.

Discussion

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Before we take any general questions, I want to ask for the benefit of Dan Fielding, our Government and Legislative Liaison from MassDOT, are there any elected officials in the audience this evening?

A: Irondina Reis-Abreu: I am here from State Representative Cabral's office.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Would you like to say anything, ma'am?

A: Irondina Reis-Abreu: No, I am just here to listen.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Very good. Now, we will take general questions from the public. You had your hand up first, sir.

C: John "Buddy" Andrade: My name is John "Buddy" Andrade. I am the chairperson of a neighborhood association in the South End. We were involved with the Route 18 project that is going on and most of all that stuff that you guys have said, you say at all the meetings. It is just a normal procedure. Unfortunately, you can't be trusted.

I am warning the North End community that the only time you're going to get a chance to speak is when you have these public hearings and even then, you might not be heard. I complained continuously about issues with the Route 18 project and how you guys misrepresented 90 percent of what you told us. You have got a school there called the Hayden-McFadden School. The school I'm talking about is called the Gomes School. The Hayden-McFadden is right underneath your highway. The Gomes School is on the highway of Route 18 that will now be turning into a boulevard. We had many, many meetings. And I can't tell you how disappointed we became with the concern about the safety of the people in the community, and particularly the young people and elderly through the environmental issues like dust and lead and tearing down our trees like

you did at the Gomes School. Particularly around Hayden-McFadden, it is going to be a very important issue.

I do not believe that you guys will do the right thing when it comes down to using water to bring the dust down. You didn't do it on Route 18 during construction. This was just a road, not even tearing down things and taking down paint and all that stuff. And the paint is much deadlier than the dust that we were talking about. But, more importantly, I want to make sure that the community is going to have more access to you guys, more than just a public hearing. When there is a neighborhood association meeting, we need you to come every three or four months to come explain A to us, or B or C that we forgot about, or you misrepresented us on. We are hearing things going on and we want to make sure we know about that stuff, and be able to have the opportunity to say, "Hey, come back to another meeting," not put us through all the bureaucracy of "Call this one. Call that one."

Mrs. Leavenworth's office is really good for that. She is the Chief Engineer for this project like she is for the Route 18 project. And even utilizing, like you did on Route 18, contaminated material in the flowerboxes and that, and that came up in our public meeting. It never got addressed. It never got corrected. And we never got an answer as to why the hell did you take down seven of the biggest trees in the community that were blocking the diesel coming from the waterfront and all the cars going up and down Route 18, and you take the most beautiful trees out, 47-something-year old. And there's an elementary school there that you leave it open to the elements of air pollution. We are having a meeting this month on asthma because of the high asthma rates in this neighborhood. And you're going to find that in the North End as well. Pretty much anywhere in this region, you'll find high asthma rates. My concern is how concerned are you people going to be about this in regard to air quality, bringing down what you're going to bring down and also putting up trees and other things that are going to help clean the environment.

I do not know if they are going to close the Hayden-McFadden school down for a while. But that is going to be a very, very tricky thing. These are elementary kids. How are you going to handle that when you couldn't even handle a ground-level type construction project? We have a playground down there that the River Street exit and anybody can drive right into the playground because you guys put no amenities, no benefits to protect the kids while they are in the park. And we have parks and playgrounds in that North End area that are going to need to be taken care of. Someone's got to watch out for them. I'm hoping that the residents in that area are going to do more. I saw Miss Deneen Simpson from the Environmental Justice Office contacted your office. We provided her with information for advertisement as well as the

interpreters. From an environmental justice point of view, I'm telling you that MassDOT has probably one of the worst records in the state when it deals with the minority community and underserved communities. Come to us when we do not have to send 15 signatures or call our state representative to get you guys. And, Mr. Cabral has a bunch of calls from our office over the last three years of complaints. During the summer, you do not cut the grass. You do not clean the streets. Everything is a mess. People can't walk by. It is a hazard. Wherever you guys have a project it is the same thing. People could not walk around. It was all mud and rocks. You do not care about the residents. You do not care about the pedestrians. And all you want to do is get the job done and go home. But we live here. And we want it done, but we also want all the other things that go along with it. I was on the committee for the new bridge replacing the Fairhaven Bridge. I hope you're going to do that. Okay? That needs to be replaced. But this project is important. All the highway projects are important. However, you guys do not think about the people and you do not let us come back to you to ask you for more help because then, you want to put up all the roadblocks. Thank you.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: What I will say in response to the gentleman's comments are I have lived since 2015 inside a MassDOT construction project where the Casey Overpass, a 1950's era overpass composed of steel and concrete with both lead and asbestos was taken down. I personally witnessed how much water was sprayed onto it. I brought up my now three-year old during demolition and construction, walked through the construction site pushing a stroller, and found that adequate attention was paid to me and my needs. I cannot speak to work that was done on Route 18 because none of the project team here was part of that. But I can speak to what we have done in Chelsea with the containment system, and the fact that we have reached out to the school very proactively. We have spoken with parents. We have provided them with materials. We are very open. There has been no effort made to hide this project. We have a project website. I try to Google it once a day to make it the first thing that pops up. We are currently third if you Google "I-195 New Bedford". My contact information is there. Steve Soma's contact information is there. We have been out in this community heavily. We have spoken to almost 700 people in informal settings, plus in these formal settings. There's been no effort made to duck anybody. We are here and will continue to be here. I know this project team cares about the community. I know Bob Wheeler from District 5 cares about this community. And we will do our best to be available to you now and during construction. That is all I can say.

Anybody else? Yes, sir. Go right ahead.

C: Kenny Resendes, *Community Member*: Buddy brought up about the school. What do you plan to do about the school and the kids? Are you doing the construction while the school is in session

or during the summer when there is no school or something like that, because you are going to be adding columns and making the highway wider, and the school isn't very far from the top of the highway. I was just curious what you're going to do about that.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Yes, it is absolutely true. If we had to do any work while school was in session, everything would be contained. We'd coordinate heavily with the school to ensure that we created a safe drop-off and pickup space with no chance for kids to get hurt.

Greg, do you want to talk a little bit further about how things might be staged around the school, or is it a little early for that?

A: Greg Blake: Too early.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: We had a conversation with the school last month. Their teachers park under the viaduct. They are aware of the condition it is in. The sidewalk in front of the school, which we will reconstruct, is also in a poor state. It is not in good condition.

C: Kenny Resendes: What I was getting is when you start working the highway, when you start widening the highway and stuff like that. Like you said, the cranes swing around with the school, would that be done like in the summertime when there's nobody in school in case there is an accident, or something falls off the highway near the school? I understand you're going to move the parking and all that. I get that, the skate park and stuff, and people can park in the green space that is up on top of County Street for the teachers and stuff. I'm just wondering about things falling near the school in case something did happen.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: We would do our best to stage it to take advantages of the summer. At the 25 percent design level, it is a little hard to know exactly how it will be staged. We also must be careful not to hamstring the contractor's means and methods. We can't tell them "thou shalt" too many times or it gets very hard to build the job. You give them the regulations and you say, "You can't spray dust in the neighborhood" and "You can't leave your debris around." Obviously, it is something that we are very sensitive to. Greg and his team, and Steve, and Mark will be looking to work that into how we can develop a package to bid that would work around the school schedule as best as possible.

Q: Kenny Resendes: Would you be shutting down Route 18 at any time during the construction going over it? How would you work that out? I'm just kind of curious.

- A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** As I understand it, Route 18 would, generally speaking, remain open. I can imagine – and I’m looking at Greg and Steve as I say this – isolated incidents where you might be placing steel because Route 18 still has to get under I-195. That bridge section will have to be replaced.
- C: Kenny Resendes:** That is what I’m getting at.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** You could be in a condition where it happens at night or on a weekend. We would detour Route 18 southbound or Route 18 northbound so that we can safely and quickly move materials in overhead and then reopen it again for weekday travel. That is the kind of thing where if that did happen, you could expect the kind of public outreach that MassDOT has done to-date. If you have given us your email address, there’s going to be an email going right to you saying, Route 18 is closing at this time and this is your detour, in English and Spanish, with a nice picture that you can follow.
- Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Greg, do you foresee closures of Route 18 for possible work or do you think it could be kept open at all times?
- A: Greg Blake:** Open at all times, except for when there’s a potential night takedown.
- C: Kenny Resendes:** Because I know when they did the railroad bridges, they moved everything over like you’re going to do with the 195 where it is north to south or south to north after. I was just curious if that was going to happen or not or if it was too early to tell.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** The principle would be to keep Route 18 open. If we had to close it for public safety, it would be done over a night or a weekend when the volumes fall. It would not just be, “Oh, by the way, Route 18 northbound is closed for the next six months. Good luck.”
- C: Kenny Resendes:** People are asking, and I am just asking you so I can tell them. That is all.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** These are all good questions. At the public information meeting in January, we heard some good questions and said, “Those are good questions. We will try to come back at the hearing with answers to those.” The detour graphics you saw were part of that. Now we are getting questions tonight and we will try to come back in the fall with answers to those.
- Q: Kenny Resendes:** Yeah, I was at the first one, too. The other thing, the gentleman was saying that when they reroute some of the drainage off the highways and stuff, you are going to go onto Wamsutta Street with some of the drainage and stuff. And that whole section there, Wamsutta, Christian Avenue, down by the railroad bridges, that is subject to flooding now. Water comes

popping up through the manholes. Is that going to increase the problems down there with the drainage because there's just not enough capacity?

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Greg, do you want to speak to the drainage?

A: Greg Blake: In that particular circumstance, the drainage there now runs down into that area, which pops those covers and so forth. That is going to be taken out of the system. You are going to see a reduced volume in those existing systems. The project drainage is going to be in its own separate trunk line, which would go down to its own separate outlet.

Q Kenny Resendes: Outlet to where? To the pumping station down the South End or into the river?

A: Greg Blake: Right now, we are looking at a natural outlet just north of the railroad yard, right at Wamsutta Street.

C: Kenny Resendes: Right.

A: Greg Blake: So, we are looking at that location as well as we are looking at a potential trunk line. If that doesn't work out quite so well, and, again, it is all preliminary design, we would then look to what we looked at a few weeks ago at a utility coordination meeting, which was taking that trunk line of I- 195 drainage and running it just right along 195 out to the Acushnet right by Kyler's Catch.

C: Kenny Resendes: And the last thing, it is no big deal, but when you had the color chart up there with all the different colors of the bridges and stuff like that.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Do you want to see it again, sir?

A Kenny Resendes: Yes, I was just going to say maybe for the next meeting when you do that, if you could have it as something to take back home just to show to people who could not make it.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Sure. If you want one for yourself, you can go to the project website. This graphic was included in the design in the public information meeting. You can go download this presentation and print this. And if you want it big, get in touch with me after the meeting. My office will print you one on a nice roll plan and you can tack it up on your wall.

C: Kenny Resendes: I belong to the neighborhood association group and, you know, people just want something that I can show them at the next meeting or future meetings.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Again, you can download one tonight if you want and, really, my contact information is on the fact sheet. Feel free to call me. And if you're part of the neighborhood association, we will be more than happy to send you a big one.

C: Kenny Resendes: Thank you. I appreciate it.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Others? Yes, sir.

Q: Charles Buckley: Yeah, Charles Buckley. Exit 14 where you're going to do site preparation. Right at the bottom of Exit 14, you see the area that is over there, Penniman Street?

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Yes.

C: Charles Buckley: Right down at the bottom now, there's all kinds of inappropriate activity over there. That is all overgrown. You have got the school over there. You have got the kids walking by. I've been after the City to get that area cleaned up and everybody's got their hands tied. If you have site preparation money, I do not see why we can't. If you have got the money, I wonder if you could accelerate cleaning up that area. That would 100% improve neighborhood safety. You have to send your public safety officers into a dangerous situation right there. I'm sure you have been by that area and seen it. It is not a very nice pleasant area, especially when you're coming in and that is a gateway, you know, right to your city. I hope you'd take that into consideration and clean that up.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: I think we heard some similar comments at the public information meeting. This project is slated to start in 2023, but Mr. Wheeler from MassDOT District 5 is here taking lots of notes and has been hearing all the sort of immediate concerns. And I think, is it safe to say, Bob, that you're looking at ways in which you can try to address some things in the interim?

C: Bob Wheeler, MassDOT: Yes. Also, in that area, we will be putting in detention ponds, I believe. So, we will be doing some landscaping.

C: Charles Buckley: I just wonder if you could accelerate that and not wait till 2023. It needs attention immediately really.

C: Bob Wheeler: Okay. I'll bring that to the attention of our maintenance section.

C: Charles Buckley: How do they call that? You know, it would improve your neighborhood? How do you say it? Living? Better living – better living in your area, improve your area.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Betterments.

C: Charles Buckley: Right. Thank you.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: You're very welcome. Go right ahead, sir.

C: John Anthony, Community Member: John Anthony, lifetime resident and small businessman. First of all, I'd like to say I'm glad New Bedford is finally getting some money. It is a much-needed project. It is deteriorated pretty bad. It looks bad. So, I'm glad. I'd like to say that I know as cities grow, congestion gets more cars, more trucks, and you only have a small footprint to work in.

I can see this is your biggest challenge right here to me, living here all my life. There's no way to expand that to make it easier. I'm hoping you guys got better ideas with the widening of the lanes. What's happening is this is the South End down here. Now, we have a lot of truck traffic. Is there anybody here from the New Bedford Traffic Commission? I think they should have been here.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: We reached out.

C: John Anthony: I'm sure you have, but it would have been nice if they were here, too, because, like I said, there is a lot of truck traffic. And, over here, climbing this incline, there are a lot of oil trucks. There is the oil depot down there. There are a lot of fish houses down here. There are businesses down here. I'm sure there are some in the North End, too, but most of that is up in the industrial park or they get onto 140 by another way. So, actually, there's no way for anybody from the North End with a trailer truck to come down here to get onto over here. So, that is out of your project anyway. My main concern is the South End where there are a lot of trucks and they can't make that climb. They are trying to come out of here and people are piling up over here, and they are trying to get over to weave in there. So, this is an important area right in here to widen that up. I notice over here, before you get to the project, 195 headed East is three lanes. And I know they made it past 140. So, I'm thinking a lot of traffic gets onto 140. It would have been nice if they would have, years ago, carried that third lane right through across the river. But I do not know if there's any way at a later date if what you're doing here would have any bearing if they did decide that. But that is another issue.

My main concern is over here with the truck traffic. Like I say, these trailer trucks are coming up here and it is just impossible for the people to weave out to get down off the ramp. Ever since they built the exit over near Market Basket, I find that a lot easier at certain times of day to take

that exit, and go up Coggeshall, and then come right down here to go around south. That is going to put a lot more congestion on Coggeshall Street to tell you the truth. But I think that is a better plan when they did that. And I think the only other thing I was thinking of now, you were saying you're going to divert traffic down Penniman Street here and I'm thinking of truck traffic not cars. These trailer trucks coming down the South End to be diverted over here, right over here at this intersection where these guys are going to have to go with their 18-wheelers to take a turn there, now, during school time. This is loaded with cars from parents. They can't make their kid walk two blocks, so they've got to park on top of everything. Now, you're going to have a lot of traffic coming down here. That is something to do with the New Bedford Traffic Commission. They ought to be able to straighten that out with the police. But I'm thinking of these 10-wheelers and oil tankers. You know, if they are going to try to come down here, maneuver this turn, come down here, maneuver this tight turn here, that might be a little obstacle you guys are probably going to have to work with.

Other than that, good luck. I think you're doing a good job and with a small footprint, there's only so much you can do. I understand. I'm just glad New Bedford is getting some money to do something. We will call it New Bedford's Little Big Dig, or whatever you want to call it. But the environmental concerns, I am not that concerned. I trust you.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: I have a few things in response to your very helpful comments, sir. Thank you for those.

One of the things that Greg and his team would have had to look at is computer program called AutoTURN. AutoTURN allows you to take the geometry of an intersection, be it existing or to be designed, and then overlay a truck onto it. Then "drive" the truck through the intersections in the program and see whether it makes the turn or not. That work will be done as part of establishing the detour routes. But that is very good information about that and trucks.

Part of the outreach that we have been doing is a briefing at Sid Wainer. They carry a lot of trucks. We had a briefing with the fishing terminal folks. They have a lot of trucks. Part of the outreach is to get good information and to get those guys plugged into the project early because, unlike regular drivers, they have people who deliver for them regularly. They have a fleet and they can communicate information to that fleet. So, we can provide that information, and we can certainly look at this. Maybe this works for private cars, but it isn't the most logical for trucks. In terms of this area in here, we totally understand. In effect, everybody who I've talked to has either had a near miss or been hit or knows someone who's been hit in here. Greg mentioned those 41 crashes. That is an elevated crash rate compared to the rest of the highway.

To your point about a third lane, we are adding them where we can. Let's say I'm coming from Fairhaven. I want to get off and go down to downtown New Bedford. You come from downtown New Bedford and you want to head this way and go to Fall River or Providence, right? Right now, you and I are having to do that cross over each other in a very short space. There's not a lot of width. We can't make a space any longer. But we can add some more width. And I will say that this works very well. I've just come off doing public involvement for MassDOT's 128 Add-A-Lane in Needham where they added capacity like this to help these weaves. It is a safety improvement. We know it is difficult for trucks. You have got to drop speed to take a tight turn. You have got to go up a hill and then you have got some guy in a Mustang wanting to go fast. This is designed to give that some breathing room and we think it will help a lot.

Q: John Anthony: Okay. I'm looking at the blue, and I'm probably thinking it is like a breakdown lane or something small. But it is the width of a car, a full lane?

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Yes, you can see is we do have any place where we show that blue, that is a full additional lane. You will get a real deceleration lane where you are able to be in that and drive in that for a reasonable distance. It is not just breakdown lane and shoulder. It is a real lane plus shoulder.

C: John Anthony: That helps the westbound lane, but I mean the eastbound lane.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Nothing beyond the rail.

C: John Anthony: Yeah, that makes sense. I have never had a problem. I do not know how many accidents have happened on this side. I imagine a few because it is, like you say, a tight turn. But it is nothing like this. This is a nightmare, especially almost any time of the day. But, you know, you get a slow driver and you get a 10-wheeler behind him and they are trying to get up there. But anything's an improvement. I just expect the \$120 million to go up to \$240 million by the time we are done, for obvious reasons.

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Very good, sir.

C: John Anthony: Okay. Thank you.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Are there others?

Q: Irondina Reis-Abreu: Actually, I just have a question. I heard Buddy Andrade speak about other construction on Route 18. And, back then, I had a lot of complaints from people in the neighborhood when they did the demolition at night. Oftentimes, I had parents asking me, "Why

are they doing that at night? They know kids have to go to school in the morning.” I’m sure you guys have something in the plan. Can you share? I know I was not at the last meeting. And, also, with technology of today, will you have any kind of app when you start the construction that is for commuters, for people in the morning, showing where the heavy traffic is, what part are you guys, and what phase are you in? Is it something that you have in plan?

A: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Sure. I have to be careful because we are at the 25% design level so I’m not going to speak to specifics on this project, but I’ll speak to what I’ve done elsewhere.

For the 128 Add-A-Lane job, which I referenced, and the Casey Arborway in Jamaica Plain, which I referenced, we maintained a project website both during design and in construction. That website carried project information and a three-week look-ahead. If there was a specific night operation, we would publish that notice independently and people would get something served up right to their in-box. If they didn’t want to have email, they could go to the website for that.

You also mentioned the apps. Does everybody remember the TomTom? Those used to be in cars, the special GPS navigation. Well, TomTom is gone. Everything’s in the phone but, TomTom still exists. They are apparently the backend that pushes data to all the phones. One of the things that my firm has learned is when you’re going to do some work, you call up TomTom and they push everything out to the phones. So, we would undertake those things. They connect with them and tell drivers what’s coming.

One of the important things about this project in terms of the traffic is there’s two lanes in each direction on I-195 today, and the goal is to maintain that right through construction. We are not going to see a restriction and loss of capacity on the mainline. In terms of whether it is daytime or nighttime work, it does not matter because the contractor is going to have to adhere to MassDOT noise specifications. There’s a decibel band for daytime, a decibel band for evening, and a decibel band for night. And I’m sure everybody can guess when you can make the most noise. There are tactics that, you know, to help make the noisy parts better. When they did the Arborway in Forest Hills, which I live next to, they came in at night to shear the steel girders of the old bridge. When they worked on the abutments, they did that during the day. There are ways you can time the operations, so they are less disruptive. I do not want to throw anybody under the bus. I cannot speak to what was done further to the south on Route 18. Nobody before you tonight was there. There is no construction fairy and there is no rubber hammer, but we do try our best, and, certainly, the contract will hold the contractor accountable to make sure that they are respectful of the fact that they are right up against people’s houses.

C: Irondina Reis-Abreu: Thank you.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Certainly. Yes, sir?

C: George Boucher, *Community Member*: My name is George Boucher. I'm a 22-year resident of Fairhaven. All of this is well controlled, I think. The problem I'm seeing is Coggeshall Street going east turns into Howland and Howland comes to an intersection with Main Street and Adams Street in Fairhaven. An accident on 195 westbound at 140 will cause a backup of both lanes, and in this case three lanes, all the way to 240, all of Coggeshall Street, Howland, the whole nine yards. You never see a police officer. You have to sit there and wait for the lights to work. It is a nightmare. I've seen traffic backed up all the way to Slocum Road in Acushnet trying to get out of that area. I think that should be looked at. Somebody needs to pick up the phone and get some police officers out there to keep the traffic moving.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: So, you would like to see adequate police details as part of the project?

A: George Boucher: Yeah. Yeah, well, I think it is going to happen over there in the Coggeshall Street area. It is got to happen, you know. But nothing happens in Fairhaven. On the other end at 140 where it meets Route 6, I do not know what is going to happen there. That would not be New Bedford. That is my experience and insight.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Good to have. Anything else?

C: John Anthony, *Community Members*: I just wanted to bring up one more point. I was not trying to ignore the North End but, as you can see, there is no ramp to go on from the northbound lane to get onto I-195 West. So, a lot of those trucks do go down to Coggeshall Street, and they take a right. They go onto the Market Basket exit to get onto that, which, again, they are climbing a little more of an incline there, but that is just more trailer trucks coming in. I know there's a lot of North End businesses and those trucks do go onto the highways, too. Like I said, they do have access to 140. But, you know, I'm just bringing that up as part of the traffic flow.

Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Good thing to know. And I think, Greg, when you would have done your traffic studies, you would understand heavy vehicle percentages at every intersection?

A: Greg Blake: Correct.

C: John Anthony: By the labs, a lot of the trucks come down there. That is a tight corner, but they manage to get by there now and they go down and they get onto I-195 by Market Basket.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Being able to bend the truck in the middle is something a regular car can't do and that helps. Anything else?

C: Benny Mendoza, *Community Member*: (through translator): My name is Benny Mendoza. My concern is in the area where I live in by Route 18. My concern is more focused on the pedestrians. Our community is Hispanic and not many of us own cars and we do not have transportation. A lot of people do not respect the pedestrians in the area. I believe there should be more signaling, and more police details related to the pedestrians that have to walk the area, especially the parents with the children. That is my concern. That is all.

C: Nate Cabral-Curtis: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. I will say that, one of the things that may not have been touched on in all of this discussion is right now some of the signal heads tend to get lost due to solar glare. The drivers may not be able to see them as well as they should. The project will be providing some upgrades to make those signal heads more visible. During construction, I would anticipate, especially during some of those detours, you would see police details used to help control traffic. Certainly, on other projects, we do see that. In terms of specific concerns on local streets outside of what you see with the color here, please get that information to us and we will relay it to the City of New Bedford because MassDOT cannot just go onto New Bedford local streets and say, "We are going to change this. We are going to change that." There's a demarcation line but, we certainly understand and feel the concern. If you have a specific intersection that you're worried about, let us know and we will pass it on.

I would also note that the youngest participant in the meeting room has been remarkably well behaved at almost 8:00pm. His understanding and patience are appreciated. So, thank you, sir.

If that is it, I will turn the microphone to the MassDOT project manager and allow him to declare the hearing closed.

C: Steve Soma: Okay. We will hereby close it at 7:59. Thank you for coming.

Next Steps

The project team will continue to advance the design of the Route I-195 to Route 18 Interchange Rehabilitation Project, considering the input received at this meeting and any comments received following the meeting. Several private briefings with major stakeholders have been scheduled. A 75% Design Public Hearing will be held later this year in New Bedford.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Irondina	Reis-Abreu	State Representative Antonio Cabral's Office
Buddy	Andy	Resident
John	Anthony	Resident
Gregory	Blake	CDR Maguire
Erica	Blonde	HNTB
George	Bouche	Resident
CL	Buckley	Resident
Nate	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Maria	Carvalho	Luso Interpreting Service
Beyanid	Cole	Language Interpreter
Kevin	Hart	State Representative William M. Straus
Joshua	Hickey	Resident
Mark	Kolonoski	HNTB
Nate	Lash	Howard Stein Hudson
Benny	Mendoza	Resident
Anne	O'Neal-Carrington	ATM Inc
Melanie	Percha	CDR Maguire
Hung	Pham	MassDOT
Kenny	Resendes	Resident
Cynthia	Rivera	Resident
Joseph	Sasso	CDR Maguire
Stephen	Soma	MassDOT
Joy	Trudeau	Resident
Robert	Wheeler	MassDOT