

would analyze in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) based on input received through the Scoping Report comment period.

In terms of Scoping Report comments, Tetra Tech's Mark Fobert outlined that of the comments received, a large proportion had been form letters expressing deep concern over the proposed temporary trestle which would need to be placed in the Charles River for approximately 8-10 years as a part of constructing the Soldiers' Field Road hybrid.¹ Commentary also centered on a desire for the opening of West Station to be moved up in the overall construction timeline and concern over the impacts to the Worcester Mainline commuter rail associated with construction of the hybrid. Support was also expressed for improvements to walking and cycling connections, improvement to the Charles River parklands within the project area, and a connection from Agannis Way to the Paul Dudley White Path, along with a desire for the entire Grand Junction Bridge, both over Soldiers' Field Road and the Charles River, to be reconstructed as part of the project.

The project team next explained that largely in response to the many comments rejecting the construction impacts associated with building the hybrid option, MassDOT would be analyzing three options in the DEIS: the hybrid, an all at-grade version, and a replacement highway viaduct. The highway viaduct which will be analyzed in the DEIS is eight feet narrower than the last viaduct option which was shared with the community, stays out of the river during construction, and has fewer impacts on the Worcester Mainline and Grand Junction Line. Attendees expressed surprise that the highway viaduct option had returned to consideration and commented that A Better City has already put forth another permutation of the at-grade option. The project team is aware of this alternative and is looking into it further. Attendees also returned to the idea of removing lanes from I-90 within the throat as a way to avoid impacts to the Charles River. Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT's project manager, reminded the group that Secretary Pollack has stated on more than one occasion her commitment to retaining eight lanes on I-90 through the project. Task Force member Dennis Giombetti, who represents Senate President Spilka's office, also noted that removal of lanes from I-90 would be unacceptable to MetroWest commuters.

The last part of the meeting focused on West Station. The version of West Station which will be analyzed in the DEIS includes three platforms and four tracks allowing cross platform transfers between Worcester Mainline, Amtrak, and future urban rail service on the Grand Junction Line. Additional space for the third platform, a frequently stated preference of Task Force membership, has been accomplished by dropping one of Worcester Mainline express tracks carried in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. Discussion of West Station focused relatively little on the platform

¹ This option for reconstructing the area of the project known as "the throat" would put I-90 at-grade, Soldiers' Field Road on a new, smaller viaduct, with the Worcester Mainline also generally at-grade.

Q&A. We will try to keep this meeting brief, but if we have to get into more detail at any time, we will do that.

We will begin with Nate and then he'll pass it to Mike for updates.

C: Nathaniel Cabral Curtis: First we will go over some of the mechanics for this platform. There are two ways to ask your questions. There is raising your hand, which you can see as an option on your screen. The other thing you can do is type your questions in. We do have a member of HSH Public Involvement Staff that is minding the typed questions.

If folks cannot use a microphone, you can just type in your questions. However, just so that everybody can hear the dialog as much as possible, we would ask that you raise your hands to ask your questions, if possible. Those are the guidelines there. With that, I will go to Mike.

C: Mike O'Dowd, MassDOT: I want to welcome you all here to the Task Force meeting, and I hope this first virtual meeting of I-90 find you all in good health and that you've all been able to stay free and clear of COVID-19 despite the fact that we've had to change our normal procedures and processes.

Tonight, we are bringing you this first virtual Task Force meeting. I want to bring you up to speed on what has happened since it was December when we all last saw each other. Since then, there have been several questions that have come through MassDOT and hopefully we'll be able to answer some of them tonight. I want to thank you all for participating today and thank you all for your patience and indulgences as we go through this first virtual meeting.

Secretary Pollack and I earlier this afternoon presented to the Board of Directors a very comprehensive briefing. This briefing gave them an update on where we stand with the project.

We have a document we are preparing with responses to the over 2,000 comments that have been received during the project scoping report. We gave the board detailed steps on where we stand and where we are going forward. Our teams are working very hard to try and ensure that we are addressing each one of those comments. We want to ensure that the alternatives we consider going forward address what has clearly been communicated to us by your comments: the concerns, the needs, the wants, and the overall goals of the project. I also want to thank a new member of the team for joining us, Mr. Tim McCarthy. Tim comes over to us from the city of Boston to join the rest of the I-90 team in ensuring that we are delivering the best product that we possibly can which the community will benefit from over the next several generations.

improvements both on the commuter rail and regarding bus access. West Station is going to be a critical aspect of that. For the MBTA to be able to bring about these improvements and enhancements both on service and safety, we need to ensure that we have an ability to layover commuter rail cars. It gives us the flexibility of realigning I-90. These are some of the major issues that we needed to address very early on when we first convened this taskforce.

We feel very confident that we have, but we need to take a second look based upon some of the comments that we received during the public comments on the Scoping Report.

C: Ed Ionata: Mike, there is a question up that is pertinent to proceeding here, and that is, “are we recording this presentation?” I believe the answer is yes. So, people should be aware it's being recorded, correct?

A: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Correct. Mike and I have spoken about this earlier today. This platform will make a recording of the proceedings, and that recording will be used in the furtherance of manufacturing detailed meeting notes. Mike, do you have anything that you want to add to that?

A: Mike O’Dowd: No, thank you very much for interjecting. I appreciate that.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: No problem. Thank you.

C: Mike O’Dowd: As I mentioned earlier, we need to ensure that the reasonable range of alternatives that get advanced through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) addresses the overall project purpose, the project components, and the major needs. The project purpose includes addressing the roadway deficiencies, replacing the structurally deficient viaduct, and reconfiguring the I-90 interchange including the viaduct to address the safety issues and how the ramps touchdown into the local street network. We want to have a seamless transition between regional traffic and local traffic and a seamless transition from local traffic to regional traffic. We also want to provide rail improvements reconfiguring transit commuter rail facilities, construct the new West Station and supporting the mid-day commuter rail operations.

We are also looking at improving mobility and transportation access to allow for future connections between Allston, Brighton, Brookline, and the adjacent neighborhoods to and from the Charles River Reservation. In addition, we want land use planning opportunities to be facilitated by a multimodal network of streets, paths, rail, and transit facilities within the project area. Lastly, we want to ensure that any of the improvement made by this project do not

preclude opportunities for improved multimodal transportation access by future land use development for the city of Boston.

With that said, I am going to hand it over to Mark Fobert who will walk you through the next slide. He will walk you through a NEPA/MEPA update and what has been going on over the course of the last six months, Mark?

C: Mark Fobert, Tetra Tech: I am going to provide an update on what MassDOT has been doing in 2020 and since the last Task Force meeting. Later in the presentation, Jim Keller and Mark Shammon will be going into more detail about the design modifications I will mention briefly.

There have been design refinements at Beacon Park Yard and West Station, including a combination of four tracks and three platforms. MassDOT has also been reevaluating the no-build alternative also.

In earlier filings, the no-build included major rehabilitation and replacement. It has been refined to include reconstruction of the existing viaduct -- a major preservation effort that will be implemented if the multimodal project does not move forward.

MassDOT has been evaluating options to address major concerns raised during the scoping process, including complexity, length of construction, and impacts to the Charles River. This work has included evaluating alternative construction options to reduce impacts to the River and evaluating the pros and cons of other build alternatives, including the at-grade and the highway viaduct.

The Scoping Report was published in November of 2019 and two public hearings were held, one in Brighton and one in Framingham, along with two Task Force meetings where the Scoping Report was discussed.

There was then a 37-day comment period on the Scoping Report which closed on December 12. We received 840 comment letters. The general breakdown was more than 600 form letters and emails, 170 from the public, 40 from organizations, 16 from elected officials, and six from federal, state, and local agencies.

There were several major themes to the comments. These themes included a lack of support for inclusion of the mid-day layover in the purpose and need. Comments also thought the enhancement of the Charles River, expanded parkland, and open space while prioritizing safe, improved pedestrian access and connections should have been included in the purpose and need.

We also received comments on the various alternatives that included support for an at-grade alternative to be analyzed in the DEIS, support for four tracks at West Station, and 15-minute service on the Worcester Mainline. Elements of the original flip, including an open space buffer path on the south side of the facility and redesign of the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge. There was also support for a pedestrian connection at Agganis Way, a Cambridge Street bypass road, and rebuilding the Grand Junction rail bridge.

Comments on construction included the idea that construction of West Station should be accelerated and opposition to single track Worcester Mainline operation under all alternatives. By far, most of the comments received were about impacts to river user by the temporary trestle construction on the River.

Construction period mitigation comments included support for additional and improved connections to mitigate travel impacts during construction and interest in a mitigation package that addresses noise, air quality, and environmental concerns. Comments on analysis method included CTPS modeling assumptions and the use of AET data to determine the number of highway lanes required by the project.

Comments on the SFR Hybrid Throat (HT) option included concerns regarding temporary environmental impacts on the Charles River from the proposed temporary trestle, construction period disruptions on travel from the west, concerns about reduction of the Worcester Main Line to one track during construction, and climate change and resiliency concerns about locating I-90 below grade in order to reduce the height of the SFR viaduct.

So where do we go next in the NEPA process? In the Scoping Report, the Highway Viaduct (HV) alternative did not meet the project purpose and need because they did not provide an opportunity for an adequate north-south pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Charles River. These designs have been updated to address the shortcomings and Jim Keller will describe later in the presentation.

MassDOT remains concerned about the permanent impacts to the Charles River and are receptive that the at-grade throat alternative should not be discounted. modified at-grade alternate will be analyzed in the DEIS in response to public comments. To provide a comprehensive comparison, we conducted cooperating agency meetings in January and April. These meetings will continue during the preparation of the Scoping Report and the DEIS. It is expected that the no-build, SFR hybrid, modified at-grade, and modified highway viaduct will all be analyzed in the DEIS to provide a comprehensive evaluation of project alternatives.

have been making minor edits to the presentation that we are providing to the Task Force members tonight.

Nate, I think I missed the last question that Harry had for us.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: “How long are you going to be showing this presentation that you showed to the board?”

C: Mike O’Dowd: I am not sure how long they keep it up and available on their website. My guess is it goes into the archives, and it is available for anybody to view.

That process is like this. We will make this presentation available through our website. That is once Nate puts the presentation through the title six process and we post the recording of this proceeding on our website.

C: Ed Ionata: Most people on this call were not able to tune in to the Board Meeting. Okay, Nate let us take a minute and go to the raised hands please.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: So, I am going to go to Harry. I am going to turn your microphone on in just a minute. I also have a comment from Suzanne Rasmussen. Everybody, please turn your microphones off. I am not getting reverb, but she is, so if you are not talking, just turn your microphone off. I am going to go to Harry, then I am going to Bill Deignan.

C: Harry Mattison, *Task Force Member*: I’m curious how, given that this presentation contains a scorecard showing that you guys are pretty deeply in love with this new viaduct option that none of us had ever seen before, how we are expected to think that there is going to be a fair and honest evaluation of these options over the next month or two, which, by the way, is a completely ridiculous and insulting timeframe. But just to go back to this contradiction between the Secretary standing up and saying “oh, there’s no preference,” and then you giving a presentation that shows a bloated at-grade option that violates key principles that you say are basically the word of God, and then showing a scorecard that says we already have the best option. Like, what are we doing here?

A: Mike O’Dowd: I will try to address that. The secretary committed to a thorough assessment of the evaluation, which is the reason why she has identified three alternatives that she wants to investigate further in the DEIS and ensure that each of the three will get a fair evaluation and a fair assessment.

The matrices that we showed to the Board today is just to identify what we have seen and what we see as being some of the pros and cons or benefits associated with each of the alternatives relative to the comments that were received from the public and from the agencies on the Scoping Report.

Q: Ed Ionata: Nate, any other questions?

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I am seeing a few more text questions, but it's much faster if you raise your hands. Next one is Bill Deignan who asks, "When is the next period for public comment this summer"?

A: Mike O'Dowd: We will continue to take comments and inquiries during the entire summer from the public and from Task Force members. We have the I-90 site, please feel free to share that with everybody else. We see that as an opportunity to continually take comments and questions and inquiries from the public and Task Force members.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: The next question is, "how will input be taken for this new concept?"

A: Mike O'Dowd: There's no new concept. The Scoping Summary Report that we are in the process of generating right now will be filed with the Federal Highway Administration late in July. That will reflect the three alternatives, the refinements of those alternatives, that we are discussing this evening and that I presented earlier today to the board of directors.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Next is from Pahlavi Mande, "what are the considerations for reducing the number of lanes on I-90 and Soldiers Field Road?"

A: Mike O'Dowd: The Secretary, I believe, mentioned that she's been clear in the past that this project does not intend to reduce any of the lanes available currently on I-90 or on Soldiers Field Road. She is open to the idea of reducing the number of lanes on Soldiers' Field Road in the future if traffic volumes fell to a point where the traffic in the removed lanes could be carried by I-90.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: We have one more here from Galen. Galen asked, "What is the difference between the presentation we are being given right now and the slides that you gave to the board?"

A: Mike O'Dowd: As I just pointed out, they are very similar. There may be some more additional graphics shown on the Task Force presentation that were not shown earlier to the board today, but by and large they are fairly consistent with each other.

C: Ed Ionata: OK, Nate I think we can move on. Thank you.

Q: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I have another question from Ari. The question is directed to Pahlavi's asking "why?"

A: Mike O'Dowd: If I understand the question, Ari is questioning the response that I gave to Pahlavi relative to reduction of lanes on I-90 and Soldiers Field Road.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I think that is right, but since it's all from Ari, I am going to turn his microphone on. And he is going to go for it and then we will do some more slides.

Q: Ari Ofsevit, *Task Force Member*: My question is, I want to know what the data analysis has been done on Soldiers Field Road. As far as I know there has not been an hourly accounting of Soldiers Field Road in about 15 years. Are we just saying this because we see a lot of cars and we want to keep having a lot of cars and pollution and all the things that come with it? Or are we actually saying this because there's been an analysis done?

A: Mike O'Dowd: No, we are not just saying this. It is based upon traffic counts that had been done.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: When was the last time a traffic count for Soldiers Field Road was done?

A: Mike O'Dowd: I would have to refer to Jim Keller on that, but I believe it was done in 2017 or 2018.

A: Jim Keller, *Tetra Tech*: It was 2018, Mike. It was recent, within the last year and a half.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: Is it available to the public?

A: Jim Keller: Those numbers appear on the MHD website.

C: Mike O'Dowd: Those are the numbers that CTPS is using to generate their model. I will check and see what the status of those are. They use those numbers to calibrate the model to ensure that any of the results of the model would be reflective of the current day volumes that were made back in 2018.

The at-grade also had some further advancement post the Scoping Report from the result of public comment, in opposition to the trestle associated with the Soldiers Field Hybrid. The comments also put us in a position to determine ways to get the at-grade as well the highway viaduct to meet purpose and need, as previously discussed. What we are showing you is the north-south pedestrian crossing. It has the same layout that we have always been showing for the SFR hybrid, and we just wanted to present that as it is currently remained unchanged.

Here is the cross-section of the throat area that we have shown before. We start with the Soldiers Field Road viaduct on top of westbound I-90. Soldiers Field Road is now over the eastbound through public discussion with the Task Force and Stakeholders. And that is currently the Soldiers Field Road hybrid location of the viaduct.

This provides for the separate bicycle facilities and avoids impacting the river in the final condition, but as we got deeper into staging, it became clear that we needed width within the throat area. That is when the trestle was introduced to carry Soldiers Field Road and the Paul Dudley White Path on a temporary basis in the river. That idea generated a lot of discussion pre and post Scoping Report.

We have taken a look closer look. It does not seem like much, but we were able to come up with approximately 20 feet to shift the trestle further to the south. We are continually looking at different alternatives that would allow for construction of the SFR hybrid to take place without as much impact on the river. We understand that A Better City has publicly put out different alternatives for construction staging for the SFR hybrid. We have looked at that. We continue to study it continue to look at east and west of the narrowest location of the throat, but we are open to trying to find ways to reduce the impact into the river, but currently this is where the trestle stands.

For the at-grade alternative in the Scoping Report, the primary reason for it not meeting the purpose and need was the feasibility of a north-south connection in the Agganis area, over the I-90 and the Soldiers Field Road to touchdown on the Charles River Esplanade and Paul Dudley White Path area. We have taken a closer look at that and determined that it is feasible to provide this connection, maybe from widening I-90 and Soldiers Field Road to get that crossing, but crossing is feasible. There was a decision to increase the shoulder width from two to four feet. The Soldiers Field Road hybrid advanced through the independent review report with shoulders widened from two to four feet to accommodate storm water infrastructure and provide snow clearing areas during storms. They are both at-grade or below grade with pretty much the same cross-section with 11-foot lanes. Similarly, MassDOT operations felt it necessary for the at-grade

to have similar shoulder width to the Soldier Fields Road Hybrid. We have also made some changes to the cross-section of I-90 for the highway viaduct. The Soldiers Field Road lane width was increased to match what's existing, similar to how the highway viaduct was altered.

Here is the modified at-grade throat area that shows the crossing of Agganis Way over to the Charles River Esplanade and the Paul Dudley White Path area. There is a feasible connection, and there is also potential for that connection from the Agganis way area to connect to West Station. There would be a ramp that would go from the Agganis Way area to West station.

There are minimal changes other than increasing the shoulder width and the lane width in this alternative, but the crossing is feasible and now meets purpose and need as previously stated.

Here's a cross-section of the modified at-grade, which provides the increased cross-section for the shoulder and lane widths on SFR. It puts a portion of Soldiers' Fields Road, the retaining wall, and the Paul Dudley White Path on piles. For staging of this option, we have also seen A Better City's, similar to what they put up for the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid and looked closer at that option as well as other options MassDOT developed.

Post scoping report, we acknowledged a lot of opposition to the trestle. We needed to look at options that do not have the impacts to the river in the same magnitude as the trestle on a temporary basis of eight years. That forced us to review some other options. We ended up reconsidering the viaduct, looking back at the Scoping Report, and reviewing the north-south connection as to why it did not meet the purpose and need. We needed to take a step back and look at the feasibility as we did with the other alternatives. This process helped us come up with an option to provide a pedestrian connection for the highway viaduct alternative.

We determined that it is feasible to provide a connection for a pedestrian crossing and narrow the viaduct by eight feet. That led to the reduction of viaduct area of about 10,000 square feet. Essentially, what we did was take four feet off the outside shoulders to provide the four-foot shoulders, left and right, similar to the at-grade Soldiers Field Road hybrid. It still has 12-foot lanes, so it's still 8 feet wider than the at-grade Soldiers Field Road cross-section of I-90. But since it's a viaduct with barriers, there was a desire by MassDOT to keep those widths similar to what was previously proposed.

Some of the advantages that we see with the Highway Viaduct begin with staging. We have been evaluating as to why we have to go out into the river for the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid. That reason is because of the complications resulting from having to shift horizontal and vertical components of I-90 and the rail under other alternatives. You would have to get all of those

elements constructed at the east and west portions of the throat-area. Construction that does not include the narrowest section of the throat area. This scenario makes it very complicated to expand the width. The Highway Viaduct does not require that. As long as travel modes can be maintained in demolition, staging can be done in a way that maintains certain widths of the infrastructure, and the temporary alignments are not as complicated as in previous alternatives, temporary or permanent impacts in the Charles do not need to occur. In addition, negative impacts to rail operations, including the Grand Junction's long-term closure, can be minimized and greater resiliency with regard to flooding can be achieved as there is no below grade elevations required beyond what is currently the low point under the Grand Junction Bridge.

The visual impacts were still a problem in the Purpose and Need. Those impacts would be addressed with aesthetic treatments to the super- and substructure. We are now looking at different opportunities for that. Currently, noise impacts will be addressed by the noise barriers on the ramps and even on the viaduct itself. We will also include noise barriers in other locations. For feasibility, we are looking to make sure that this alternative does not preclude the reconstruction of the Grand Junction over Soldiers Field Road.

Here is a depiction of the modified Highway Viaduct. It is narrower by about eight feet than what we have proposed before. It also shows the connections below the viaduct and above the rail, and a pedestrian and bicycle bridge. It would connect to the Agganis Way area with matching elevation to avoid the need for a dramatic ramp. There would also be an opportunity to connect Agganis Way to West Station. There would also be opportunities to create a pedestrian bridge the feasibility for which is being looked at for all three variations. The bridge would touch down over at the open space area near the Paul Dudley White Path.

Here is the cross-section. As a result of further study, we were able to go from the four columns to the three columns that was proposed in the independent review report. It just needed to be studied further and evaluated to determine whether that was feasible. We have determined that it is.

Since we have narrowed the divider by eight feet and have gone to a three-column arrangement, we have an opportunity to relocate Soldiers Field Road. I will get into that on the next slide. This alternative also provides for the two-track Grand Junction for the future, two rail over the Charles River.

That three-column arrangement allows us to shift Soldiers Field Road to the south, which opens up space in the throat area for the Highway Viaduct alternative that allows for a separated Paul Dudley White pedestrian and bicycle path. This isn't the entire limits throat area like the

side of things. We've tried to maintain the existing profile of I-90 as much as possible. The rail does go lower in the yard in the final condition by a couple of feet. That was always part of the project. We have always been looking to do that. With that said, the changes we have made are getting deeper into some of the beams and some of the structural elements to take off some elevation without losing structural integrity. We have not run into too many issues as far as the elevation to maintain the 18 foot six inch minimum and provide a 10 foot pedestrian crossing height.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: Just a quick follow up. What is the elevation of I-90 at that cross-section?

A: Jim Keller: I do not have that with me right now. We would not propose something or show it as feasible if we were changing the height of the viaduct by too much. At this time, it is already well constrained geometrically. If you start playing around with the vertical curves, it will not be a great alignment.

C: Ari Ofsevit: This drawing clearly says 15 feet 6 inches, so make sure you update that to 18 feet 6 inches.

C: Jim Keller: I just noticed that. Yes, it is not supposed to be 15 feet 6 inches. It is 18 and a half feet, minimum.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: David, you are on for our next question.

Q: David Lutzenheiser, Task Force Member: You mentioned noise barriers and other aesthetic improvements to hide a 45-foot high viaduct. How would you do that? What sort of noise barriers and aesthetic improvements would you make to hide the highway viaduct?

My second question is there is a wide space under the northern side of the viaduct. You have the railroad tracks on the south side. Can some of that space on the north side be used for pushing Soldiers Field Road further underneath?

A: Jim Keller: The viaduct treatments is something that the team is looking at to advance. As far as what we can do, we are engaging a bridge architect to look at those treatments, whether they would be more than treatments on the vertical, on the bench system, plus the architectural treatments for the barriers. That is all stuff that the team has to look at. We do not have anything laid out right now, otherwise we would show you, but we know that it is going to be important. Even the color schemes. How all these things come together is still something we have to look at.

Noise barriers are on the table. We have not decided if they are traditional noise barriers, or a more robust snow fence. Again, the team is looking at that. The noise barriers will be part of our full

analysis with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that we go through and do for our noise analysis. Most things are in progress, and we don't have a definitive design to show you those elements.

Q: David Lutsenheiser: Would that include potentially noise barriers on the Pike itself?

A: Jim Keller: Yes.

From the east, the Grand Junction Rail Line quickly diverts to the north to get up and over the Grand Junction Bridge. You have room, but to put curvature on Soldiers Field Road for a short distance is a difficult task, so there would not be much room to shift Soldiers Field Road to the south.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: OK, I will go to my next raise hand. Bill it is your turn.

Q: Bill Deignan, *Task Force Member*: I had a couple of similar questions to David. One is about making sure the noise barriers on the river side of the viaduct are being considered and analyzed. The modified Highway Viaduct scheme will obviously go over the sheet of the river surface and into Cambridge Court. Also, I would like to see more complete plan view of why some of that space under the viaduct can't be used for Soldiers Field Road. Even with the modified Highway Viaduct scheme, it only leaves eight feet of parkland, and that's not a lot. It's great that there are separated paths there, but the parkland space is still minimal. That is disappointing to see that there cannot be more space for planting trees and other things.

And I was also curious why in previous alternatives, the Grand Junction Bridge over Soldiers Field Road was included, but now I'm seeing in this alternative that it's not precluded in future. Can you go into a little more detail about why it is not included?

Q: Jim Keller: Good question, Bill. Because of the changes to the rail alignment and elevations for both the at-grade and SFR hybrid alternatives it has to be replaced because it is a complete shift of the Grand Junction realignment. The Highway Viaduct is being kept on the same profile, essentially the same horizontal and vertical alignment, so there's no need to replace the bridge. We understand that there was a strong desire for the bridge to be replaced, but one of the advantages of the Highway Viaduct is that you do not have to shut down the Grand Junction Rail except for short periods of time during construction. It could be replaced under any alternative. MassDOT with the Highway Viaduct is looking at it as potentially part of a Grand Junction rail line project over the Charles that gets replaced.

C: Bill Deignan: As a follow up, I want to see more analysis. I think we heard that before that it was not precluded, but when you actually look at the space left to reconstruct it, it would be extremely expensive and much more difficult to redo it at a later time. I guess I want to see more analysis on what this term “does not preclude” means in this case.

C: Jim Keller: Your comment is noted.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Thank you, Bill. Next is Jessica Robertson.

Q: Jessica Robertson, *Task Force Member*: I want to start with by saying that I am appalled that we are even reconsidering the Highway Viaduct. I also want to emphasize one of the issues with the Highway Viaduct that is it touches down too far west on the street grid. Essentially, the issue has been exacerbated by trying to squeeze the bike and pedestrian connection underneath the Highway Viaduct.

I think it is very important that we get a very detailed explanation of the grades at all these different points and the slope of all of those streets coming up to meet the highway when comparing this option to the other options. And about Soldiers Field Road going under the viaduct, I think that the Independent Review Team proposed to use a structure that had the pillars in the middle instead of on the edges to make it more feasible. I’m wondering why that is not being considered here?

A: Jim Keller: We looked closely to what the Independent Review Team researched, including the span arrangement, and this is currently where we are at. We can continue to look at things. We completely understand that there’s a strong desire to shift Soldiers Field Road even further to create as much open space as possible.

We found that the alignment of the Grand Junction rail is in a location that, with the Highway Viaduct, it cannot be shifted further to the east from where it currently is. If it is shifted any further east there is no clearance for the rail, so we have it located where it currently is. Maybe we can shift it a little bit east or west to maintain a minimum clearance. We are really constrained by the pinch point where the Grand Junction rail has to get under the Viaduct before it goes up and over Soldiers Field Road. But we’ve not been able to shift it any further to the east to allow for additional open space or additional realignment of Soldiers Field Road to the south.

I don’t know if that answers your first question. We really tried to maximize that without changing the profile of the Viaduct without having to make it even higher. This is something that cannot really be done because it comes out onto Commonwealth Avenue right there. We just can’t get more out of it to relocate the Grand Junction Rail any further.

C: Ed Ionata: Mike, can you to return to Jessica's larger question as to some of the reasons why the Highway Viaduct is back in consideration.

Q: Mike O'Dowd: Can you repeat the question Jessica?

Q: Jessica Robertson: The viaduct is universally disliked by everyone, except for, it seems, the project team. I am wondering why it has been resurrected and other options, such as the ones that A Better City has developed, are not being considered? It seems that there are a number of constraints that MassDOT is considering as being inflexible and non-negotiable. In addition, there are priorities that have been brought up by many stakeholders over the last six years that are treated as much more flexible and much more negotiable. I am just wondering how those decisions are getting made and why they were made in the absence of any participation of the Task Force?

A: Mike O'Dowd: The reason why we decided to go back and take another look at a refined version or reengineered version of the Highway Viaduct was in response to the hundreds and thousands of questions and comments that we received on alternatives that were presented in the Scoping Report. There was an overwhelming desire for us to find an alternative that addressed the Purpose and Need while reducing the overall construction duration and avoid any impacts, either temporarily or permanently, within the waterway. We also wanted to avoid impacts to major utility crossings that would be relocated or disrupted. We also wanted to avoid disruptions to the MBTA services. It was in response to all of that which is why we have gone back and taken a look at.

Q: Jessica Robertson: But there are other alternatives that have been raised, including looking at fewer lanes and looking at different shoulder widths and lane widths in the cross-section. Also, just a couple of days ago we submitted a letter with a bunch of stakeholders, including the Charles River watershed and the Charles River Conservancy, saying that some amount of permanent change in the river is acceptable. If ecological restoration is a major part of the project, that opens up a bunch of different options that are not currently being explored.

A: Mike O'Dowd: Great points. I read that letter, and the Secretary reviewed it with me. But the presentation that we provided to the Board of Directors is reflective of many of the comments that we received in the scoping report, as well as the concerns that were raised to us in the letter that we received from the organizations and advocacy groups.

As I stated before, we felt very confident in the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid as an alternative was going to be a consensus agreement amongst all the public, regulatory agencies, and Task Force members. We were somewhat surprised by the multitude of comments that rejected it based on the

impacts associated with building it. In result, it brought us back to having to look at alternatives that addressed those concerns and issues.

The Secretary is clear that she did not say what the preferred alternative is going to be. What she has said is that there are three alternatives that we have agreed to further evaluate in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

C: Jessica Robertson: There are additional alternatives that should be evaluated. Also, there are fundamental problems with the way you are interpreting some of those comments. The specifics of the at-grade alternatives that you are evaluating here does not reflect many of the comments and priorities of people that have been involved in this project. It is inaccurate to say there are only three possible alternatives and that they are reflected in this presentation that you are giving.

C: Mike O'Dowd: That is a fair statement Jessica, but I think we all need to be cognizant of the fact that we have looked at dozens upon dozens of alternatives over the course of the last five or six years with all of you. With each alternative, we have tried to get feedback from you all. The reason that we arrived at the three that we have right now is based upon all the dialog from the public meetings, the task force, and the public documents. These alternatives have transpired and evolved over the course of several years now. We feel that these three alternatives that we have discussed this evening best address the Purpose and Need and the overarching needs of the projects.

It is not that we are discounting or excluding any alternatives. I think, just the contrary: we have looked at dozens of alternatives, and it was through those, collectively, that we arrived at the three that we have right now. We are making refinements and improvements to those that best address all of the concerns that have been brought to us previously.

Q: Jessica Robertson: If we have further refinements and improvements to the options you are showing tonight, you can incorporate those in the next round of designs?

A: Mike O'Dowd: I think what is important right now is that the reason why we're presenting to you this evening, and we presented to the Board of Directors, is because we want to continue to take feedback. If there are improvements that you feel could be made to the three alternatives, we are taking that public comment. We are taking them seriously.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Folks, Harry has had his hand up for a solid couple of minutes. I am going to go to Harry. I also have another hand up from Henrietta Davis. I would like to do that one and then maybe we can go to the rail slides. Is that acceptable to folks?

C: Ed Ionata: That sounds great. That will leave some time for a final Q and A. So, that means we have Harry, then Henrietta, and then we'll move on to Mark Shammon's presentation.

Q: Harry Mattison: I have three quick questions. The first is the schedule. I believe that today the Secretary said that in 45 days you are selecting the preferred alternative. How is this process, where you are open to feedback and modifying these different alternatives, supposed to work to actually selecting one in less than two months?

A: Mike O'Dowd: The status or the schedule over the course of the next several months is that we will be filing the Scoping Summary Report with Federal Highway at some point at the end of July.

45 days beyond that point, we will continue to have exchanges with Task Force members, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies as we continue to evaluate the three alternatives.

Q: Harry Mattison: How many Task Force meetings will we have between now and when that 45-day period ends?

A: Mike O'Dowd: I can't say for sure, but certainly, we can schedule two, if not three. It will be at that point sometime later in the fall when we would be in a position to select an alternative that we could see moving forward as preferred through the DEIS and with the Notice of Project Change that would be filed with the EPA sometime this fall. We would be accepting public comments on that document at that point.

Q: Harry Mattison: My second question is you have shown a slide to us and to the Board that says that the rest of the project area, outside of the throat area, is well defined.

A: Mike O'Dowd: That is the case, yes. The alternative is consistent with what we have shown over the course of the last 12 to 18 months as far as locations of the street network, street grid, and intersection locations.

C: Harry Mattison: I know you've shown it to us over and over again, but let's be really clear that in the minds of many people on this Task Force, in the minds of the elected officials who sent you all a letter, there is a lot of issues with the rest of this project area, including the width of the streets, the lack of the People's Pike, and the Franklin Street Footbridge.

We learned that you have received a letter from the owner of the property that you want to take disagreeing with that design. Maybe you have been keeping track of the number of times we've asked for a better design. I have lost count. But please do not mischaracterize this as acceptance that this is done and ready to go.

C: Mike O'Dowd: This is not a detailed design.

C: Harry Mattison: It is all you have ever shown us, Mike. If you want to show a different graphical representation of a footbridge that people could actually use, then we would love to see it. But you keep showing us the same old picture month after month for two years and you've never drawn an acceptable footbridge.

So, it's time to actually fix some of these issues that are really, really important to the people in this neighborhood and the people who were impacted by living next to the highway.

A: Mike O'Dowd: Understood, and we will provide you with some of those architectural renderings, so some of them will be repeat performances from what we've shown you before and some will be even some more additional improvements that Etty has been working on, and she'll be in a position to show them to you, but this is intended to show you a graphical representation of where the alignment of it would be, the neighborhoods that it's going to be addressing, the continuity of it, the touchstones points. This is just showing that we are committed to building that pedestrian crossing.

C: Harry Mattison: That footbridge is completely unacceptable, and you've never drawn it in a way that would be safe to use. We've said over and over again that the people who live next to the highway and next to the rail yard deserve a buffer park that Harvard proposed. That lets you fix the footbridge and give some relief to the neighborhood and creates a really great path, connecting important destinations.

We've asked for an honest, accurate analysis of why you think these express tracks actually accomplish anything, and you've given us numbers that just don't make sense. Whether it's well defined or not, it's not acceptable yet. The letter from our mayor last week emphasizes that. We certainly expect for this to come back for further review and some serious improvements.

The third thing is Tetra Tech is the lead consultant on a great project in Chicago called the Wild Mile and it would be great if this part of Tetra Tech who says, "we're not ever going to touch the Charles River" could send us some information from their viewpoint about a project in Chicago that's absolutely touching the Chicago River with a boardwalk with new wetlands with a rebuilt riverbank. I think that would be an important thing for Tetra Tech to help us understand how something is possible in Chicago and we aren't even allowed to talk about something like that here.

Q: Mike O'Dowd: Ed, could you provide us with any background on that? I'm not familiar with it, although it had been brought to my attention a week or so ago.

- A: Ed Ionata:** Understood, I think we'd be happy to present the details at a future Task Force meeting, but bear in mind that that the Wild Mile is essentially a park project on a heavily impacted section of industrial river, but we can bring forth what the basis of that project was and some of the environmental hurdles they were up against.
- C: Harry Mattison:** The question isn't to tell us about the environmental hurdles. The point is to show how they were able to narrow the river in Chicago with a very ecological benefit to make the environment better, and to make human enjoyment of the river better. Then just show us what lessons you can learn from that to be able to do the same thing here.
- C: Ed Ionata:** Whether they apply here or not is open to question and open to state policy, state regulatory agencies, and some of the things that the Secretary spoke about at the Board this afternoon. We're certainly be happy to get into the details on how it applies and how it may not apply.
- C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis:** We're going to move on to Henrietta Davis, as we discussed, and then we'll return to the slides. Henrietta, your microphone is live.
- Q: Henrietta Davis, *Task Force Member*:** I was just looking at that modified viaduct and had some concerns about that bicycle/pedestrian crossing and whether it met any kind of standards for quality. It's very concerning to think there's a 200-foot shot across with no way out. It's not exactly the safest place to walk. And if there are bicyclists in there as well there's going to be separation. It doesn't seem like walking over the trains is going to be really something anybody really wants to do. It theoretically meets the goal of getting to the river, but in terms of a quality experience, I'm not sure you have one there. Is there a ramp on the landing side, and what does the landing do to affect the parkland on the other side? Will you continue to have 16 - 20 feet of parkland?
- A: Chris Calnan, *Tetra Tech*:** I would say no doubt there're some challenges with this crossing that we've shown you tonight such as the aesthetic treatments, the look, and the feel. We have engaged an architect to give us better details of what this thing can look like and how can we treat the sound, the air quality, and the crossing itself.

We also understand that there're challenges for each of these crossings. When you get to the other side, you mentioned the landings, we have that with the other crossings as well as far as limited width. This is the lowest of the crossings, so there's less ramp structure and less stairs versus what you have with the other crossings where you're further up in the air and you have longer transition. By no means is this fully designed. We're trying to come up with creative ideas to make this thing

As some of you pointed out, the station arrangement would be necessary to support the future 15-minute bi-directional all-services operation selected by the MassDOT Board last November after they reviewed the MBTA commuter rail vision initiatives. This layout offers two tracks effectively dedicated to local Worcester Main Line service and two tracks dedicated to a future Grand Junction shuttle service. The track layout and switches are being optimized to gain platform access flexibility for Main Line trains operating in either direction. This flexibility would be important to bypass a stalled train occupying the station or a train held up by an emergency operation at the station.

As with prior concepts, this concept provides for four layover tracks lying to the south of the station area, supporting eight train and lay up consists with electric plug-ins, power infrastructure, and yard service roads. In order to create space for the four track/ three platform West Station arrangement, we've reduced the express tracks from two, down to one. This express track would serve Zone Express trains, Heart to Hub trains, Amtrak Service, and perhaps even future passenger trains operating between western Massachusetts and Boston. This track would be used for the commuter rail express services, eastbound in the morning and reversing direction for outbound zone express services in the afternoon.

These are the notable rail related changes that we've made since we last met with you in the fall. As I mentioned in the introduction, there is not much difference in the West Station in Beacon Park Yard layouts among the three alternatives being considered. The version you're looking at is the Highway Viaduct Alternative, where you see the tracks cross below the highway. As we move to the next slide, you can see that there has been a slight adjustment to the highway and track alignment with the Soldiers Field Road hybrid highway having slid to the north and with the tracks turning a little bit more sharply to the south. This creates the space for the highway and rail infrastructure to be laid near grade level. West Station and other track infrastructure to the west are not impacted.

There was a modest difference related to the potential Malvern to Agganis pedestrian and bicycle connection that we'll get to in a moment, but from a rail point of view the SFR Hybrid and the at-grade options are effectively unchanged within Beacon Park Yard owing to how they both need to enter the throat area on the same alignment.

Coming back to the pedestrian and bicycle connections, a possible design concept has been developed to connect between the Malvern Transit Way and the Throat Area overpass that Jim spoke to you about. The connection allows non-motorized east-west and north-south access through and around Beacon Park Yards and West Station.

Traveling up the transit way from the south, users have the opportunity to continue north to Seattle Street, northeast to West Station, east to Agganis Way and to the throat area overpass or to bypass

doubt a challenge to try to squeeze everything in there. We are trying to achieve the separate paths and make them as wide as they can be, realistically, given the constraints that we have.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Heather Miller, you're on for the next question.

Q: Heather Miller, *Charles River Watershed Association*: Heather Miller, with the Charles River Watershed Association. Going back to the question of looking at reducing the total number of lanes, because that seems like that would be one way to compromise on getting a lot of elements project able to happen without falling into the River. I was wondering how not looking at a reduction in the total number of lanes is consistent with the State's greenhouse gas reduction goals which calls for decreases in single occupancy vehicle trips.

I was also wondering if MassDOT has considered post-pandemic anticipated commuting patterns because survey data has indicated that many people who can work remotely will do so more often once offices start re-opening.

A: Mike O'Dowd: What we have seen, and Highway Administrator Gulliver has mentioning this at some of his briefing updates today to the Board, is that you're correct. Over the last 12 to 14 weeks there was a significant drop, but what we have seen as the economy is starting to pick up again from the multiple phases and orders that the Governor has given us to re-opening, a lot of those volumes are starting to come back. It's still probably somewhere in the range of 20% below where we typically would be this time last year, maybe even a little bit more than that. But over the course of the last few weeks, we have seen, on a daily basis, the numbers are starting to come back. That's no sure indication that they'll come back to where they were previousl, we really don't know the answer to that.

As far as addressing greenhouse gas emissions, we are, and that will be a component of the evaluation within the DEIS and the DEIR: what alternative best addresses that and how we're able to address that at the intersections, the link configurations, and the cross-sections that we're proposing. But doing that by addressing what we know to be the case, or at least prior to COVID-19 volumes associated with it. Everything is pre-COVID-19 and earlier.

One of the things that we've been striving to do is process regional traffic on regional roadways, and that includes the interstate and the parkway traffic. Once we start contemplating reducing lane configurations on certain roadways, we're forced with having to process that volume of vehicles in some other location, and that could be the local roads. Hopefully that addresses your questions.

C: Heather Miller: Not quite, the question was about the state's calls to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. If the state is doing things to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, then we should be able to consider reducing the capacity of the roadways for those regional trips. Many studies have shown that when you reduce vehicle capacity, it doesn't necessarily all spillover anywhere else or that there is an element of induced demand.

C: Mike O'Dowd: Agreed, and that's something that we'll continue to evaluate when we go into the EIS process and looking at all of the environmental components associated with the three alternatives that are being investigated.

C: Heather Miller: But the question was about investigating an alternative that includes fewer lanes.

C: Mike O'Dowd: I understand, but we've been clear all along that MassDOT is not entertaining reductions of the lanes on I-90, since we started out. We have stated that it was going to be four lanes in each direction, and we've been consistently clear on that course of action. It's been the same with Soldiers Field Road that there would be two lanes eastbound and two lanes westbound. There's really been no changes, and we've been consistent with that message all along. That comes not only from the project team, but it also comes from DOT leadership. We'll continue to investigate how we can best address greenhouse gas emissions, but within the parameters that we've just defined and laid out.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Next is Ari.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: My first question is, if you're not talking about reduction of travel lens you're not talking about greenhouse gas reductions. We're going to have the same number of greenhouse gasses. If you're not going to consider reducing lanes, you're telling us we're not going to consider anything that's going to reduce greenhouse gasses. But don't say you're going to consider it if you're not going to consider. Are you saying you're not going to consider anything that would reduce the volume of traffic on the road?

A: Mike O'Dowd: What I'm saying is there are other causes of greenhouse gas emissions that could be attributed to congestion as well, and delays at intersections and delays on the roadways would also produce greenhouse gas emissions.

As I just mentioned to Jessica, it's a component. We will investigate greenhouse gas emissions in the final environmental impact report. It's incumbent upon us to do that.

C: Ari Ofsevit: Let's have a real greenhouse gas reduction alternative, something that we can actually put our finger on and say we looked at this and we decided that it's more important to push cars through than to have a real greenhouse gas reduction alternative. So why are we not having a real greenhouse gas reduction alternative?

A: Ed Ionata: OK, comment noted, Ari.

A: Mike O'Dowd: As I just pointed out, the investigation or the assessment of the greenhouse gasses will be reflective of the alternatives that we've currently laid out.

Q: Ari Ofsevit: Well, let's get an alternative that has 10 lanes and see how much greenhouse gasses go down. I bet they go down a lot. That's what we're supposed to be doing for the environment, for the future, so that our children can live in a better world where we don't have just congestion and cars everywhere. We don't have to do it for all the alternatives, but how about an at-grade with fewer lanes that doesn't go into the river and has fewer greenhouse gas reductions.

A: Mike O'Dowd: We're not intending to do that. As I've mentioned, the three alternatives that have been brought forward to the Board of Directors earlier today and as we present them to you, reflect the alternatives that will be brought forward for an environmental assessment.

C: Ari Ofsevit: Don't tell me that one of them is going to have greenhouse gas reductions because they're not.

When you show the Highway Viaduct you say that is the lowest pedestrian bridge elevation. Why is that pedestrian bridge elevation any lower than the at-grade option?

A: Ed Ionata: The commuter rail has to go up and over I-90 similar to Soldiers Field Road. So, there's a shifting of the rail profile in that area which leads us to believe that it's higher than the at-grade, but it's probably pretty similar

C: Ari Ofsevit: OK. That rail comes down to grade, like a thousand feet east of Agganis, so that shouldn't be an issue.

The final question I have is why are we still talking about an express track? We've said it doesn't save any time or provide any benefit. It just adds to the cost of the project, and it means we can have a better buffer or People's Pike. We keep being told that a train is going to go 150 miles an hour through there.

I'm happy that there are four tracks at West Station. We don't need an express track.

A: Greg Boles, VHB: As Mark mentioned in his presentation, there are other services outside of the local MBTA service that would be serving West Station. By providing this express track, it provides additional flexibility as well as faster speeds. While you may believe that the savings on time aren't substantial, MBTA does.

It provides additional flexibility for trains to move through here and thinking about an operational schedule, if you have two trains coming out of South Station, both heading west, one local and one express, or one being the Heart to Hub. By providing this express track it would allow the local train to go in front and then make its stop at West Station, and at the same time, allow the Heart to Hub train, or an Amtrak train, or a Zone Express to bypass and continue west at a faster speed unimpeded. Flexibility is the largest benefit of the express track, as well as again, allowing for faster speeds.

C: Ari Ofsevit: If you had those two trains stopped at Yawkee Station, by the time the train left Yawkee Station and got to West Station the other train would have to pull in to service Lansdown. But at that time, the train would have been to West Station and have to stop and wait there for the other train to pass. You have two tracks about a mile west and there's not enough time given the current system to merge.

A: Greg Boles: We can have this discussion at another time, but there is a benefit to the express track.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: OK, moving on from that, I had a hand up next from Dennis Giombetti. Dennis, thank you for attending and representing the Senate President's Office.

Q: Dennis Giombetti, Task Force Member: I just wanted to make a quick comment around the lane reduction. If there's anything that has almost exclusive support from the MetroWest region and from all the communities that come into this area from west, is that there's no lane reduction in this project. As we know, traffic is almost unbearable, and having any lane reduction would be a major, major burden to the MetroWest region. So, again, I understand some of the complexities of the project, but lane reduction would be a major stop for the MetroWest region.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Thank you, Dennis.

Fred Salvucci, you're up next.

Q: Fred Salvucci, Community Member: Thank you. One of the issues that generated a lot of the concern with the hybrid was that project leadership said you could not maintain two track service throughout the construction period. In fact, you said you weren't sure you could provide one track

service. With this new highway viaduct I never saw an analysis with the old highway viaduct regarding what kind of maintenance and two track service you were committing to on the Worcester branch. Are you committing to two track service throughout the construction period with this?

A: Jim Keller: No alternative can provide that at this time.

C: Fred Salvucci: You can do that with the all at-grade alternative. Not providing two-track service throughout construction is a migraine headache. You've been taking away lanes for a decade from the MetroWest. If you don't provide two tracks that's a big, big issue.

Secondly, this new highway viaduct is a little bit wider than the highway that's there, correct?

A: Jim Keller: Yes.

Q: Fred Salvucci: Why would you make it more difficult to fit things in in the throat when you know the problem is there's not enough space? The slides made it look like that option is being left open. If you do this highway viaduct – which I think is a bad idea – you're saving a chunk of money in comparison to the hybrid. Use that money to build a new Grand Junction Bridge across the river, with two tracks, across Soldiers Field Road. The only way you'll know that it fits is if you build it at the same time. Leaving the option open never works. I'm an old man. I've been around this thing too many times. The honest thing to do is to build the two tracks with the bicycle connections, from Cambridge to the Boston side, as part of this project.

This business, about how state regulation doesn't permit you to be in the river, that is not true. I was in the government when the Chapter 91 regulations were written. I lost in the negotiation, because DEP would not consider a roadway as a water dependent use. It is not difficult to put a park facility, bicycle paths, or the pedestrian path that provides access to the park purpose. It is permissible. It is simply not true to say there's a permit issue there.

It is understandable that the throat is very difficult to do. Every option has difficulties, and I think by far the all at-grade is the best one that's on the table at the moment. I don't care about the flexibility that you get with that extra track. That extra track is precluding a buffer park. The final environmental impact statement for South Station admitted that under federal regulation, the community near Pratt Street deserves noise and vibration protection because you're increasing the number of trains right at their backyard fence.⁴ The 25 foot or so buffer park with the People's Pike in it serves two purposes: one is environmental mitigation that was promised in a different

⁴ Installation of the noise barrier along Pratt and Ashford Streets has been a given part of the project since 2014.

document, but the project consistently dances away from it. There is no excuse to not settle all of the issues; they're very subtle yet the same. The ridiculous bicycle paths with all the backs and forths that requires acquiring a piece of land from the landowner who's written you saying that they don't want that done, stop doing that stuff. You can fix this. To the west of Agganis there's simply no excuse to have this number of outstanding issues. It's not honest to hope that no one remembers the MassDOT promise of mitigation to that community. That buffer has to happen, and if it doesn't I think a lot of being are going to be furious.

Are you proposing to replace Cambridge Street Bridge, which you told us seven years ago was ready to fall down? It's structurally and functionally deficient because its vertical curve is too sharp and it's dangerous for pedestrians and bikes. Are you proposing to fix that bridge as part of this project?

A: Mike O'Dowd: The answer is yes to that. The existing Cambridge Street Bridge that's there now over I-90 and over the rail line. That's going to be a superstructure replacement or at minimum, a deck replacement with some steel repairs and substructure repairs

C: Fred Salvucci: Get the vertical curve right because it's a safety hazard as it is.

C: Mike O'Dowd: Understood.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: We'll go next to Galen.

Q: Galen Mook, *Task Force Member*: Thanks. I appreciate the fact that you guys are at least having a meeting, so we're grateful for that. I do think the public process is broken here, so I just want to get that on record, the fact that I don't know if FHWA is participating in this process, I don't know FTA is participating in this process. I can only assume that they're directed not to be here, even though they are crucial stakeholders in this, even though we've had to ask our Congressional Representatives to have the federal involvement be a public process just the same. I understand there are limitations to Zoom and you're doing your best, so I'm going give you a pass. But I think that we need transparency here.

And the fact that we haven't met since the Scoping Report and haven't gotten responses to the thousand plus comments that you've received is a sign that you guys might have bitten off a little more than you can chew. And the fact that you've kept us in the dark for the past seven months and came out with something which we were totally blindsided by does comes across as a sign of bad faith. It's a poison pill for this process to the point where what's even the point of this Task Force and why are we even still debating the things that we've been talking about for six years which we knew were supposed to have been fixed.

Some of my questions are for the increases in shoulder width. Was that an FHWA direction for I-90? And similarly, with Soldiers Field Road, was widening that road a directive of DCR? Because I distinctly remember Carl mentioning that you can put Soldiers Field Road back just the way it was. I'm curious as to why that has changed.

My second question would be for Mike. You mentioned the multitude of comments that were in favor of this plan. I'm curious as to how many of the 800 or so comments are actually favorable of an I-90 viaduct versus one of the other alternatives? If we're going to have a public process, which includes years' worth of comments, and you don't take them into consideration, then the public process is broken. Do you have a rough estimate of, how many comments might have actually been in favor of I-90 going back on the viaduct?

Why is the Grand Junction Bridge, which is no longer going to be part of this project, going to be closed down? Why is this not the opportunity to then build it right all at once as opposed to potentially having to shut down the Grand Junction? We all know we need to tracks across the river.

My third question is, if we can really build it right, why are we intentionally making it harder for ourselves to do good work now and make it more expensive and more challenging in the future? And, lastly, where's the talk about the modeling when it comes to the transit? Are we actually modeling 15-minute headways? What do those numbers look like the last time we really saw numbers? If you are actually analyzing with modeling that is accurate about what the headways, that would be directed by MassDOT's Board about urban rail, how that connects with the commuter rail. Do you have that modeling in place? Is that taking into account when you're talking about how much ridership we can get? And I really do want to push back on the fact that this project and the Purpose and Need does not state the essential goals of having fewer cars and less greenhouse gas emissions.

It's astounding that we are still talking about increasing throughput in congestion conversations when really we need to be thinking about getting people out of cars. And the best way to do that is with transit.

I don't really understand where FHWA or FTA is in this conversation, but at least in the parkland conversation, why are we not talking about bringing that back to being a park? The whole purpose of this project is not about making a better turnpike, although that is where you are approaching it from. It is about knitting the neighborhood back together and making it so that we can actually function as a community here.

C: Ed Ionata: Thank you for your questions, Galen. I think we're beyond the time we were supposed to finish, but Mike can you provide a response to the set of questions from Galen? I think we'll be responding to a lot of similar questions in the response to comments on the Scoping Document.

A: Jim Keller: A comment on the SFR travel ways, Galen. I appreciate the question. As far as the 11 foot, one-foot shoulder discussion, we want to keep some width there for storm water collection. A 10-foot lane with a two foot shoulder, that's also an option, but we want to have some width in addition to a 10-foot lane.

Q: Galen Mook; Is that a MassDOT directive or is that a DCR directive?

A: Jim Keller: It's not a directive, it's what you would have as a minimum for stormwater collection. I understand that DCR, in their parkway standards, has a 10-foot lane as allowable. That could be the case here, it could be a 10-foot lane with a two-foot offset. It's the 12-foot width that the minimum is trying to be attained for each travel lane with the shoulder included. There needs to be room for stormwater collection and some additional width so that it's not just 10 feet from edge to edge of the road.

Q: Ed Ionata: Mike, I think several of Galen's comments and questions revolve around participation by Federal Transit, by Federal Rail, by DCR. Do you want to say anything about the ongoing cooperating agency efforts or leave it at that?

A: Mike O'Dowd: I can't say for sure whether or not Federal Highway or FTA were participants or contributors to tonight's Task Force meeting. Certainly, they did know about it, and obviously they were invited to it. We still stay in touch with them on a regular basis. Obviously Federal Highway is a lead federal agency, and the Federal Transit Agency is also part of our cooperating agencies group meetings. We do meet with them regularly and will continue to meet with them regularly. We will continue to invite them to any public meetings, virtual or physical and any other outreach efforts we conduct.

As far as some of the other ideas regarding transit modeling in 15 minutes, back in December there was significant amount of dialog between all the members of the Task Force as well as the team members and TPS relative to the fact that MassDOT wasn't modeling the aspirational service. We went back and forth over this and there's been no change. Coming from the executive leadership at DOT, we are not modeling the aspirational service plan. In discussions with the MBTA, they don't see themselves within a reasonable timeframe of being able to introduce that service. It's not saying that they won't, it's just saying that they can't put a reasonable timeframe upon which they would be able to do that.

What we've tasked our engineers with is to construct a station in a platform configuration that would not only address what we see is the current service plan and the station stops both in the AM and the PM, but whether or not it would be able to handle something even more enhanced than that. So, that's the extent of the modeling. The modeling is not going to look at 15-minute headways, as you just asked a moment ago.

Q: Galen Mook: So, you're not modeling the decision that your control board decided on with a rail vision?

A: Mike O'Dowd: What I said is that the MBTA does not have any immediate plans to introduce a service that could entertain 15-minute headways. So, therefore, we're not going to model something that doesn't have a reasonable timeframe associated with being able to implement it. We're modeling traffic to a 20-year design horizon.

Q: Galen Mook: So, you don't think in 20 years that we're going to have an MBTA that can manage 15-minute headways.

A: Mike O'Dowd: I can't speak to that. This particular line, what I've been told, is that we're not modeling the 15 minute headways for the service and I believe what I've been told from the MBTA is that the rail vision plan was to focus on other service locations on other lines. So, I don't even know, to be honest with you, whether it was the Worcester/Framingham Mainline that was one of the considerations for the rail vision in the endorsement of the FMCB be to investigate the 15-minute headways or if it was intended to be identified for other the corridors and the network.

Q: Galen Mook: From a resident's perspective, this is Allston getting traffic and an express track so that people can pass through our neighborhood, making it more dangerous and more polluted, without actually providing a service, and we're footing the bill as taxpayers for everything here. And it is not connecting the neighborhood to an urban rail vision, which was a decision made by your board. Just model it and let us see if it works. If you are not going to study the alternatives, this is not acceptable because we don't believe what you're bringing us.

C: Ed Ionata: Galen I think your points are understood. I believe this whole thing is going to shut off in about 4.5 minutes. Is there another question here we can answer?

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: Yes, go ahead Tad.

Q: Tad Read: Earlier in the presentation you mentioned that ABC had develop some ideas for a hybrid option that would involve the shorter construction and encroached considerably less into the River.

You also indicated that you would open to considering those ideas. What would the process be for these ideas, and what opportunity would the Task Force have to engage in the process ABC's idea about an at-grade option that places Paul Dudley White Path into the river?

Q: Jim Keller: We obviously want to be open to any kind of option to construct his throat area for the hybrid and for the at-grade. We've seen those plans that A Better City put together and we definitely want to give them as much review as we can. We've been looking at them over some time now. Outside of the narrowest section of the throat, we're definitely coming to some constraints as you come into the approach section of the highway from the east as well as the west. Working out some of those details, we are finding it very difficult with that approach. The approach that the MassDOT team has put together has a level of comfort, how it all ties into east and west. We haven't been able to come to that point with that approach to the staging. It's going to require a little more looking at as far as how that gets facilitated.

Q: Tad Read, *Task Force Member*: Do you think you could let us know what the taskforce process would be around that?

A: Ed Ionata: There will be another task force meeting in July around the same time as the Scoping Summary Report comes out. I think that will help to clarify a lot of issues. It will have a response to all the comments that we received which touch a lot of the issues, if not all of the issues that we, we've heard tonight. There'll be some written comments, some written responses, and people can see, in more detail, what the total range of comments were.

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I think we might be wrapped up. If anybody can hear me, good night and thank you for your participation.

Next Steps

The task force will next meet over the course of the summer of 2020 when the Scoping Summary Report is made available to the public. The release of the Scoping Summary Report will also include notification regarding the report to the general public as well.

