



VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

DECEMBER 10, 2024

FOR THE PROPOSED

**FALL RIVER – SOMERSET FENDER SYSTEM REPAIRS
F-02-058=S-16-008, I-195 OVER THE TAUNTON RIVER (BRAGA BRIDGE)
Project No. 612882**

Major Projects

IN THE CITY OF FALL RIVER AND TOWN OF SOMERSET, MASSACHUSETTS

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR**

**CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
Project File No. 612882**

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed FALL RIVER- SOMERSET- FENDER SYSTEM REPAIRS, F-02-058=S-16-008, I-195 OVER THE TAUNTON RIVER (BRAGA BRIDGE) project in Fall River, & Somerset, MA.

WHEN: 6:00 PM, Tuesday, December 10, 2024

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed FALL RIVER- SOMERSET- FENDER SYSTEM REPAIRS, F-02-058=S-16-008, I-195 OVER THE TAUNTON RIVER (BRAGA BRIDGE) project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of designing and installing new fender system elements to replace the existing damaged or missing fenders. All work for this project is within the channel with no impacts to roadway users or changes to the roadway.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Alyson Bedard, P.E., Bridge Preservation Engineer, via e-mail to BridgePreservationProjects@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7110, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Bridge Preservation Unit, Project File No. 612882. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER



Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is committed to building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure that is both safe and efficient for all who use our roadways, bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, while maintaining the integrity of the environment.

As part of the design process for this project, we are conducting this public hearing to explain the proposed improvements, listen to your comments and answer any questions you may have. At the conclusion of the hearing, MassDOT will review all of your comments and, where feasible, incorporate them into the design of the project.

We recognize that road and bridge construction can create inconveniences for the public. MassDOT places a great deal of emphasis on minimizing the temporary disruptive effects of construction.

MassDOT encourages input from local communities and values your opinions. Please be assured that we will undertake no project without addressing the concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

Carrie Lavalley, P. E.
Chief Engineer

WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

WHY A PUBLIC HEARING?

To provide an assured method whereby the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can furnish to the public information concerning the State's highway construction proposals, and to afford every interested resident of the area an opportunity to be heard on any proposed project. At the same time, the hearings afford the Commonwealth an additional opportunity to receive information from local sources which would be of value to the State in making its final decisions to what design should be advanced for development.

WHY NOT A VOTE ON HIGHWAY PLANS?

The hearings are not intended to be a popular referendum for the purpose of determining the nature of a proposed improvement by a majority of those present. They do not relieve the duly constituted officials of a State highway department of the necessity for making decisions in State highway matters for which they are charged with full responsibility.

WHAT DOES A PUBLIC HEARING ACCOMPLISH?

It is designed to ensure the opportunity for, or the availability of, a forum to provide factual information which is pertinent to the determination of the final alternative considered by the state to best serve the public interest, and on which improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken.

It is important that the people of the area express their views in regard to the proposal being presented, so that views can be properly recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These minutes will be carefully studied and taken into consideration in the determination of the final design.

RIGHT OF WAY CONCERNS

The State is responsible for securing the Right of Way for this project. If your property, or a portion of it, must be acquired by the State for highway purposes in the interest of all people of the Commonwealth, your rights are fully protected under the law. Briefly, here are some of the answers to questions you might ask.

1. WHO CONTACTS ME?

Representatives of the Right of Way Bureau of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Highway Division. They will explain the impacts and your rights as protected under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 79.

2. WHAT IS A FAIR PRICE FOR MY PROPERTY?

Every offer is made to ensure that an equitable value is awarded to you for the property, or to appraise the "damage" to the property as a result of the acquisition. MassDOT appraisers, independent appraisers, MassDOT "Review Appraisers" and a Real Estate Appraisal Review Board may all contribute in arriving at an award of damages. The State also pays a proportionate part of the real estate tax for the current year for fee takings, and interest from the date the property is acquired to the payment date, on all impacts.

3. MUST I ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFER?

No. If, after the figure established as market value has been offered to the owner, the owner feels he or she is not being offered a fair price, he or she has the right, within three years, to appeal to the courts. Pending a court decision, he or she can be paid on a "pro-tanto" basis (or "for the time being") that in no way prejudices the court appeal.

4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY HOUSE?

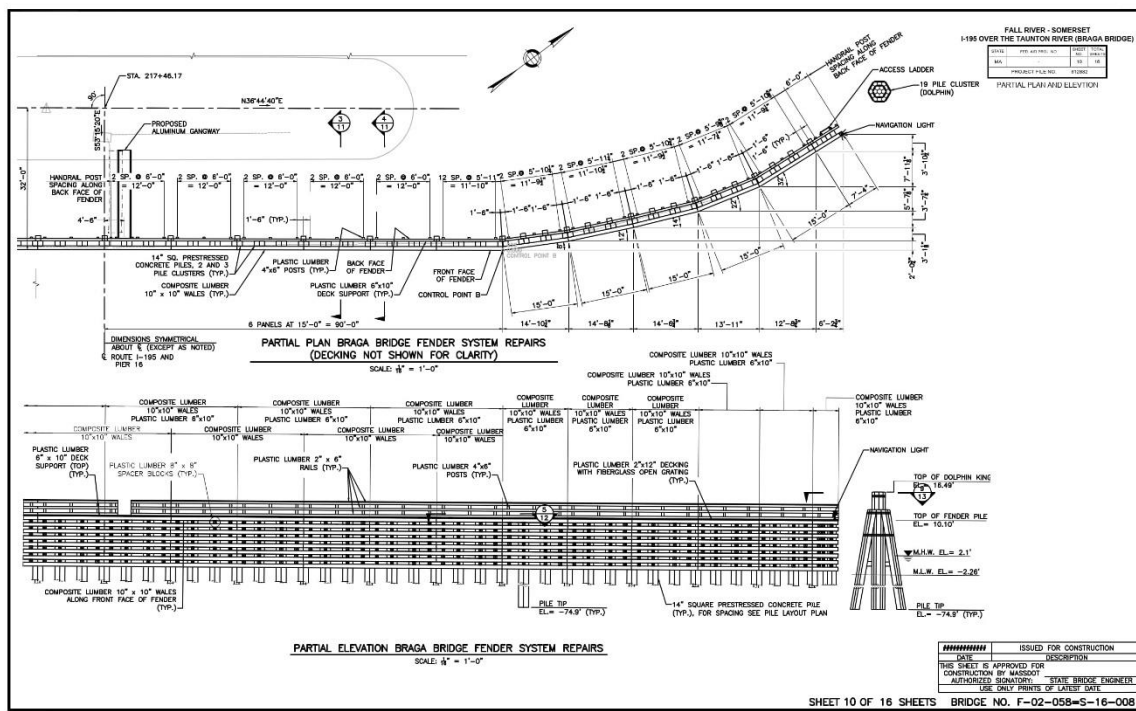
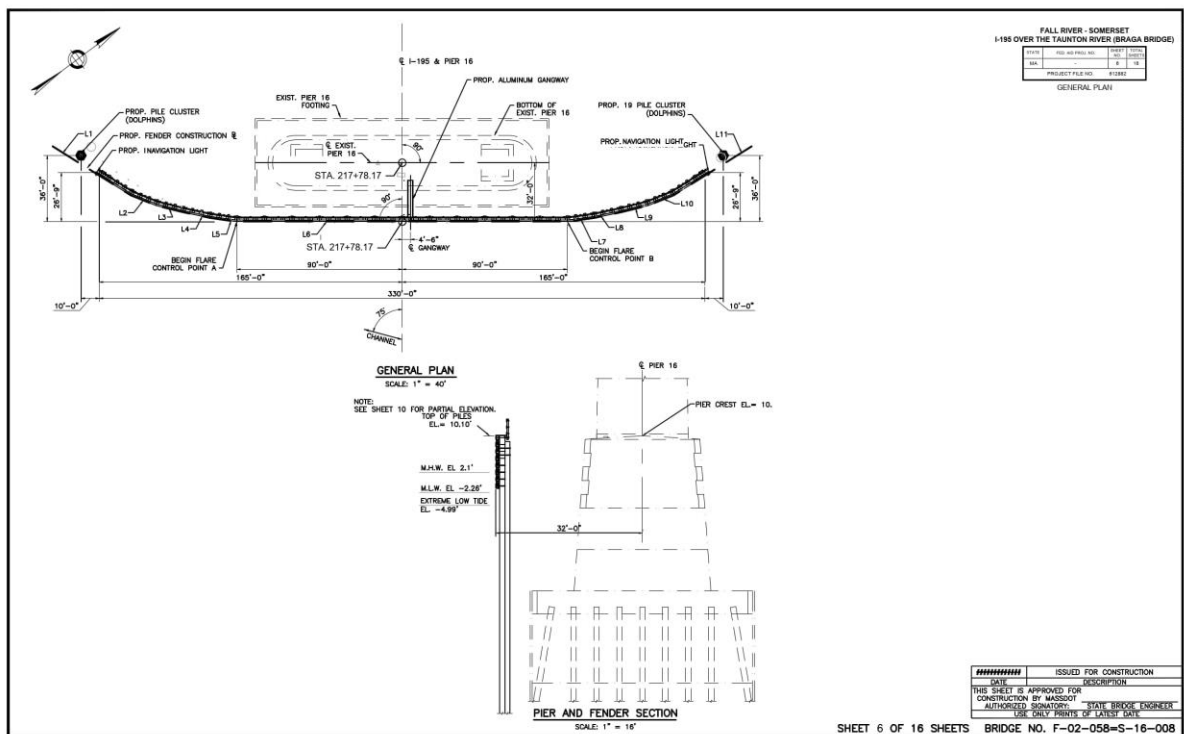
The owner will have the opportunity to buy back his or her house, provided he or she has a location to which it can be moved, and the proper permits for its removal. If the owner does not wish to repurchase, the house will be advertised for bids. The highest bidder, who must also have a location and permits for removal, will be awarded the house. Otherwise, the structure will be slated for demolition.

5. WHAT HAPPENS IF I MUST RELOCATE?

In addition to the market value of the property, the Department pays certain relocation benefits for both owners and tenants of acquired residences and businesses who meet eligibility requirements. Assistance in relocation is also provided. Department brochures are available for details on these benefits.



Figure 1: Locus Map



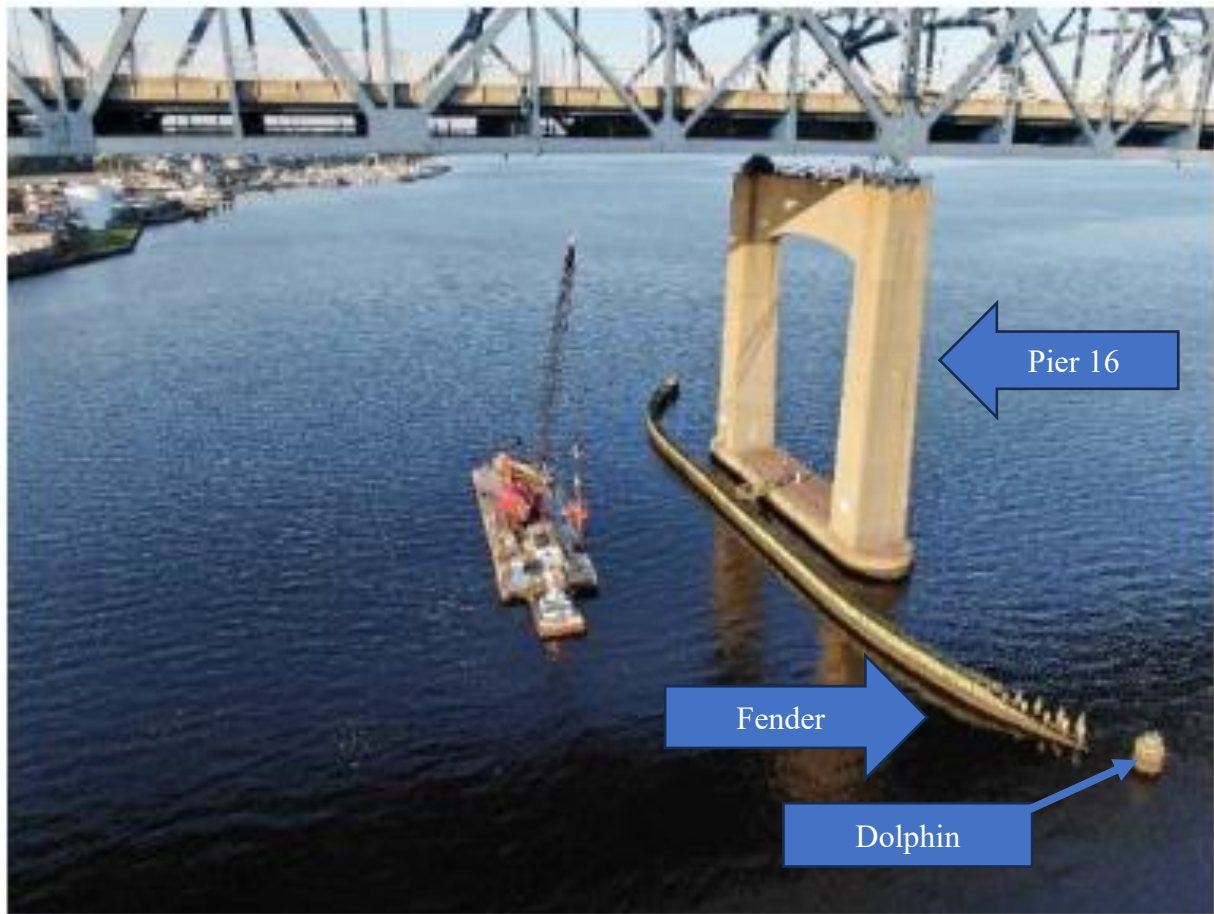


Figure 4: The Existing Fender System

Project Location:

The existing fender system separates pier 16 of the Charles M. Braga Jr. Memorial Bridge from the designated navigation channel of the Taunton River. The purpose of the fender system is to protect the pier from potentially damaging impacts by ships. While the Braga Bridge carries I-195 between the City of Fall River and Town of Somerset, the fender and the pier it protects is located within the municipal limits of Fall River.

Project Purpose:

The existing fender system was most recently rehabilitated in 2005. Inspections in 2020 determined that the system's timbers were severely deteriorated and unable to provide adequate protection to pier 16. This footprint rehabilitation will restore the needed structural capacity and ensure safe operating conditions for both maritime and bridge users. MassDOT has made the determination of the adequacy of an in-kind replacement in consultation with the United States Coast Guard and the Northeast Marine Pilots' Association.

Existing Conditions

The existing fender system is roughly 335 feet long with the center section parallel to the east face of pier 16. The ends curve away from the navigation channel on a 100-foot radius arc. The fender is topped with an access walkway connecting to pier 16. The fender system is composed of piles driven vertically into the bed of the Taunton River and faced by timber planking. This vertical structure is braced by a diagonal or battered piles which are connected to the vertical piles at one end and anchored in the bed of the river at the other. The connections between the vertical and battered piles are severely deteriorated. This is one of the top reasons for the decision to replace the fender system. Round structures, known as dolphins, protect and demarcate the outer ends of the fender itself. Navigational lighting is also present on the structure to provide for safe nighttime operation.

In preparing this 25% design, MassDOT has analyzed, and dismissed, both a no-build and partial repair alternative. A no-build alternative would allow an unsafe condition to persist and worsen. Given the quantity and nature of the existing deteriorated material within the existing fender system, it is not recommended that any of it should be reused and mixed with new materials.

The Proposed New Fender System

MassDOT proposes to remove the existing fender and dolphins in their entirety with all timber disposed of in a suitable facility. The new fender will be 335 feet in length with dolphins at either end. These will be placed in the same locations as the existing structures. The dolphins will be composed of reinforced composite polymer piles. The new fender itself will be a marine timber wall supported by precast, prestressed concrete piles. The existing navigation lights will be reused on the new structure. In addition, a lighted sign displaying the vertical clearance under the bridge above Mean High Water (MHW), approximately 135 feet, will be placed on the new fender system.

Project Schedule

The project plans on display are at the 25% preliminary design stage. Comments from the public hearing will be incorporated into the final design plans to the maximum extent possible. It is currently anticipated that it will take 15 months to fully remove the existing fender system and build its replacement. The anticipated construction sequence is as follows:

1. Remove the existing fender system using a barge-mounted crane.

2. Install the fender template to guide installation of the new fender system from a barge mounted rig.
3. Install the concrete piles from the same barge mounted rig.
4. Install the dolphins.
5. Remove the fender template.
6. Install the new marine lumber facing on the piles, walkway, and railings.
7. Install navigation lighting and vertical clearance sign.

Construction will be staged such that the navigation channel can remain open while the new fender system is built. Road traffic on the Braga Bridge will not be impacted.

Project Cost

The project's total anticipated cost is approximately \$6.23 million. Funding for construction will be by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HIGHWAY DIVISION
NON FEDERAL AID PROJECT

Fall River and Somerset, MA
Fall River – Somerset Fender System Repairs
F-02-058=S-16-008, I-195 over the Taunton River (Braga Bridge)
Project File No. 612882

This sheet is provided for your comments. Your input is solicited and appreciated. You may e-mail comments directly to BridgePreservationProjects@dot.state.ma.us or you may mail this sheet with any additional comments to:

Alyson Bedard, P.E., Bridge Preservation Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Suite 7110, Boston, MA 02116-3973
Attn: Bridge Preservation, Project File No. 612882

Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Please Fold and Tape



Please Place
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Alyson Bedard, P.E., Bridge Preservation Engineer
MassDOT – Highway Division
10 Park Plaza, Suite 7110
Boston, MA 02116-3973

RE: Virtual Public Hearing
FALL RIVER – SOMERSET FENDER SYSTEM REPAIRS
FALL RIVER & SOMERSET, MA
Project File No. 612882
Attn: Bridge Preservation

