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Project Manager

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Subject: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Chelsea/Route 1 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project
Chelsea Collaborative Briefing - Spanish
Meeting Notes of January 22, 2018

Overview

On January 22, 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Highway Division presented an update on the Chelsea/Route 1 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project to the Chelsea Collaborative in Spanish. The briefing was held at the Chelsea Collaborative headquarters at 318 Broadway in Chelsea.

Gladys Vega, the Executive Director of the Chelsea Collaborative began the meeting by welcoming attendees. John Lozada, the MassDOT Director of the Office of Civil Rights, gave a presentation on the project in Spanish, focusing on its purpose, the schedule, and the work to be done. Through a translator, MassDOT Project Manager Joe Pavao was able to answer questions and concerns voiced by attendees.

Questions and comments focused on ramp closures and lane restrictions, as well as Bus Route 111. Because many citizens of Chelsea work overnight hours, there was concern over access to the city during nighttime operations. However, Mr. Pavao assured attendees that the connection between Chelsea and Boston will remain open 24 hours a day.

The 25% Design Public Hearing will be held on January 24, 2018.

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Welcome & Opening Remarks

C: Gladys Vega: My name is Gladys Vega and I am with the Chelsea Collaborative. We are very happy to host MassDOT to discuss the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation Project. The 25% Design Public Hearing is coming up this coming Wednesday. I imagine that we will be bringing a group of people to the DPH so that people will hear the concerns we have. I will now hand it over to Gisela de Orta.

C: Gisela de Orta: Welcome and good evening. Thank you to everyone for being here and to the Chelsea Collaborative for organizing this event. My name is Gisela de Orta. I work with MassDOT and HNTB.

Members from the project team are here to answer questions and to listen to all of your concerns. John Lozada will now give a presentation about the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation Project.

Presentation

C: John Lozada: My name is John Lozado and I work for MassDOT. I'm going to begin by going over the schedule, objectives, and goals of the project. We will talk about the environmental justice and public involvement work for the project as well.

The project team is MassDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), HNTB and the City of Chelsea. Howard Stein Hudson, CME and VHB are also part of the project design team. This map shows the project limits. The southern limits start at the Tobin Bridge and extend north to Chelsea High School. The sections of the map in dark blue compose the main part of the project. The section in light blue is the ground level and there will only be light work done there. The orange lines are the ramps.

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

The Chelsea Viaduct was built in 1956 and 1957, over 60 years ago, and it needs upgrading. This viaduct is very important because it carries 63,000 vehicles per day.

This slide shows the existing conditions underneath the viaduct and the critical condition of the beams and the supports. You can see that it is very important to repair this to ensure safety and reliability. The bridge is in good shape and is constantly inspected. It will not fall down but it certainly needs work.

This slide shows the objectives of the project. The main purpose is to make the repairs that are necessary while minimizing disruption to the community. This project is part of the federal goal of reducing the number of deficient roadways to under 10%.

This slide shows the schedule of the project. The 25% DPH is this Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at Chelsea City Hall. Following the 25% DPH, the final design will be ready by March in order for the project to go to bid. The selected general contractor will be responsible for keeping the community informed about what is going on as well as creating a traffic management program.

Next, we are going to speak a little more about the project specifics. The two important parts of the project are the superstructure and the substructure. We are going to do the repairs on the substructure first and then on the superstructure. In order to advance the project, we will be using Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) techniques. There is only a small section where accelerated construction is not possible.

The project will include a snow fence where necessary, drainage and accident barriers. This is a photo of the substructure, it basically supports the roadway above it. The photo on the left shows the current conditions, the photo on the right shows the proposed column design. The rusty columns will be encased in concrete for support. This is a representation of the planned work, not an actual photo. During the meeting on Wednesday there will be additional images shown detailing different designs.

This photo is of the superstructure. They will be using prefabricated bridge units (PBUs) as part of the ABC techniques. They will lift the roadway pieces into place. This photo is from the 2011 Fast 14 project where we replaced 14 bridges using ABC methods.

This is an image of the superstructure. The zones colored in light blue over the railroad spans and at the beginning of the viaduct are where we will not be able to use ABC methods. The structural components are cleaned and painted, and the metal pieces are put in place for when the repair work is done.

The project team is working to have everything ready, so they can announce the winning bid in March 2018. We want to issue the Notice to Proceed in the Fall of 2018.

The rehabilitation work on the substructure will take place from winter 2019 to winter 2020. The work on the superstructure will start in spring of 2020 through fall of 2020. The project completion date is spring 2021. The whole project will take a little less than three years to complete. The project will coordinate with construction on the Tobin Bridge so that impacts to the community are minimized.

During winter 2019 to winter 2020 there will be no impacts to traffic on Route 1 during the peak travel hours. However, some streets around the area will be closed so that there will be space for the cranes to bring in materials. There will be announcements when there are delays. When we are working on the superstructure during spring 2020 through fall 2020 we will be reducing travel going from three lanes to two. at night it will be reduced to one lane. Also, some parking will be impacted. There will be temporary closures of certain ramps, and there will be impacts on other local streets.

We are also planning on closing Ramp A, we are investigating this right now. There is concern in the neighborhood and the closure is currently under discussion. There will be some changes in response to people's concerns and we will be communicating those final decisions soon.

If we do weekend work, we will be able to reduce the total work time of the project. In the areas where they cannot use PBUs, the department is proposing work during 12 specific weekends starting Friday at 10:00 p.m. until Monday at 5:00 a.m. These 12 weekends will be instead of nine months of night work. The neighbors will be informed when there will be a closure during the weekends.

We have also been doing extensive regional traffic impact analysis. We are looking at where vehicles will be displaced during construction and the impacts on the highways. The analysis takes other construction projects into account as well.

We plan on doing extensive mitigation of dust, noise and lead. The project team will be discussing how to reduce dust, noise and lead paint as well as parking management with different contractors. The lead will be contained during removal.

During substructure work from winter 2019 to winter 2020, there will be an impact on parking under the viaduct, but only reduced in certain areas. During the superstructure work from spring 2020 to fall 2020 there will be some loss of parking spaces. We are planning on widening

the columns and improving the drainage in the lots, which will also have parking impacts. There will be additional parking spaces on Carter Street, however, there is a potential that we will lose some parking spaces temporarily.

This project has an extensive public involvement process. We have done outreach at Market Basket, we've held briefings with GreenRoots and a number of other organizations since last year. People can access project information online by visiting the website. There will be mailings sent to EZPass users. There will be project materials at multiple public buildings. And as we mentioned earlier, there is the 25% Design Public Hearing this Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. There have been several meetings and if you are interested in additional meetings you can request them.

Our next steps include completing the final design in February so that we can advertise and start to receive bids in March 2018. The Notice to Proceed will be granted in the fall of 2018 for this project. During this process there will be public announcements and requests for comments.

Here is the website and contact information to learn more about the project. We will now open the floor to questions and comments.

Discussion

Q: No Name Given: It's very bad walking under the bridge. The parking lots are also in rough shape. When I drive to work, it takes 36 minutes. If you want to limit the impacts, then think of the people of Chelsea. Once you get your money you will wash your hands and leave. The people of Chelsea will be stuck. If you combine the work being done on the Tobin Bridge and the work for this project, there will be a bigger impact on the community. How much time will be added to people's commutes?

C: No Name Given: I take Route 16 and the Tobin Bridge. The traffic is so crazy during peak hours.

A: Joe Pavao: We will start with the first question. For the parking, the lots will be repaired and restored with new paving and new drainage. There will be more parking in the end.

C: No Name Given: I want to see what it will look like.

A: Joe Pavao: We will have renderings for under the bridge. We will not be changing any streets and if there are detours those will be temporary, and they will not be done during peak hours.

- C: No Name Given (cont'd):** I am concerned about closures during peak hours.
- A: Joe Pavao:** There will be no closures during the peak hours for any local roadways. Once we have a detour and construction schedule, we will come out to the community to let you know.
- Q: No Name Given:** The other thing is the duration of the project. It's not just one year. but three years. How many weekends are you going to be working?
- A: Joe Pavao:** There will be 12 weekends of work. We will have incentives and penalties if the contractor does not stay on schedule. For every hour they go beyond the time frame they will have to pay a fine.
- Q: No Name Given:** At the Green Roots meeting the representative from the MBTA said people will have to add 40 minutes to their commute if they take Bus Route 111.
- A: Joe Pavao:** We do have people here from the MBTA, but this particular project is not going to impact that route. However, I do understand there are bigger concerns to Bus Route 111. We have other projects in the state that may have additional impacts on the project. We don't see major impacts to Bus 111 as a result of this project. We will have a minor impact.
- A: John Lozada:** The North Washington Street project will have significant impacts, but it isn't connected.
- Q: No Name Given:** There will be three projects running at the same time. The combination of the three of them will add almost an hour. Is there a plan for people getting to Boston?
- C: Susie Garcia:** I am Susie Garcia and I am the Chief Administrative Officer of Operations for the MBTA. We understand your concerns and we will address them. The T's General Manager is concerned about the 111 as well. He had to wait for it the other day. We will absolutely have a plan.
- A: Joe Pavao:** Although tonight we are just talking about the viaduct, the project team, MassDOT, and the MBTA are talking about all of the projects and how they will affect regional traffic.
- Q: Yessenia Alfaro:** I am a Chelsea resident, I live near the Beacon Street Ramp, near the High School. Because I live near the project area I worry about the dust and pollution, the health impacts of the project. I am very concerned about lead paint and containment. The vast majority of the students are under the bridge. There are moms and kids commuting, walking underneath with their strollers. When they were painting without any containment, I was smelling the paint

every day and I was constantly complaining. We understand the necessity of repairing the viaduct since it so old, but how are you going to make sure that we are protected from dust and lead?

A: Joe Pavao: We heard this loud and clear at our briefing with GreenRoots. We use very strict abatement techniques, negative pressure so that no dust comes out. We hire an independent contractor to keep an eye on the lead and they report back to us. We are very strict with the contractors on this.

A: Mark Kolonoski: The project will also have a 24-hour hotline that you can call and report anything that you are concerned about.

Q: Yessenia Alfara: Will there be bilingual support?

A: Joe Pavao: Absolutely.

Q: Yessenia Alfara: I hate that every six months I have to get my tires redone. In some areas the pavement is in rough shape and there are big bolts of rusty iron that ruin my tires. Will they be cleaning this up? The City is not taking care of it.

A: Joe Pavao: Everything within this structure is within our right of way. We will not be doing any easements or takings. We will restore everything that we impact underneath that. If it is outside of that, we can work with the City to take care of it.

C: Yessenia Alfara: I am also concerned about the digging vibrations. My backyard is the bridge.

A: Joe Pavao: We are looking at monitoring some homes that are really close to the construction.

Q: No Name Given: I have a few questions about what will be happening underneath afterwards. Will the lead that falls off of the viaduct be paved over?

A: Joe Pavao: All lead will be abated, fully contained and removed. It will be taken to a place off-site. Because the system will encapsulate all the work, there shouldn't be any external contamination. When they cut the lead, it will be placed on trucks and removed off site.

Q: No Name Given: You said you'll be restoring some parking. Can you clarify who these parking lots are for?

A: Joe Pavao: All the lots are owned by the state. We lease some lots out to the state, City, high school, and other agencies. I know that the City Manager is working to expand parking for city use. And there will be a new parking lot at Carter Street, so we can move cars around during construction.

To answer your question about what will happen underneath the viaduct, we will be wrapping the existing steel columns with concrete and architectural wrappings. We have asked our consultant to look at the parking and see how we can get more spaces out of it. All of the drainage will be replaced. We will be putting all new lighting underneath so that it will be safe at night.

Q: No Name Given (cont'd): Are there any proposals to use that lot for something other than a parking lot? They are often empty, and it doesn't add any value to the neighborhood. Because it is an impervious surface, there is a lot of flooding. It doesn't seem like the best solution for this neighborhood.

A: Joe Pavao: Well the parking is all spoken for. Certainly, any proposals for the final parking we can work out with the City Manager. The point of the Carter Street lot is so we can move cars around during construction. We understand the drainage isn't working too well there and we will be fixing that.

C: No Name Given: I realize that the project is needed, and the community will suffer. I propose two small solutions: an EZPASS card to use the tunnel at the same reduced price, or to be able to take the train at Wellington Station with reduced parking.

A: Joe Pavao: We have heard similar concerns. For this project we think we can mitigate the impacts with minor improvements to Bus Route 111. It will be using the Everett Avenue on-ramp which will save a few minutes on that route. We don't see other impacts as a result of this project. We want to have a discussion with the MBTA and MassDOT outside of this project about how to deal with the regional effects.

Q: Tito Rodriguez: What will happen with Ramp A?

A: Joe Pavao: During Phase 1 of construction it will be closed. We were originally going to close it permanently; however, we have received negative feedback from the community on this issue. On Wednesday we will present our plans for Ramp A. We will listen to everybody's input on it and we will decide and come back to you. It is not final.

C: Tito Rodriguez: Closing that ramp is a mistake. I live close to downtown Chelsea and if you close that ramp people will be stuck in that area with all of the traffic.

C: No Name Given: I also think it is a mistake because Chelsea is growing. There are a lot of apartments and hotels being built. Even though I work and live in this community, when I get out of work at 5:00 p.m. there is a lot of traffic. When I drive by the Tobin Bridge area there is a lot of traffic there too. Imagine if one of the entrances closes after all of these buildings are built. We also have the casino coming in. If there is an emergency, it would be difficult for ambulances or fire trucks to get through. I think it is a mistake to close it.

Q: No Name Given: Will the website be in Spanish and will the hotline be manned by someone in Spanish?

A: Joe Pavao: Yes.

Q: No Name Given: I agree that the city is growing, and it would be a bad idea to close the ramp. Will there be any coordination during the construction process to avoid closing the ramps so that traffic can continue to flow during the project? Also, I see the 111 riders waiting for far too long.

A: Susie Garcia: We are addressing a mitigation plan for Bus Route 111 and will have a solution.

A: Joe Pavao: We are not closing all of the ramps during construction. There will always be some ramps open. All notifications will go out to the community in advance.

C: No Name Given: Do not close the ramp at Everett Avenue. If you do I will lose my job and then you will have problems.

Q: Gladys Vega: I have a few concerns: Who are you planning to hire? Are there local jobs coming out of this? Also, if these parking spaces are going to be used for construction, what will be the alternative route for the residents in the neighborhood? Have you done a feasibility study for people parking on the streets?

The other thing that I have to add is the idea of options when it comes to the commute. We have this slogan that Chelsea is on the move and now we have so many buildings without parking. Any accident creates a huge traffic impact. I know you can only speak to this one project, but we need to understand that there are three projects going on at once. The lives of people who work outside of Chelsea rely on this. Our community members cannot be fired from their jobs because of the increased time to travel to Boston. Our people work 24 hours a day. You can come at 4:00 a.m. and you will see people commuting to Boston to work. We are active by 3:30 a.m.

In our community, the income of our people depends on our connection to Boston. We cannot jeopardize them being 10 or 15 minutes late. I urge you to coordinate your efforts with the other projects because our people do not have the luxury to lose their jobs. We see people getting evicted every day because they've lost their jobs.

A: Joe Pavao: We will not be going away. You will see most of the same people and our district office out here. The contractor will be required to come out to the public to meet with the community on every step of the project.

Getting back to Gladys' comments about the extended shifts. We will always maintain access to Boston and Chelsea. We will never be fully closing the viaduct. At night, traffic will be limited to one lane. During the daytime, the contractor will maintain two lanes of traffic. As far as the contractors taking up resident spaces, we will enforce that. They will have to designate areas for staging where they will store materials and bring them in to the jobsite. We want to know if a contractor is parking on residential streets, we will enforce that very aggressively.

One other thing I want to address is jobs. We can't require that the contractor hire locally. However, we will know who is coming in ahead of time as well as who their subcontractors are going to be. We will reach out to them. I would encourage people to go out and apply for jobs with the subcontractors.

Q: No Name Given: I just want to say something about how Gladys mentioned how this project will affect people's livelihoods. I feel this is an exaggerated case of what is already a problem. I'm glad the MBTA is here. We obviously need a lot of alternatives. It is time for out of the box thinking.

We have a radio program tomorrow and I want to invite people to the 25% Design Public Hearing. Will there be a question and answer portion just like tonight's meeting?

A: Joe Pavao: It will be a little more formal than this, but yes. That will be our official 25% Design Public Hearing. We will come back as often as people need. Thank you for having us.

Next Steps

The 25% Design Public Hearing will be held on January 24, 2018. Following the hearing, the team will advance the project to its final design.

Appendix 1: Speakers

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Yessenia	Alfara	Chelsea Collaborative
Susie	Garcia	MBTA
Mark	Kolonoski	HNTB
John	Lozada	MassDOT
Joe	Pavao	MassDOT
Tito	Rodriguez	
Gladys	Vega	Chelsea Collaborative