

Basilere Bridge Replacement



What is the Basilere Bridge Replacement Project?

The Private First Class (PFC) Ralph T. Basilere Bridge crosses the Merrimack River in the center of Haverhill. Built in 1925, the bridge has nearly reached its 100th birthday. Since 1972, it has carried the name of PFC Basilere, Haverhill's first Vietnam War casualty. Though safe, the bridge has reached the end of its useful lifespan. All its parts show the wear of nearly a century of service and the structure must be replaced. In 2022, MassDOT launched the effort to design a new bridge – the fourth across the Merrimack at this location.

A New Bridge

As of the summer of 2024, MassDOT is actively developing the Request for Proposals (RFP) which will be made available to design/builders by the end of the year. The bridge replacement meets agency goals in that it:

- **Can be built in phases, keeping traffic flowing during construction**
- Serves current and future traffic needs
- Improves cycling and walking conditions on the bridge
- Improves the Merrimack River's water quality
- Allows continued boating during and after construction
- Minimizes impacts on nearby properties
- Will support utilities during construction
- Provides opportunities for accelerated construction methods to reduce construction impacts
- Provides a look which reflects the existing bridge while embracing Haverhill's future



The new Basilere Bridge's arches recall today's bridge

Reconstructing a Local Landmark

The Basilere Bridge is a symbol of Haverhill. Some version of its picture is on the City's website and the local Fire Department's uniforms. The Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce and Latino Coalition also use a picture of the bridge in their logos. The new bridge is the result of a partnership between MassDOT and the Haverhill community to produce a structure that reflects its host community and can be a source of pride for it as today's bridge is. Major elements of the replacement bridge are direct results of this partnership include:

- An arched appearance that references the existing bridge

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- Under-bridge lighting that highlights the bridge's arches at night
- Vertical beacons that echo the existing bridges towers and can be lit at night
- A central seating area that invites pedestrians to rest and enjoy views of the river
- A formally defined, four-lane cross-section with separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Reuse of the existing bridge's tower roofs in the Bradford Rail Trail Park.

From Design to Construction

The new bridge will be built using design/build methods. With this project delivery method, MassDOT develops a base concept. Contractors then team with engineering firms, forming design/build teams. These teams submit their qualifications to bid for the project to MassDOT. The Best Value design/builder is awarded the project, both completing the design and building the structure. Best Value is determined by balancing a team's technical approach and cost. Design/build offers the benefit of innovation in design and construction. With the contractor joining the project earlier in the overall process, construction begins sooner, leading to faster project delivery.



MassDOT currently anticipates that construction will begin in late 2025 and last approximately six and a half years. Traffic impacts, such as lane reductions on the bridge or changes to the adjoining intersections are expected to last six years. At least one lane in each direction and one sidewalk will remain available throughout construction.

Public Outreach Continues into Construction

The replacement PFC Ralph T. Basilieri Bridge is the result of a transparent, iterative public involvement process. Prior to the May 29th, 2024, Design Public Hearing, MassDOT held two public information meetings, two public workshops, and met directly with key local stakeholder groups.

Public outreach will remain an important part of the project as it transitions towards construction. Members of the Haverhill community can anticipate an introductory public information meeting which will explain how the design/builder will stage the project, steps they will take to keep traffic moving during construction, how they will meet environmental commitments, and more. Regular updates will be issued during construction so that residents can monitor project progress and know what to expect from construction activities.

How can I find out more?

Please visit the project website below for more details, to sign up for updates and email alerts, and to view the latest resources on the Basilieri Bridge Replacement Project

Project website www.mass.gov/basilieri-bridge-project-haverhill
Project email haverhillbasilieri@dot.state.ma.us

