MEMO

TO: Eamon Kernan, MassDOT Project Manager

FROM: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, WSP Senior Consultant

RE: PFC Ralph. T Basiliere Bridge Replacement Project Targeted Meeting – Latino Coalition of Haverhill

DATE: August 28, 2023

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OVERVIEW

On Wednesday, August 23rd, 2023, members of MassDOT and consultant staff associated with the PFC Ralph T. Basiliere Bridge Replacement, attended a targeted briefing organized by the Latino Coalition of Haverhill for members of their board leadership. Attendees included members of the Coalition itself, local community leader Kalister Green-Byrd, and representatives from MakeIT Haverhill, a community action-oriented non-profit, including the co-founder, Keith Boucher and the Program Director, Lisbeth Valdez. The meeting was held at MakeIT Haverhill, located at 301 Washington Street in Haverhill.

Built in 1925, the Basiliere Bridge is routinely inspected by MassDOT and remains safe for all users but is approaching the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce members of the Latino Coalition of Haverhill of the need to replace the structure. The meeting aimed to provide a status update on the concept design process, facilitate discussion of ideas, observations, and concerns for the Coalition, and foster connections between the project team and the organization. The presentation noted the importance of the Basiliere Bridge to the City[1] and showcased some of the concepts developed to date to replace the bridge both in terms of cross-section and general appearance.

Attendees were engaged and vocal during the meeting, asking numerous questions and sharing valuable feedback. The audience acknowledged the necessity of replacing the Basiliere Bridge and raised concerns about traffic congestion during bridge construction and its potential interference with public events, such as the League of Women Voters parade, which traditionally crosses the bridge. Attendees expressed a keen interest in various aspects of the project, seeking further information about the design-build process, the different cross-sections, scour, bridge lighting, and the significance of the pre-25% conceptualization phase. Questions covered various project details, including funding sources (20% state, 80% federal) and the efforts that have been undertaken to coordinate with neighboring construction. Participants inquired about passage for boaters under the bridge after construction. The

[1] The Basiliere Bridge appears on the City of Haverhill's website, the badges of municipal firefighters, and on the websites of several, local community organizations.

project team explained that the reduction in spans from seven to five would increase clearance for boaters, ensuring the audience that access would be maintained. Attendees offered to disseminate project information within their networks, and the project team shared that regular updates will be distributed through the email addresses provided by Coalition members. Following the meeting, a copy of the presentation given, translated into Spanish was provided to Argenis Marte, the Coalition's president to share with his membership.

PRESENTAION[2]

C: Eamon Kernan (EK): My name is Eamon Kernan. I am the Project Manager with MassDOT. We are going to rebuild the Basiliere Bridge, the bridge on Route 125 over the Merrimack River. This presentation is very similar to five other presentations that we have done previously. If you have any questions, please ask them as we go through because we do not have too many people. If you do not understand something, please ask.

We have an agenda. We are going to talk about this MassDOT project, the status of where we are right now, and how we are going to keep the bridge open during construction. We are not going to close the bridge to rebuild it. We have to build it in pieces and that will be the construction approach. Once we're through the agenda, we'll have plenty of time for Q&A.

How did we get here? The bridge was originally built in 1925. In 1966, Private 1st Class Ralph T. Basiliere became Haverhill's first Vietnam War casualty. The bridge was named in his honor in 1972. In 2018, five years ago, MassDOT began a study to replace the bridge's deck and arches while hoping to reuse the foundations. However, upon further study, they decided that the whole bridge needed to be replaced. In 2022, MassDOT initiated the concept design phase for the bridge replacement. This year we have been coming and talking to groups like yourselves about the bridge to gather feedback and ideas. People have been letting us know things that we did not previously know. It has been very helpful.

Where is the bridge relative to everywhere else? We know that it is Route 125, that Bradford is in the South and Haverhill is in the North. The yacht club is in the east and the yellow section is the bridge. The bridge is about 800 feet long. The limits of work are not just the bridge because we have to blend into the adjoining roads. We will have to change lanes, redo traffic, and redo the intersections on both sides to help the traffic move through. You can see, the limits of work are larger than the bridge itself. They are from just to the north of the Main Street/Water Street/Merrimack Street intersection to just past the South Main Street/Middlesex Street intersection in the south. Thinking of the local landmarks, it's roughly from Market Basket on the Haverhill side to Dunkin Donuts in Bradford.

Here are some definitions for when we talk about a bridge. People will talk about the arch; everyone knows the famous Roman Arch. That is the arch. The pier is this piece. It is the foundation. It goes right down to the bedrock below and supports the arch above it. The arch supports the deck. The deck is the roadway that everybody drives on. The deck is made up of the roadway itself but also the beams underneath it are considered a part of the deck. One of the major issues that you do not see is scour. We have a slide that will describe what scour is.

Why did we begin this project? This is the third bridge going over the Merrimack River. This one was put in in 1925. It is actually two bridges because where the new bicycle path was built was an old rail line and out second bridge is a short structure which went over that and it is technically a separate bridge from the bridge that goes over the Merrimack River. All together the two structures are roughly 800 feet long and 68 feet wide. The big thing is that it carries 20,000 vehicles a day. That is the most important thing for everyone in Haverhill. 20,000 vehicles a day, how are we going to get them over the bridge during construction?

[2] "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer.

Here are some pictures of what it looks like underneath. If you own a boat, this is what you will see, and this is why we have to replace it. When we mention scour, if you remember from when you were a kid and you would be on the beach and the water would go by your feet, it would create a hole around your feet. That happens when the river goes by the foundations. It scours at the foundations, and it weakens them. That heavy scour is really what drives the need for the total replacement. The new bridge will address that so that the scour is reduced or eliminated and we won't find ourselves back in the same situation.

Q: Argenis Marte (AM): Can you see the scour from the top?

A: EK: It is at the base.

A: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): It is under the water.

A: Richard Lenox (RL): MassDOT will occasionally do underwater inspections and they will monitor the change in the riverbed next to the foundation. That is being monitored. We have also done analyses of the river to see what the long term would look like, if you had a serious event, what could happen. That long term analysis of a potential serious event is what was concerning and led to the conclusion that we need to replace the entire bridge.

A: EK: They will put in material at the riverbed that may be rock or something else, some new device, so when the water goes by, it will not lift the dirt up around it.

C: EK: Project Status: currently we are in the concept design. You can see the different alternatives. We have come to the city and presented that we are going to replace this bridge, but we are not just going to do it in the vacuum. We are not going to come and build a highway bridge like the I-495 bridges over the river. This one is in the middle of the city. We came to the city and said, "What would you like to see?" We brought an architect on board. You do not want the bridge to be designed by engineers because it will be very square. We wanted an architect so that the bridge would look good for the City of Haverhill. We took input from the people of Haverhill as to what they would like to see. We presented alternatives. We had some meetings where people came and said, "I really like that, but I do not like this, I like this piece of that one, and I like this piece of that one, but I do not like this piece." The engineers have been working to figure out what we can do given the site and the things we need the bridge to do. Once the architect has a general idea, then the engineer steps in to make it work. I've known some architects that if left to their own wishes for a perfect bridge, there would be no foundations and there would be no columns. It would stay up by magic and be very pretty.

C: RL: We are still working on that. So, if you see something here today that you do like or do not, please let us know.

C: EK: The cross-section is very important. The cross-section is what we see in the last picture over there, where you see sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and four vehicle lanes, two in each direction. That is the cross-section. We are looking at if we could go with three lanes instead of four. Every time we say three lanes everyone has a heart attack because there are 20,000 vehicles, but if you think about the center section of the bridge, there are three lanes and when it gets to the intersection is where you really see four lanes. If you know what is out there right now, we very seldom have two cars going side by side, they tend to be staggered. When they get to the traffic lights, they sort themselves into four lanes, but they are not going across the center of the bridge as though there were two, well-defined lanes in both directions. That is important in regards to the width of the bridge because we are limited on the width. If we go with a four-lane cross-section it takes up more space than three lanes. Where would we put the bicycle lanes, how wide would the sidewalks be, and how wide would everything be? We would like the sidewalks and the bicycle lanes to be as wide as possible. There is talk about whether we need a bus lane on the bridge. There is a lot of conversation about the cross-section. WSP, our design firm, has a traffic expert who runs the numbers to see what effects the different cross-sections would have on the vehicles and on the pedestrians so that everything will operate well when we build it. Our goal is that the traffic situation will be equal or better when we are finished. During construction it is a

different story, but we will do what we can with signal timing, phasing, and possible turn restrictions to keep everyone moving.

Some different milestones: WSP gave us their pre-25% design. We are going to have an Over-the-Shoulder meeting which is where the design firm will meet with the various different MassDOT disciplines to discuss how we are going to do this and that. This is so that the design firm does not move forward with a design and spend a lot of time and dollars on it to get to a point where MassDOT sees it, does not like it and they have to start from scratch. We do what is called the pre-25%, which is where we all sit down in a room, and the design firm says, "This is what we heard, and this is what we think we are going to do." If a MassDOT person says that they do not really like it, then discussion will occur, and hopefully, after the pre-25% the everyone is comfortable with the design we will do. Following the pre-25% design, we have what is called a design public hearing, which would is a more official version of some of the meetings we have done thus far. We come to the city to present and say, "Hey, we have been listening to you. We hope we have it right, but this is the bridge you are going to get." The hope would be, at that time, that we would not hear objections, that the people would be happy with the design, and then we are off and running.

Q: Kalister Green-Byrd (KGB): You said that you are doing the pre-25% design. Is that in the beginning?

A: EK: Larger projects like this typically have a pre-25% design. After that there is 25% design, a 75% design, a 100% design and then you have the package that gets advertised. The numbers are a little misleading because 25% design is very close to 80% design in the major elements, but without a lot of detail on smaller items. All of the ideas are kind of on paper, but it might say, there is going to be a chair right here, but there would not be any details about that type of chair. We would just know that a chair would be there and then when it goes to the 75% design, there may be details about that. The 25% design is a huge effort by the designer to get all of the ideas on paper. That is the very reason we have a pre-25% design because we do not want a designer moving forward and putting effort in only for MassDOT to say, "No, we do not like that," and then the designer has to start again, and they were pretty much at 80%. All their ideas were there. The pre-25% is almost like this meeting but with MassDOT to say, "This is what we are going to do and how we are going to do it." We also throw in our numbers. Our traffic expert believes we will need that because they will get questions from MassDOT, such as, "Well, is that going to accommodate 20,000 vehicles a day?" They need to know those answers, so that is what the pre-25% design is so that we do not move forward with a design which is in some way unworkable.

C: EK: Here are the few cross-sections that we have. This is one of the three-lane ideas. We said earlier that the bridge is 68 feet. We are thinking that the new bridge will be 75 feet wide; that's a result of building the new structure in halves to keep traffic moving while construction takes place. We are limited because on both ends, the bridge narrows down to squeeze past the properties located there.

This is one of our concepts, also over on the easels, which has bicycle lanes in both directions. We do not have a cross-section that shows bidirectional bicycle lanes because while that was one concept that the Solomon Foundation had discussed with the City some time ago – and I personally liked it – it got blown away during the public process very quickly.

Q: KGB: Can you go back again; I just want to see; that is the four?

A: EK: That is the four. There is a strong possibility it's the direction we will go, largely in part because of the strong direction we have received from all of you here in Haverhill. There was a lot of concern in regard to emergency vehicle access with three lanes under congested conditions since most of your emergency response begins on the north side of the river. The three-lane cross-section remains under review by MassDOT. When we have our over-the briefing and our own, internal complete streets advocates will talk about walking, cycling and other modes of transport. They may say, "Why didn't we go with the three lanes?" We have good reasons, but that is part of the whole presentation. We also received clear recommendations for directional symmetry for cycling, and walking. People told us through public input, "if I am on a bicycle, I do not want to have to cross over and then cross back. I want to keep on going."

The project team is still seeking public input. We will listen to everybody right up to the point where we will have to stop listening to make sure we get you all a new bridge in a reasonable amount of time.

One of the ideas was that we want the bridge to evoke the bridge that is already there. We want it to be a modern bridge, but we want to do some honor to the structure you already have. Sometimes you do not pay attention as you go across the bridge, and you do not necessarily see it from both ends, but it is quite attractive. That is one of the reasons we brought a bridge architect onto this project team, to help us achieve that. The space between the piers is called a span. The bridge right now has seven spans. The new bridge might have five. If you're down on the riverbank today, both ends of the bridge really block the view of the water. Another thing we have discussed with the public is the idea of opening that up so that when you're down there, you're able to enjoy those views of the water and really engage with the river.

This is another one of our ideas: this is called an overlook and it's a nice spot to stop, rest, and enjoy the views of the river. This is another concept of an overlook which is longer and placed centrally between the piers. There were conversations about how when you go over the bridge, it can be very windy, and if we could put in shields, that would stop the wind. This is one concept of how the shield might look. We do not know what it is going to finally look like, but those are some of the ideas. MassDOT has some hesitancy about the wind shields. One of the thoughts is that we could make them with a frosted glass, but when the "artists" want to put their name or favorite picture on it, it could become something of a maintenance nightmare. One thought was that MassDOT could hand it over to the City of Haverhill to deal with those tasks, but in our discussions, the city is also a little hesitant, so this is still being discussed. We are not sure what is going to happen with that idea yet. Going one step further from the idea of a shield somebody asked if we were to have that, could we have an overhang so if you are out there you could be covered from the rain. Again, another maintenance challenge, but it is an idea we got so we put concepts on paper so people could look at it. Sometimes it is very difficult for people to know what they do or do not like until they see it. They have ideas. Somebody may say, "I think I want to have some pink." You go, and you paint the house pink, and they say, "That is not the color pink I wanted." So, paint a little square first and then decide whether you like it or not.

We also want to try and connect the Dempsey Boardwalk to the Wall Street Path at some point; we don't believe this project could do that, but we don't want to do anything that would prevent it from being completed someday. We want to connect to the bicycle trail on the opposite side. If you look at the map, there is kind of a loop that you can make with the Basiliere Bridge, the Comeau Bridge, the rail trail and the boardwalk. We want to strengthen that loop and its connections, particularly where the Basiliere connects to the Bradford Rail Trail.

Keeping Haverhill open for business: I am not going to go through all of this. We will not just design a structure. We have to look at traffic, and at emergency vehicles. When we talked to the Chamber of Commerce, they said, "Who is going to come to my restaurant if this bridge is not open properly?" The proposed construction approach is what they call design-build. Most projects are all design-bid-build which means the designer will design the bridge over two to three years. It will then go out for advertising. It will be bid on by the contractors and one wins. When they start construction and it will take three years to build the bridge. Let's say that is 6 years. How design-build works is that the designer brings the design to 25%. Like we said earlier, 25% is really sort of 80%, just without all the details nailed down. They bring the design to 25% and then it is advertised to what they design-build entities. The winning entity will continue to design the bridge, but they will start construction while finishing the details. Instead of waiting three years to start, you might wait two years, and then the contractor will come in and he will start building things while designing the next phase. So, it may change from six years down to five. Also, you have cooperation between the designer and the contractor because they are working together on what works well for this particular bridge.

Q: AM: Is design-build always preferred?

Q: EK: This is an expensive project. The bridge is going to cost about 150 million dollars to build. This project is in a congested area. I am not sure what flips the switch for them to want to go design-build, but it is to try and speed production up.

A: RL: In cases that they may want to use it, it is because, again, as Eamon was talking about, the designer is able to work directly with the contractor to create innovation, which they can come up with in that partnership, much more so than if the designer was working by themselves. Design-build offers that opportunity. As Eamon was talking about, in that whole process, you get multiple teams doing the same thing, coming up with ideas, so when the final team wins, they can also look at the ideas that the other teams had, which can lead to some efficiency. Ultimately, it just gets construction going quicker, which is kind of the biggest objective for MassDOT on this project

C: EK: It is probably a question that gets asked all the time because if it was better all the time, then every project would be like that. The next question would be, "Why do you not do every project like that?" When you go to the very complex and expensive projects, it works better. We know that it reduces time from concept to finishing construction. If a designer is designing in a certain way, the contractor is going to have to build it in a certain way as opposed to when it is design-build, the contractor works with the designers and can say, "I have this special tool that really helps to build the beams for a bridge, so please design around my special tool." Suddenly, the beams are based around the contractor, and now they are built much quicker and, perhaps, cheaper. There is also a transfer of risk from MassDOT to the design-build entity, though that is of course not the most important element. The answer is that I am not 100% sure because nobody has ever said design-build is better in all cases because if it were, all of our projects would be design-build. I am not 100% sure how that is determined. I know that they tend to build very big and very expensive projects.

C: NCC: The only thing that I would add, just because we have had this conversation a lot with a very small bridge that I am dealing with in Boston, in Hyde Park if you know the City; because of where the bridge is and because it has to go over Amtrak and there are electrified wires, there is really no room for innovation. There is one type of bridge that can be put there and one way that they can put it there, so no matter who touches it, the results will really be the same. Whereas with this, I think you have a lot of flexibility, so all of that innovation and chance to say, "I have a special tool that can pick up a beam this way," and then everyone can get in on that and design things appropriately to go faster. Design-build lends itself to situations where there is flexibility, as you have here, whereas in Hyde Park, no matter who does it, it will be the same. In that case, why go through the extra hoops?

C: EK: There are also incentives for going design-build. There will be incentives for a contractor to finish early. It could be thousands of dollars a day if they finish earlier. There is also the other side, if they are late, they could pay thousands of dollars a day.

I hope I covered enough. If you want any details filled in, let's have your questions.

DISCUSSION

Q: AM: You mentioned you have an expert in traffic control. Do you know where or how far away the traffic might be if it backs up? Like to G.A.R. Park?

A: EK: WSP has its traffic expert. We count all the traffic coming in, and then they can put it into a simulation. They feed all of this information into a computer simulation, and they can say, "What happens if you have three lanes? When the traffic light goes red, how far will the traffic back up? Let's make it red for 30 seconds, what happens? Let's make it red for 40 seconds. Okay, 35 seconds is the perfect amount of time. If you do that one at 35 seconds, what are we going to do for this one?" They can feed it all that information into the computer and press play, and all the traffic they have counted runs through the model they have created. Based on the signal timing and phasing in the model, they can make tweaks to optimize the flow. The goal would be an optimum traffic situation.

Q: AM: Will there be any detours?

A: RL: I think that naturally, having a project like this you might get a certain percentage of people that just want to stay away from the construction and may find an alternative way to go. There might be a fraction of the volume that goes elsewhere. It is a very tricky enterprise because we are reducing the capacity by half.

A: EK: It was not on these slides, but when we are building this bridge, we are going to put one lane of traffic each way and take down half the bridge, rebuild half the bridge, move two lanes of traffic onto that, then tear down that piece, build two new lanes, and then we will have four lanes. This is rather than shutting the bridge off for three years and saying, “take the detour.” Like Rich said, people will naturally take a route that they think is quicker. Everybody has the idea to not go to the bridge at 5:00 p.m. When we are under construction, people might say, "Let's go to dinner; well, I am not going over the bridge; we are not going to make our reservation." We cannot plan for that. We know it will happen, but it’s hard to understand it exactly.

A: RL: There are things that we will do at the intersections in particular. Maybe we have to restrict a left turn at a certain intersection because otherwise everyone will back up behind the person that is waiting to turn left. We also might adjust the timing in the signal. Once it’s put in place, the engineers will review it and say, “It is not quite working as well as it could. We will tinker with it.” They will continue evaluating it once it is put in place to make it work as well as it can. There is going to be some headache because we have to leave enough room for the design-builder to construct the bridge.

A: EK: MassDOT will be asking all of those questions to WSP at the over-the shoulder meeting.

Q: AM: What about the construction projects in the area?

A: EK: Yes, there are some big projects going on and will be going on at the same time of some of them. As best as we can, they will be built into the model.

A: RL: We are aware that they are redoing that whole area [pointing to a map of downtown Haverhill, specifically the corner of Main Street and Merrimack Street]. Luckily the demolition and the first phase of the Renaissance Project, which involves the demolition of the Pentucket Bank and the parking deck along the reconstruction of Merrimack Street, will be done prior to the real start of the work on the bridge. Timing-wise, I hope it works out better than if they were going on at the same time.

Q: KGB: I have sat on the housing board and worked 30-45 years with the Commonwealth. I understand a lot of what you are saying, but just as a resident, when this comment first came up about the bridge, I and the organization I belong to said “we must have our event before they start construction on this bridge!” How are we going to have a parade across the bridge for the League of Women Voters? We had one couple of years ago, but people say, "When are they going to start that again?" The word has just gotten out. People say, "When is it going to be?" We had it three years ago. People talk about the traffic and the backup, and I was thinking the same thing too.

A: RL: I think the good thing the city talked about is that with the funding they got, they have to be done by a certain point, which, fortunately kind of aligns so that they’re ending just before we begin.

C: KGB: I am sure MassDOT is working with the city officials and knows some of the plans and things and that there is some coordination and understanding. I know that the bridge has to be done.

C: EK: It is like when you have a child, you just have to have some more patience that is all and then when you have a second child you need more patience again. If we have a few projects going on at a time, we will just ask for a little more patience.

C: AM: In the end, it is going to look amazing.

C: EK: What is sad about things like this is that the city will be disturbed greatly during construction. When the bridge is complete and you have a nice new bridge, if you are driving across it, really you will not notice anything different, other than if you walk across, you will not be in fear of potholes. If you walk across, it will be more pleasant. If we add some of these details, it will be a nice bridge to look at. Hopefully if we put in the overlooks, it will be a destination so people can walk out there to sit and enjoy their lunch. One of the goals for when we are done because of our traffic analysis, which we’re doing for today and the future, is to have timing and phasing for the traffic signals so the intersections can work better and getting across will be less frustrating than it is today.

Q: KGB: Will there be lighting on the bridge?

A: RL: Yes, there will be all new lighting.

A: EK: We are going to put lighting on top and underneath. So, for Saint Patrick's Day, put in nice green colors. When it is the Peruvian Day, we can put in red and white. I am not sure of all of the colors for the national days. The city will have that option if they want to light the bridge up as a feature for special days.

C: KGB: I was just thinking of the pictures of veterans they have on bridges and the lighting as you go across now.

A: EK: That is one of the elements the architects will be working on. The views you have over here do not show lights yet but ultimately crossing to be safe, and the bridge will be lit appropriately. There will be plans for underlighting too so that the bridge looks good at night.

Q: AM: It will not affect me, but I am curious. What about the boats passing underneath? Will there be space? Like, we have the Yacht Club.

A: EK: Currently boats can go under. Right now, with the deterioration they worry about pieces dropping off. That concern will go away, and the boats will continue to be able to go under. There are seven spans right now, and we will have less, but the space and height for boar traffic will be there. The boats that are going under today will continue to be able to when we're done.

A: RL: During construction, we will need to make safety provisions with buoys and lighting to make sure there is safe passage.

A: EK: There are environmental restrictions as well such as for the Atlantic Sturgeon which is a million-year-old fish and has a spawning ground is just upstream of the bridge. That = means our bridge and construction site is on their route so there are heavy restrictions for when we can actually build in the water. We are almost restricted to three months for when we can build in the water. You can avoid that by building a temporary wall where you want to put your foundation. Then you pump all the water out and work inside because now you are not in the water. One of the issues with the Atlantic Sturgeon is that the percussion sound of a hammer transmits through the water and it really disturbs them quite a bit. If you remove the water you're effectively working in the ground and the transmission of those sounds is not the same. There are restrictions and the Commonwealth has people on site during construction to observe, pay attention, and listen for the sounds. That is just one environmental restriction. MassDOT is subject to every federal and state regulation, and we have to get the right approvals before we can build anything.

Q: AM: Where is the funding coming from?

A: EK: 80% comes from federal funds and 20% from state funds.

Q: AM: The city does not pay anything?

A: EK: No. It is state and federal funding to pay for the bridge.

A: RL: There are certain extras.

A: EK: Good point, Rich. Let's say MassDOT was working on this road out here, and we proposed a regular light that everyone is used to and the City of Haverhill came in and said we really like the historic lights, we can do that, but the city would have to pay the difference between the cost of the plain and historical fixtures. Construction and electricity will be the same except for the cost difference of the light itself. If the city has any requests in that regard, that were beyond what we are already proposing, usually in an aesthetics situation because in an engineering situation usually they would be able to justify it, but if it were just a matter of preferring one look or item over another, the city would have to pay the difference.

A: RL: In this case, as Eamon said, we are proposing aesthetic things anyway.

A: EK: Yes, I do not think the city will be getting any bills.

Q: AM: You said you talked to the Chamber. Were there any concerns that they brought up?

A: EK: There were some distinct concerns, yes. If somebody owned a restaurant, how would their customers get to the restaurant? Is the bridge going to be completely demolished? No, people can still get across throughout construction. I think for the small businesses will be impacted the same as every other resident in Haverhill that uses that bridge. I do not think that you could put a number on it. How would you know how many customers are not going to go to a restaurant because we are building the bridge? They could still get there, it might take them a little longer, but we cannot determine that. Those are the sort of questions they were asking. Is the bridge going to be completely demolished? Is there a detour? How long? Yes, they are going to be affected, but the entire City of Haverhill is going to be affected. It's not as though the burdens will fall disproportionately on any one sector of the population.

C: NCC: Eamon, if you have a chance, you might go back to the grid that we put together because that covers some of the things that they had to say.

A: EK: This is what the Chamber of Commerce asked [flipping to the slide].

A: NCC: It is all of the stuff that you folks have kind of touched on. How do my employees get to and from the office? Really the answer is what Rich was talking about. We might do some stuff for the traffic to help it move under temporary conditions. We will always keep a lane going in each direction. There will always be a sidewalk. How are vendors and customers going to get across? It is the same thing. The Renaissance project, which is what Rich mentioned and the emergency response times. The big hospital is on the north side of the river; all of the emergency response is north of the river, and it may have to get into Bradford and back out again. Then the overall project completion time. In my conversations with Argenis, a lot of it was about your specific concerns as a group and what he told me, is that largely you guys, for want of a better word, are a specialized Chamber of Commerce. It is Latino-owned businesses. You have certain focuses because of that, but really from the perspective of this project, it is about the business impacts. You know, are people going to come to your auto shop, things like that. Are you going to be able to get the people in to deliver the parts on the timetable you need?

C: AM: I do not see too much concern.

C: RL: We are keeping the bridge open. There was some concern at the other meetings that they had heard we were not.

C: NCC: Yes, that rumor was out there.

Q: AM: Can I take a picture of this?

A: NCC: I will email it to you.

C: RL: Roughly at this time next year, we are looking to get the design-build teams' proposal phase started. Maybe that would be selected early 2025. They have some designs that they need to do before they can get it started so construction will be likely in 2026 with shovels in the ground.

We do not have a detailed schedule yet. As Eamon talked about the environmental restrictions, so we are thinking it will take at least three years to build the bridge, pending environmental restrictions, and there are a lot of utility operations on the bridge. It takes time for National Grid, Verizon, or whoever to do the needed relocations of their lines. At this point, our best guess is three-plus years. Over the course of the next year, we will have a better handle on what the schedule is.

C: AM: From us, we would like to share some information on our social media.

A: EK: I do not know if Nate explained this to you. He has your email, and it will go with all other email addresses. There is a website for this project. There will be email blasts that will announce certain milestones about what is going on so you will get the information to see what is going on with this project.

Q: AM: Will there be a Spanish translation?

A: NCC: The website for example, your browser can translate it. That would not be a problem. If you want this presentation also in Spanish, we can send it off to UMass and I can get it to you in Spanish. It will take a little extra time, but we can make that happen. WSP could also probably do this.

C: AM: That would be great, thank you.

A: EK: We might have those services, or we may have someone on call.

A: NCC: The other thing is, when we do send out those blasts as Eamon described, when we have our next meeting for the general public, it will go on our website and there are usually several emails that will go out including a save the date. We have got all the flyers on the website and there is always a Spanish version of the meeting flyer available to download. Then there is the publicity campaign. I will come up here to the city and drop off flyers in multiple languages including Spanish at about 22 locations at this point. They are sprinkled all over downtown and into Bradford. We have a couple of hours live at the library with people saying, "Hey, come see our meeting," and we have a couple of hours live at the Market Basket. I love the Market Basket because if the meeting is at the Innovation Hub I can point to where the meeting is. One of the reasons that we come out and talk to organizations such as yours, is so you will help carry our messaging as partners.

C: AM: Thank you so much.

C: EK: Like I said, when we are at 25% design there will be a design public hearing which is the big one. Everyone on the email list will be told about that. We are legally responsible to get it out there and let everyone know about it. At the previous meetings, we did have interpreters for Spanish and Portuguese. They were not required, but we wanted to be 100% sure everybody would be able to participate. They will be present for the design public hearing as well because the hearing, well, that is the big one. That is the one where we say, "Hey, we are coming, this is what we are going to do, and this is what it is going to look like." To a degree at that point, we are not listening to feedback. We will listen to the questions and if a question comes up that is valid and we cannot justify why we have done what we have done, then something might change. This is the seventh meeting we have had with the city. We are trying our best to not just come in and do what we want. We are trying to listen, and I think we have done a pretty good job so far. For us, there is nothing worse than when we have the design public hearing, and someone walks in and says, "Why are you not doing that?" and we say, "Were you at any of our prior seven meetings?" and they say "I did not know about them." Nate has been here giving out flyers; he was just short of going up in a helicopter, throwing them out and letting them float down. We have been doing our best to let everyone know what we are doing. Our intent is to build you a good bridge that you can be proud of, the same way you are proud of the one out there today.

C: KGB: If we get the information, we can disseminate it. There is always going to be someone like that. People always come up to me complaining, and "I say are you registered to vote?" and if they say yes, I ask "did you vote?" and if they say no, and I say "I do not want to talk to you."

I think it is good that we have the information. I am not bilingual, but I am working with the coalition, and I can help get the information out. I can also take it back to the African American community and help disseminate information throughout the city. Hopefully, the better of people will be informed about what is going on.

C: AM: Yes, because there are a lot of people from our community, I do not think that they believe that they can have a say in a project like this.

C: EK: And they do in fact have a say in it; we want to hear from them.

C: NCC: That is why we are here. It is to demonstrate, as Eamon says, that we really would like to hear from you. Sometimes, like with the bridge I mentioned in Hyde Park, they keep asking, "Well, can you change this?" and we have to keep coming back to, "It is the depth of the structure, and it is what Amtrak will allow us to put over their

electric wires", the end. Our hands are tied. In this case, within reason, there is a fair amount of latitude. When we can give that, certainly for all of us, I think that it feels really nice to say, "What do you think?" as opposed to, "Sorry, it is over an electrified train track, I cannot do anything for you."

NEXT STEPS

MassDOT continues to evaluate the cross-section memorandum discussed. The design plan to date will be presented to at the Over-the-Shoulder Review scheduled for September 7, 2023.