



To:	Joe Pavao Project Manager	Date:	August ??, 2018
From:	Doug Johnson Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.36
Subject:	Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Chelsea/Route 1 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project 25% Design Public Hearing Meeting Notes of January 24, 2018		

Overview

On February 14, 2018, members of the MassDOT Highway Division project team for the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation, led by project manager Joe Pavao, appeared before a meeting of the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce to provide a briefing about the status of the project. The briefing included a short presentation of the existing conditions on the viaduct, the project scope and schedule. This was followed by a question and answer session.

The primary concerns of the members of the Chamber were traffic management and the timing of local road closures and travel lane reductions on the viaduct. Members asked for as much advanced notice as possible prior to local road closures, and recommended stationing police officers at key intersections, and particularly around public schools during peak hours, to help manage traffic. It was explained that MassDOT would be coordinating with the City of Chelsea to provide additional crossing guards near schools, and the project includes a Traffic Management Plan including police details throughout the project area. Regardless of these concerns, many Chamber members expressed an understanding that the viaduct plays an important role in mobility for Chelsea and the North Shore and should be rehabilitated.

Project team members will meet with the Chelsea City Council on March 1, 2018, to discuss the updated mitigation package.

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Introductions

C: Joe Pavao: Hi everyone. Thanks for meeting with us to talk about the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation Project. My name is Joe Pavao and I am the MassDOT Project Manager for the project. Before we get started I'll let the project team introduce themselves.

C: Cara Pirkey: I'm Cara Pirkey. I'm a Traffic Engineer with HNTB.

C: Doug Johnson: I'm Doug Johnson. I work in Public Involvement at Howard Stein Hudson (HSH).

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis: I'm Nate Curtis and I also work in Public Involvement at HSH. I'll be handing out printed copies of the PowerPoint presentation for you to flip through, as well as a sign-in sheet so that we can get your contact information and keep you informed going forward.

Presentation

C: Joe Pavao: While Nate is handing everything out I'll go through a quick overview of the project. I'm sure most of you have heard of it because we have a very robust public participation plan that we've been working on since last October. We had a Public Information Meeting in November and we've met with local community organizations. I've been actively working with the City Manager, Tom Ambrosino, and have had multiple meetings with him as we've received feedback from the community, in order to determine how we can mitigate some of the project impacts.

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

This is just one of several meetings we're having to try to incorporate the comments and concerns of businesses and the community. I know this is just a small representation of the business community so we want to do more outreach and hold more meetings with businesses. We'll be looking for suggestions from you on how we can accomplish that.

I'll go over the project schedule. We plan to advertise the project this spring and we'll award a contract to a general contractor in September or October of 2018. The reason we are doing that is we have the ongoing Tobin Bridge Deck Repair Project that will be reducing the Tobin Bridge down to two lanes, and we want to coordinate this project with that work so that we have a continuation of the two-lane condition onto the viaduct. We don't want Route 1 to open back up to three lanes on the Viaduct and then have it be reduced to two lanes a year later.

Now I'll go through the slides. We've covered the introductions already. We have a lot of project impacts that we've been hearing about from the community that we'll talk about in a moment.

The MassDOT Highway Division is the project proponent. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is contributing 80% of the cost of the project, so they'll be overseeing us very closely. We have environmental documents and a categorical exclusion that have to be approved by the FHWA before we can advertise the project. HNTB is the lead designer on the project and Howard Stein Hudson is working on public involvement. Obviously we are coordinating with the City of Chelsea and the MBTA.

The limits of work essentially start at the Carter Street off ramp, heading southbound to Boston, and terminate at the Tobin Bridge. You can see on the first slide that all of the ramps and some landmarks are labeled for reference. The next slide shows a bird's eye view of the Arlington Street on-ramp, and I'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

The Chelsea Viaduct carries about 63,000 vehicles per day. It also carries MBTA Bus 111. The 111 currently takes Ramp A but it will be moving to the Everett Street on-ramp. That change is unrelated to this project. I believe that will be happening in May. The MBTA is reaching out and will be talking to the City Council. Like I said, that is independent of this project. We are one agency, so we are coordinating with each other, but the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation is a separate project.

I'll now talk about the existing conditions. The structure is in poor condition and the deck is structurally deficient. It's not unsafe, but it is deficient. By doing this project we are going to remove 260,000 square feet of structurally deficient deck. That is really the purpose of this

project. We're replacing the entire superstructure and doing major substructure repairs. After this project is complete, the viaduct should last 75 years with regular maintenance.

The goal is to advertise the project in the spring. We're using Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) techniques on this project. If we were to use conventional construction techniques on a project of this nature, it would take anywhere from three to five years. We're doing all of the substructure work in 2019, including retrofitting columns, installing new drainage and lighting, and rebuilding the parking lots. The superstructure work will be done with Prefabricated Bridge Units (PBUs), similar to the Fast 14 and Route 3 projects. We replaced the Route 3 bridges in a 55-hour weekend. That is the same technique we will be using on this project. Our schedule is nine months and we'll replace all 75 spans. We have heavy disincentives for the contractor if they do not meet the project schedule.

We are just beyond the 25% design phase and we're finalizing the plans. At this point, not a lot will change in terms of design because there are only so many things we can do. We are revising the plans based on comments from the community. There is a lot of mitigation as part of this project. We are continuing to listen to the community. We want to know what your concerns are so that we can incorporate that feedback into the project. The current cost of the project is \$110 million. That's expected to go up, but until we finalize the plans and mitigation measures we won't have the final cost.

I'll go over the scope of the project. As I said, we're using ABC techniques. We'll be installing new barriers on the viaduct that will be taller and will make the roadway safer. We'll be replacing the lighting and drainage and rebuilding the parking lots underneath the structure. I was going to save some of the mitigation discussion for the City Council briefing on March 1st, but we can talk about some of the things that we will be incorporating into the project.

We have mitigation plans for dust, lead paint, and noise during construction. We have robust and strict noise and dust requirements. We will have independent compliance monitors on site to ensure the contractor is meeting those specifications. We'll have a 24 hour hotline in English and in Spanish. Anyone can call that line if they have a question or concern and we'll have someone respond to them immediately.

In terms of public participation, we will continue our outreach efforts throughout the duration of the project. The contractor will have to hire a public outreach consultant and have a public outreach plan during construction. Whenever there are changes to the project, we'll be out with the contractor to talk to businesses and notify the community.

The next slide shows color photographs of the substructure. Some of the comments we received asked for better columns. The columns will be encased in new concrete so we looked at options for public art or some type of installation. You can see the different options we are proposing. We're looking for feedback on those options.

This is a photo of a Prefabricated Bridge Unit being lifted off of a truck. That is the type of construction we are proposing. That doesn't mean the contractor can't come back and propose different methods, as long as they can meet the schedule. We want to get in and out as quickly as possible.

During the first phase of superstructure work, after the substructure work is complete, we'll be replacing the outside of the superstructure. That's the outermost lanes of the highway. We'll have multiple cranes on site. Most of the work will take place at night, but we will do preparatory work during the day. The PBUs will be dropped into place overnight, and we will have to reduce the viaduct down to one lane in each direction. By 5:00 a.m. it will be opened back up to two lanes in each direction. There are penalties for the contractor if they don't open the roadway on time. This has worked for us in the past on other projects.

Q: Sergio Jaramillo: What time will the road be reduced to one lane?

A: Joe Pavao: Right now, it's scheduled for 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., but on the southbound side the volumes justify going down to one lane at 10:00 p.m. We're still working out the details, but we want to give the contractor as much time as possible.

Q: No Name Given: Is this work is going to be just on the outer lanes?

A: Joe Pavao: Work will be done on all three lanes. The outer lanes will be replaced during the first phase of the project, then the middle lanes will be replaced, and finally the innermost lanes will be replaced.

There are a couple of locations where we will use grid deck instead of PBUs. One of those areas is over the commuter rail tracks. There is one span there and five as you approach the Tobin Bridge. These sections require different construction techniques that essentially involve demolishing everything and re-pouring the concrete. We wanted to minimize traffic impacts and impacts to the community, so we picked 12 weekends during which the contractor will work for 55 hours to do that work. Otherwise it would take nine months of night work to do these sections. That will be just for those locations.

We're going to have regional traffic mitigation, including Variable Message Boards on Route 1 and as far out as Route 128. The North Shore is the source of 80% to 90% of the traffic on the viaduct, so we want to encourage alternate routes, including Route 128 to I-93, etc. We expect to divert a lot of traffic so that the remaining two lanes we will have in place can accommodate the traffic. Based on our analysis, we're estimating that from Route 16 to Charlestown the project will add three to five minutes of travel time during peak hours. That is pretty reasonable for a project of this size. Of course, it could be slightly more or less.

We have a robust police detail plan for all local streets, so on the first day of construction we'll deploy that plan, monitor it and make adjustments based on comments from businesses and the community. If there are locations that have problems, we can move police details around as needed to accommodate traffic. In my experience, for the first week or two of any project, there is an adjustment period as everyone gets used to it after which point things do settle down.

I'll touch on a couple of the main points concerning mitigation. We were proposing to close Ramp A permanently. However, we listened to the community and even though our traffic analysis shows we should be closing it, we are keeping it open. You're the first to hear that officially. I was going to tell the City Council first, but I might as well present it here. So, we are going to be rebuilding that ramp and keeping it open after the project is complete. That was one of the major changes that we incorporated based on feedback from the community.

Regarding parking under the viaduct, MassDOT owns all of the land under the viaduct and in terms of leasing the land, everything is spoken for. The City, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and the Massachusetts Information Technology Center (MITC) lease some of the parking, for example. That said, we're building a new parking lot near the high school. Right now, it's overgrown, so we'll be paving that into a parking lot. That will allow us to mitigate the temporary parking losses during substructure work. When we're done with the project we'll turn that lot over to the City of Chelsea for them to use as they see fit. We'll essentially give the City a 99-year, no-cost lease, allowing them to do whatever with the property, whether it be parking, a public garden, a skate park, etc. We just need to retain rights to access it in order to maintain the structure in the future.

One of the other big things we heard from the community concerns noise. This project is not a Type 1 project, so noise barriers can only be added if we're adding capacity, widening the bridge or adding lanes. We're not doing any of that in this project, so we can't install noise barriers. However, we found a different snow fence that is solid, so it has sound dampening properties. We'll be installing this snow fence wherever it won't block sight lines. We found that the old

snow fencing wasn't keeping snow and debris from falling onto people's properties and causing damage, so we'll be replacing it with the solid snow fence. We'll discuss that in the next presentation to the City Council and at the next Public Information Meeting. That is another major concern that the community had that we can address as part of this project. Including Ramp A and the solid snow barrier added a considerable cost to the project, but we needed to address those two major concerns.

There has been a lot of discussion about MBTA Bus 111, which is a completely separate issue. But we are all one agency, so we've been working with the MBTA. A representative from the T has been to all of the meetings and listened to the community's concerns. This project on its own won't impact Bus 111 all that much, however we understand that there are cumulative impacts with other projects. We are working with the T and they're meeting with the community to figure out how they can improve local bus service overall, including where we have other projects. We have the North Washington Street Bridge project which will impact Route 1. The City of Boston is redesigning Rutherford Ave. So, there are a lot of projects that will impact North Shore traffic. MassDOT is looking at all of those projects globally. We have another firm that is analyzing how all of these projects will impact North Shore communities. That is being done independently of this project.

We'll continue coordinating with the MBTA. We do that as part of any project. We'll continue to look at how we can improve these projects and deliver them while still mitigating traffic. That's all I have for talking points. I want to hear what your concerns are. I'll take notes and listen.

Discussion

- C: Jeannette McWilliams:** I'm the Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Community Health Center across from Market Basket and I'm a North Shore commuter. We already have a challenge with the number of vehicles that use the Carter Street ramp to avoid the back up on the bridge. That adds to the traffic from schools and the neighborhood cut through traffic. I'm concerned, and I am hoping someone is looking at that. We have ambulances transporting patients over the bridge to MGH. I just want to say we're really concerned.
- A: Joe Pavao:** You mentioned the schools. We're going to include an item in the contract, this is something the City Manager asked for, that is a lump sum cost that the city can use to hire more crossing guards to help during peak times.
- C: Jeannette McWilliams:** That is not going to help. We need police enforcement.

- A: Joe Pavao:** One of the things we've been negotiating with the City Manager's Office, and that I'll talk about at the City Council meeting, is we're setting up an enhancement fund of \$800,000 for the City of Chelsea to use for whatever they want. It could be used to hire more police, it could be used for additional traffic mitigation, etc. Anything that has to do with the impacts of the structure that we're not addressing contractually with the contractor, the city will have that fund to address issues as they see fit. That's a sum of money that the state is offering to the City for anything the City wants to use it for. One of the things the City Manager talked about was providing low-cost loans for sound proofing windows or other needs. That is a discussion that will have to happen between the City Manager's Office, the City Council and organizations like this one.
- A: Cara Pirkey:** Just to reiterate, we will have police details at those locations you mentioned and at other locations to move traffic through and to keep people moving.
- A: Joe Pavao:** We'll be paying for that as part of the project.
- C: Jeannette McWilliams:** There are police there now, it's just the volume of traffic. We're concerned. Our employees are already concerned about how early they have to leave just to get through the area as it currently is.
- C: Alice Murillo:** I see a bullet point here that says, "Intermittent night time closures from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m." I work at the Chelsea campus of Bunker Hill Community College. We have classes that run until 10:00 p.m. For us, it's important to know early on when those closures will take place so that we can coordinate our buses.
- A: Joe Pavao:** These will be short term closures, perhaps just for a couple hours at a time. They're used to do things like move a piece of construction equipment or to do a specific piece of work, etc. We will come out before any closures and let everyone know in advance.
- C: Alice Murillo:** We're on Spruce Street. I don't know how bad it will be.
- A: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis:** One of the reasons we collect contact information at meetings like this is so that notifications can be sent to you. You'll get a notification saying "this is the time," "this is the closure," "this is the detour." You're in luck because you have professional drivers to whom you can distribute this information.
- A: Joe Pavao:** We'll also have a dedicated website where all of this information will be posted. One more thing about Emergency Management that I wanted to mention is that the contractor will

be required to have tow trucks at either end of the viaduct when there are a reduced number of travel lanes. That way if there is a breakdown or a disabled vehicle it can be removed immediately.

Q: No Name Given: There was once a plan to move the Carter Street ramp. What happened to that?

A: Joe Pavao: I wasn't aware of that.

Q: Sergio Jaramillo: I have a comment and a concern. Thank you for the new parking, it's badly needed. Second, we can say that responses will be immediate and there will be plenty of police details, but my concern is with what happens once things become routine. Who will be in charge to make sure that traffic stays routine?

A: Joe Pavao: We will have a resident engineer in charge of the project who is a MassDOT employee. It will be someone who is very experienced with large projects. They will be responsible for making sure that all requirements are being met. As far as police details are concerned, we're going to overdo it with police for a week or two until people figure out their routes and we see what the traffic patterns are. We can only predict as best we can, based on our modeling, where people are going to go and what is going to happen. We're going to encourage people to divert using static message boards, social media, the website, etc. As things get uniform, we can pull police details back or add more details if needed. It could even be outside of Chelsea. We're monitoring the project globally.

C: Allan Alpert: Traffic will get worse, but the project is necessary. Traffic is getting worse everywhere, but people need to understand that the project needs to be done. I worked on the Silver Line project and MassDOT was excellent to work with. Steve Capasso was great.

C: Sergio Jaramillo: Are there any other questions? This meeting is adjourned.

Next Steps

MassDOT and the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation Project Team will meet with the Chelsea City Council on Thursday, March 1st. The next Public Information Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 5th at Chelsea City Hall.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Nader	Acevedo	Chamber of Commerce
Allan I.	Alpert	OEM/911, Chamber of Commerce
Arthur	Arsenault	Chamber of Commerce
Nathanial	Cabral-Curtis	HSH
Alberto	Calvo	Chamber of Commerce
Richard	Cuthie	Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce
Maureen	Foley	Chamber of Commerce
Sue	Gallant	Chamber of Commerce
Sergio	Jaramillo	Chamber of Commerce
Doug	Johnson	HSH
Joe	Mahoney	Chamber of Commerce
Bruce	Mauch	Chamber of Commerce, Chelsea Clock
Jeannette	McWilliams	MGHC, Chamber of Commerce
Alice	Murillo	BHCC, Chamber of Commerce
Joe	Pavao	MassDOT
Cara	Pirkey	HNTB
Joe	Vinard	Chamber of Commerce