



Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge Replacement

Public Meeting 2

Chicopee | October 8, 2025 | 6:00 PM

Project File Number: 612187



How to Participate

- Listen and view the 30-minute presentation
- Ask questions to project team during question-and-answer period
- Submit comments into the comment box at the sign-in table
- Representatives of the media can direct media inquiries to Jacquelyn.Goddard@dot.state.ma.us

General Public Information Meeting Notes and Procedures

- MassDOT may retain and distribute transcripts / written records of this meeting
- All parts of this meeting are considered public record.
- Information from this meeting will be posted on the Mass.gov website.
- This meeting will be open to questions and answers at the end of the presentation

Notice of MassDOT / MBTA Policy Diversity and Civil Rights

All MassDOT / MBTA activities, including public meetings, are free of discrimination. The MassDOT / MBTA complies with all federal and state civil rights requirements, preventing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, and additional protected characteristics. We welcome the diversity from across our entire service area. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit: www.mass.gov/nondiscrimination-in-transportation-program / www.mbta.com/titlevi to reach the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights.

All questions and comments are welcome and appreciated.

Please refrain from any disrespectful comments.

Agenda

1. Welcome & Overview
2. Why was this project initiated?
3. What do we want to accomplish?
4. How has our design progressed?
5. How will roadway users be impacted?
6. What are the environmental, cultural resource, and community impacts?
7. What is our construction approach?
8. How will we keep you informed?
9. Questions and discussion



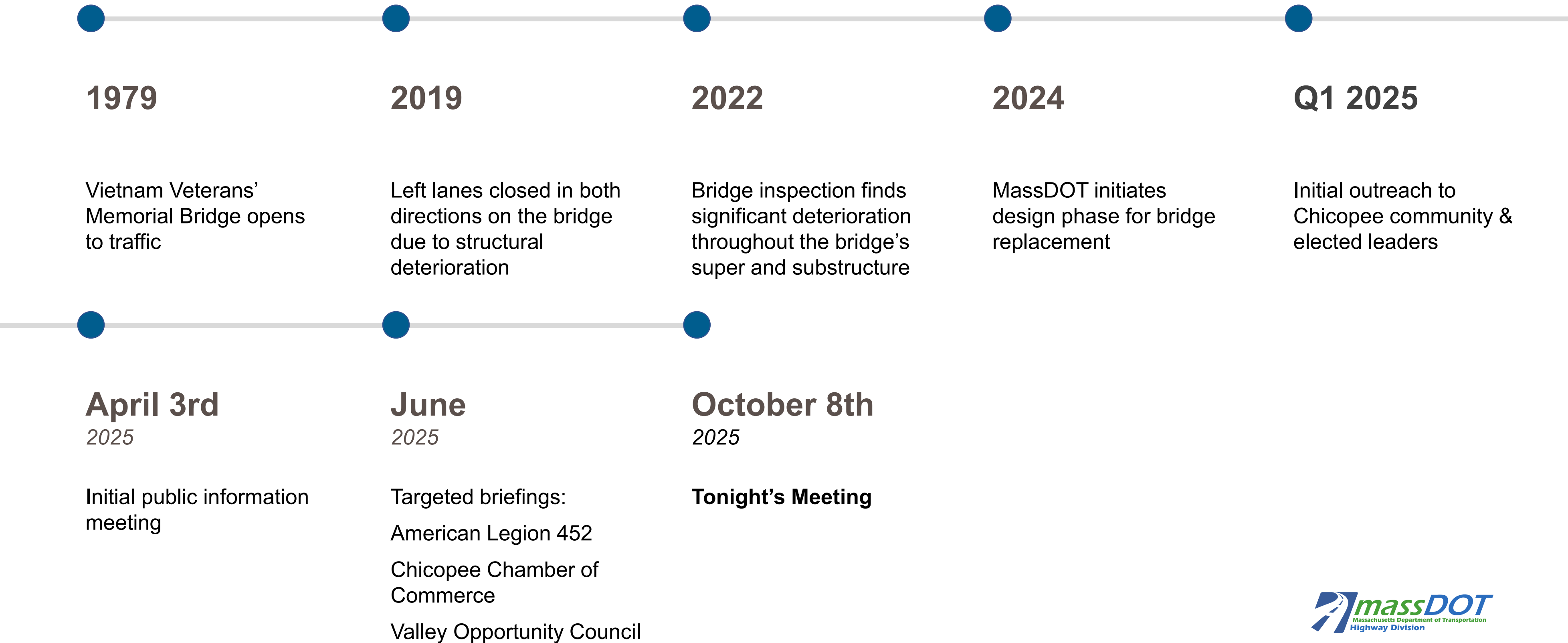
Welcome and Meeting Overview:

- 30-minute presentation
 - Aleksey Belov, Project Manager, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
 - Andy Benkert, Project Management/Bridge Engineering, WSP
 - Brenda Codella, MassDOT, Right-of-Way (ROW)
 - Kaye Lynn Johnson, Landscape Architect, The Collaborative
 - Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, Communications and Public Involvement, WSP
- Q&A Period
 - Aleksey Belov, Project Manager, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
 - Andy Benkert, Project Management/Bridge Engineering, WSP
 - Brenda Codella, MassDOT, Right-of-Way (ROW)
 - Dan Racicot, MassDOT Government Affairs
 - Kaye Lynn Johnson, Landscape Architect, The Collaborative
 - Laura Hanson, MassDOT, D2 Acting Project Development Engineer
 - Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, Communications and Public Involvement, WSP

Language Translation Speakers

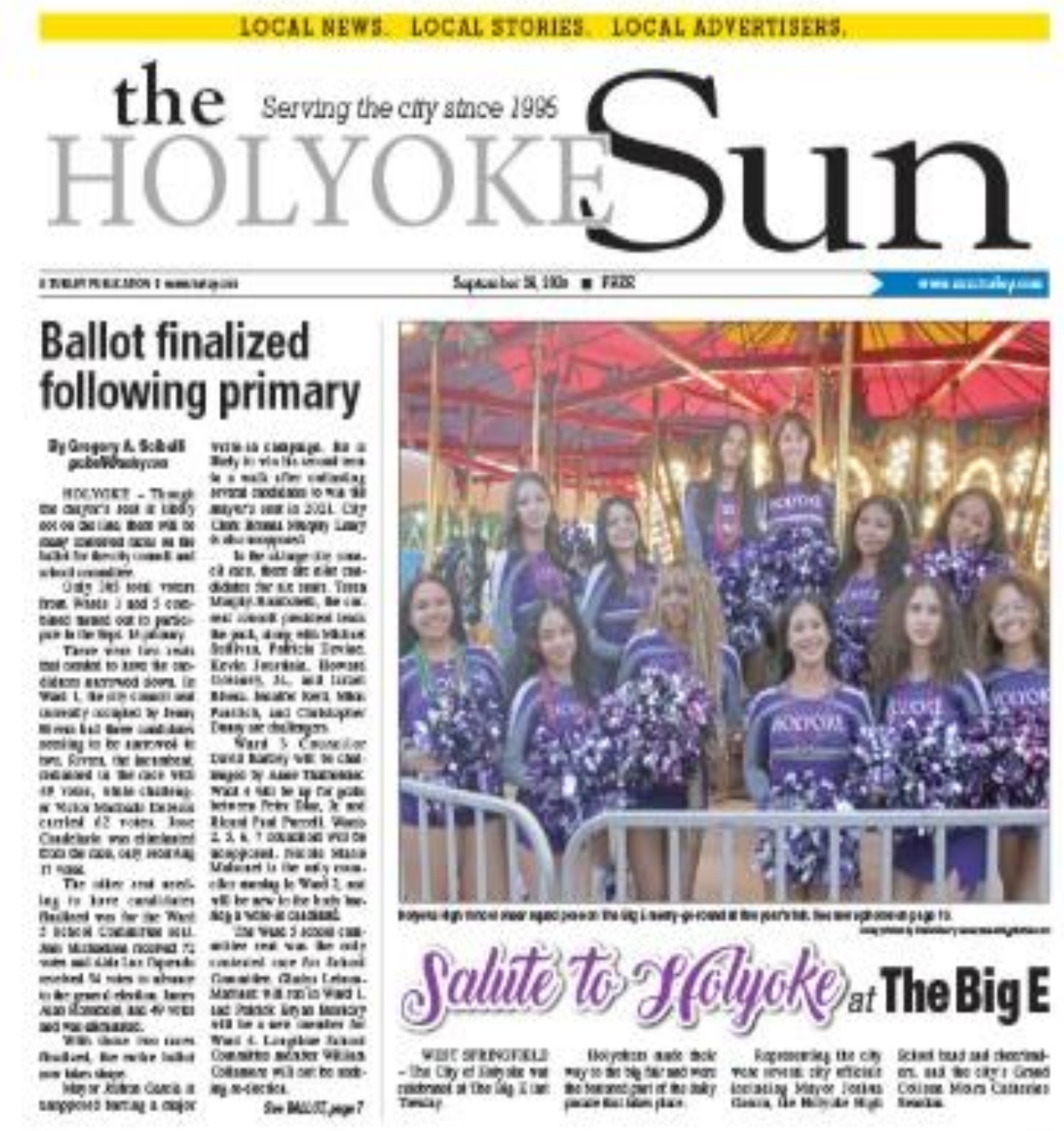
- **Russian**
 - Aghanana Baghirova
- **Spanish**
 - Diego Rodriguez

How did we get here?



Public Information Meeting – 10/8/25 - Advertisement

- MassDOT email burst: 9/25, 10/1, 10/6 & 10/8
- Newsprint:
 - *The Chicopee Register*: 10/3
 - *The Holyoke Sun*: 9/26 and 10/3
 - *The Springfield Reminder*: 10/3
 - *The Springfield Republican*: 9/24 and 10/3
 - *Vocero Hispano*: 10/3 & online through 10/8
- Radio:
 - Neuva 98.1 FM – 10/3-10/8
 - WNEPM 88.5 FM – 10/3-10/7
- Public Access Cable TV
 - Chicopee: 9/26-10/8
 - Holyoke: 9/26-10/8
 - Springfield: 9/26-10/8



Public Information Meeting – Flyer Drops and Staffed Tables

Staffed Tables:

- Price Rite Marketplace
- Chicopee Public Library
- Flyer Drops at 25 locations in Chicopee, focused on Willimansett
- Conversations with parents during pickup at Fairview Elementary School



Flyer Drop and Staffed Table Locations



Thank You To Those Who Shared Our Flyers

State and Municipal:

- State Delegation for Chicopee
- Municipal governments for Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield
- Chicopee municipal departments:
 - Disability
 - Housing
 - Seniors
 - Veterans

Local community organizations, medical providers, schools, and social service providers

Thank you to Chicopee city staff for helping access our meeting site

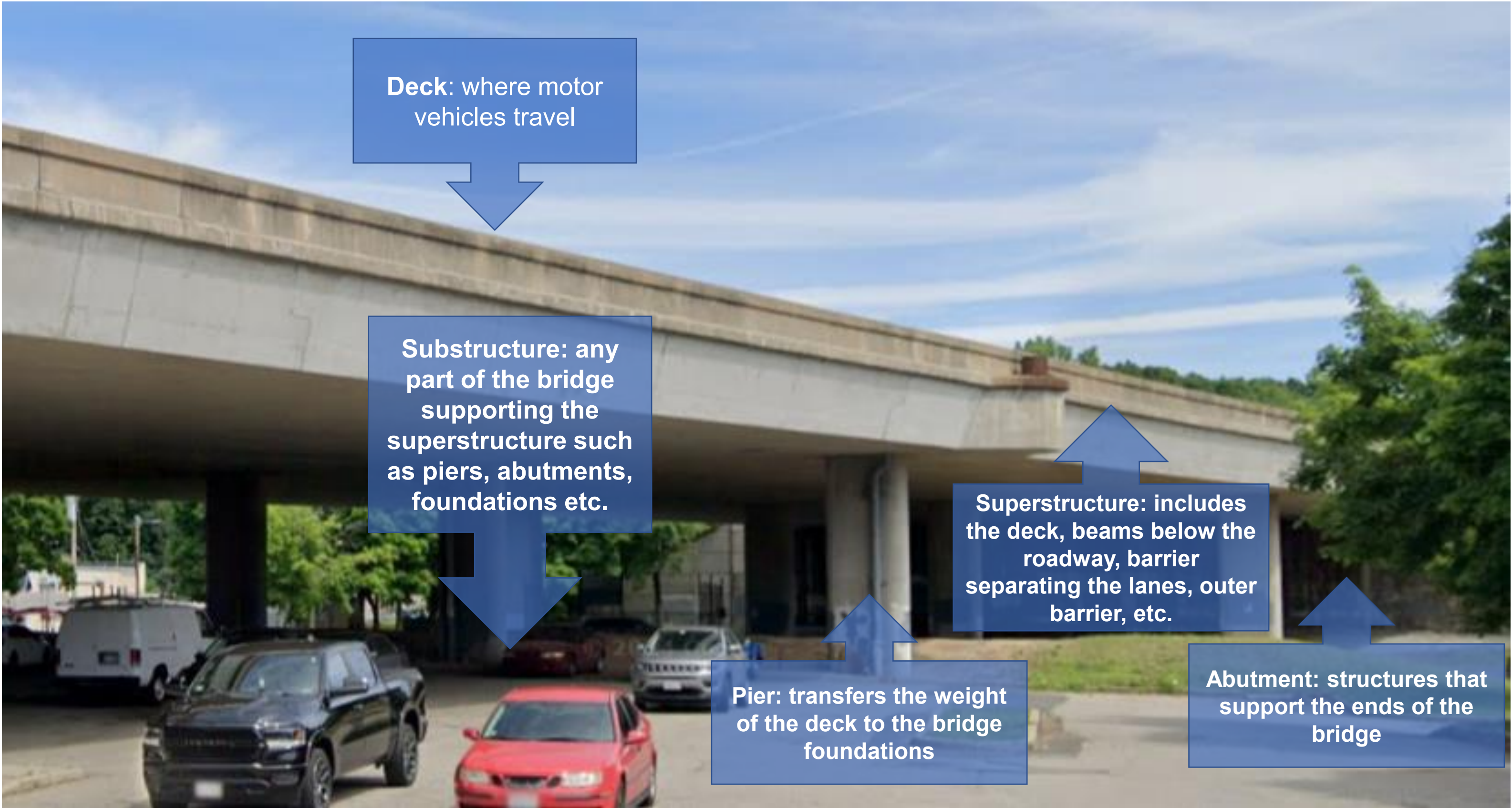


**Why was this
project
initiated?**

Project Limits and Context



Key Terms



Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge: Key Facts

- Configuration
 - 840' long
 - 111' wide (edge-to edge)
 - Concrete box girder superstructure
 - Six piers
 - Two abutments
- Approximate daily traffic:
 - 31,760 vehicles per day
 - 4.8% heavy vehicles (buses, trucks)
- Three lanes in each direction
 - Left lanes closed in both directions due to structural deterioration



A Deteriorated Structure

- Super- and Substructure are in poor condition:
 - Spalled/delaminated concrete
 - Exposed reinforcing steel
 - Damaged expansion joints
- *Remains safe for all users*
- Has reached the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced



Work Completed to Date

- Bridge Type Selection Worksheet
- Initial and supplementary traffic data collection
- Preliminary Structures Report
- Survey
- Additional field visits
- Coordination with Berkshire Eastern RR
- Coordination with City of Chicopee
- 25% design submitted to MassDOT and reviewed

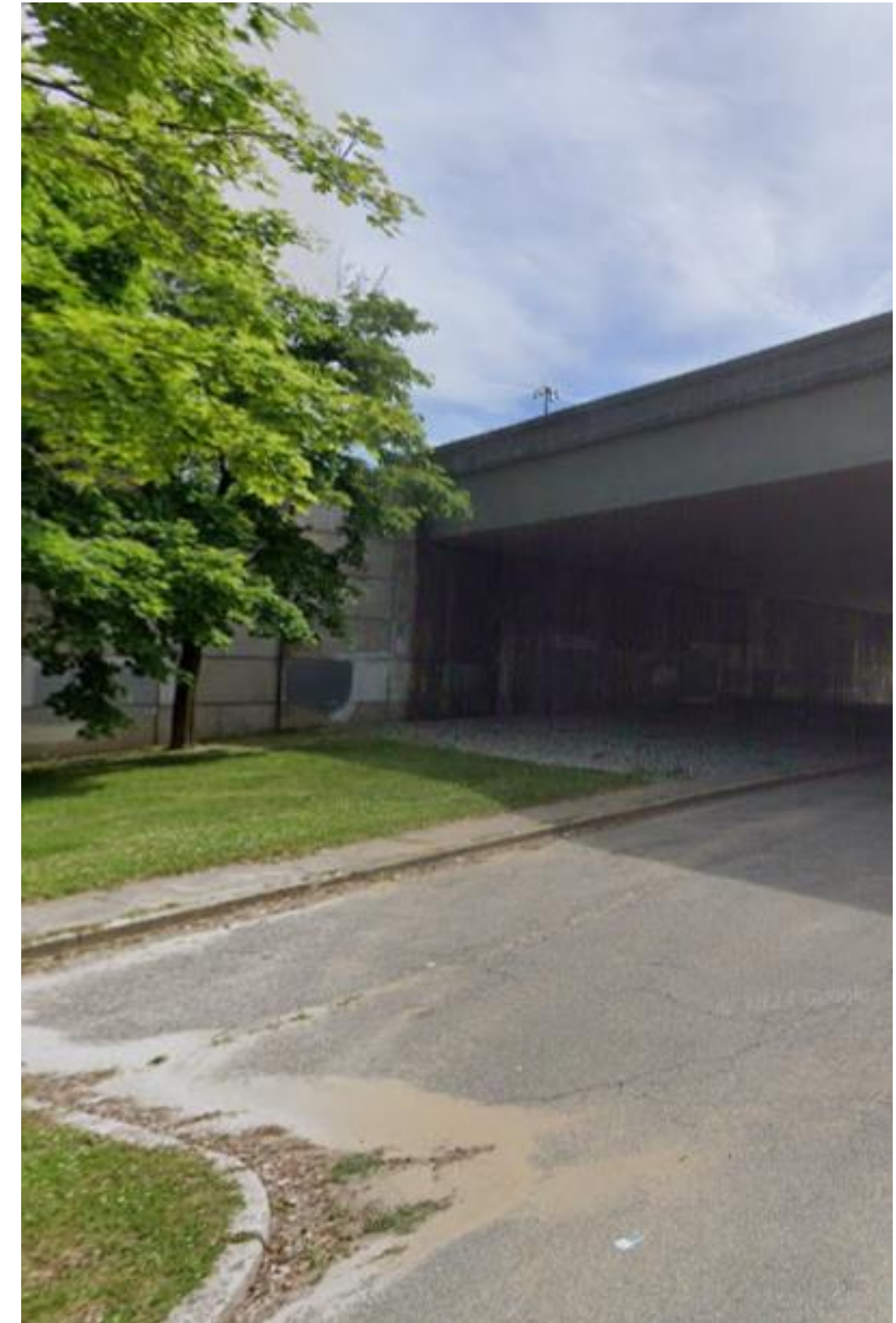




**What do we
want to
accomplish?**

With Regard to the Roadway User

- A new bridge should:
 - Restore I-391 to a full six lane cross section (3 lanes NB and 3 lanes SB)
 - Provide for current and future traffic volumes including heavy vehicles
 - Be constructible in halves to maintain highway traffic during construction
 - Provide a 75-year design lifespan to reduce long-term impacts to local and regional motorists and transit users



With Regard to our Willimansett Neighbors

- A new bridge should:
 - Avoid permanent property impacts to the extent feasible
 - Be a candidate for accelerated construction techniques to reduce abutter impacts
 - Avoid impacts to the abutting sections of I-391 with changes to horizontal or vertical alignment
 - Minimize demolition and construction impacts to local access along Chicopee Street
 - Maintain Margaret/Perrault Street Connector
 - Maintain parking for local businesses



Other Considerations

- A new bridge should:
 - Have foundation and pier locations that avoid current bridge foundations
- Offer opportunities to address concerns raised by City officials:
 - Reduction of vacant under-bridge space which hosts nuisance activities
 - Introduction of lighting to deter nuisance activities

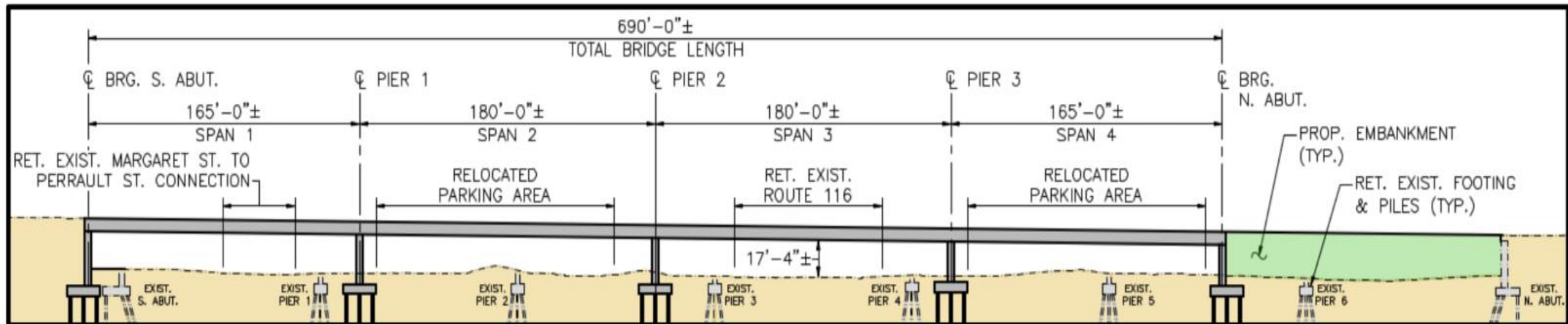




**How has our
design
progressed?**

Our Anticipated Span Arrangement

- Reduces unused space below the bridge
- Avoids existing pier locations
- Limits ROW impacts
- Maintains Margaret St. to Perrault St. connection



4 Span Arrangement

Our Anticipated Structure Type

- I-Girder Superstructure with:
 - A concrete deck
 - An asphalt riding surface
- Resistant to damage from water and deicing salt
- Low maintenance
- Allows for future rehabilitation
- Will use MassDOT's aesthetic pier given neighborhood location



Current MassDOT aesthetic pier –
Boxborough, Route 111 Bridge Replacement
– July 2025

Construction Period Conditions on I-391

- As of April 3rd:
 - One northbound lane
 - Two southbound lanes
- As of October 8th:
 - Two lanes in both directions
- What's the same?
 - I-391 generally open to traffic
 - Bridge built one half at a time
 - Rolling roadblocks used during nighttime operations – demolition or girder lifts





**How will
roadway
users be
impacted?**

Two Different User Groups

- I-391 is a divided highway:
 - Motor vehicles only
 - Cars, trucks, PVRTA 21-E bus
- Chicopee Street is a local road:
 - All modes of travel
 - PVRTA 21 bus
 - Transit stops adjacent to the bridge
 - Parking under the bridge
- Our goal is to maintain NB and SB travel on I-391 and Chicopee Street during demolition and construction



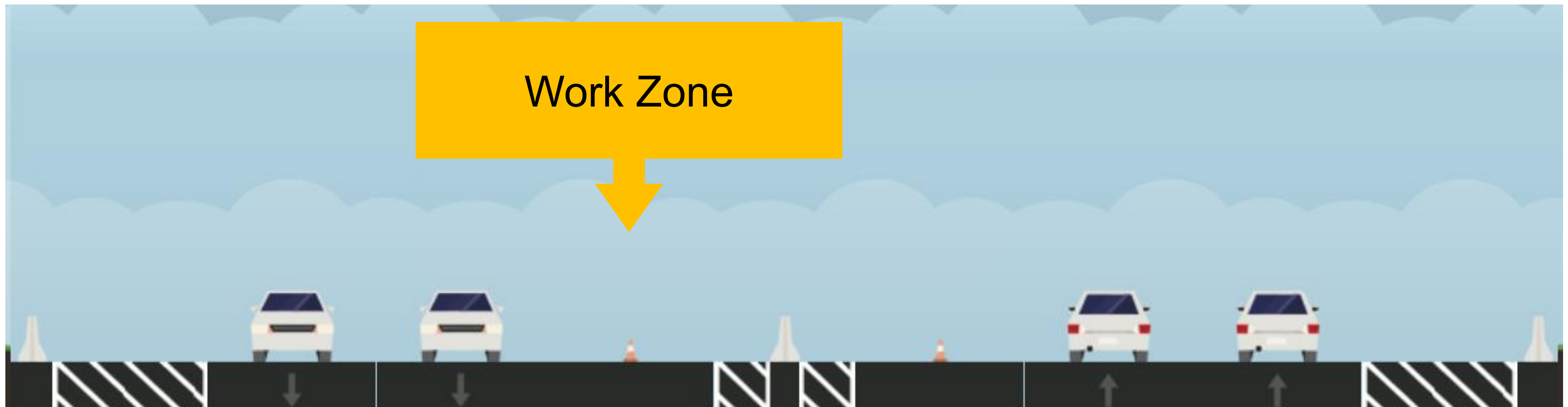
Lane Shifts and Median Crossovers

- Median crossover lanes are needed accomplish the lane shifts in phases one through three.
- These will be gaps in the median barrier along I-391:
 - Between the Grattan Street overpass and Berkshire Eastern RR
 - On the bridge over the Connecticut River
- Gaps are long enough to allow north and southbound lanes to shift safely
- All barrier will be replaced at the end of construction



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Pre-Stage 1

- Perform temporary repairs to closed southbound lanes
- Remove barrier and establish lane crossover locations
- Shift all traffic to southbound (west) side of the bridge
- Spring to Fall 2027



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 1

- Demolish the northbound (east) side of the existing bridge
- Construct and complete the northbound side of the new bridge
- Winter 2027 to Spring 2030



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 2

- Shift all traffic onto the first half of the new bridge
- Demolish the southbound (west) side of the existing bridge
- Construct and complete the southbound side of the new bridge
- Spring 2030 to Spring 2032



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 3

- Open the completed structure to a full six lane cross section
- Restore median barrier and pavement at lane crossover locations
- Spring 2032



Bus Stop Relocation

- PVRTA Route 21 Bus Stops:
 - One stop under the bridge
 - One stop immediately adjacent
- Before construction starts:
 - Work with PVRTA to relocate a minimum safe distance from current sites
 - Assist in communicating to riders



Maintenance of Local Traffic

- Chicopee Street, Margaret/Perrault connector would close for demolition or construction above them, but not at the same time unless absolutely necessary
- Sections of parking would need to periodically close for the same reason



Approximate work zone that does not need a road closure

Approximate work zone that needs a road closure

Anticipated Detours



- For local cars:
 - Margaret/Perrault Connector if Chicopee Street is impacted
 - Chicopee Street if Margaret/Perrault Connector is impacted
- For trucks or regional traffic:
 - Grattan Street to I-391
 - I-391 towards Holyoke to Exit 5 (Main Street)
 - Right off the exit ramp onto Main Street
 - Right off Main Street onto Cabot Street
 - Cabot Street to Willimansett Bridge
 - Willimansett Bridge to Chicopee Street
- Operations impacting Chicopee Street timed to begin after final 9PM run of PVRTA Route 21

Maintenance of Parking

- Parking Goals:
 - Maintain parking supply during and after construction
 - Provide approximately 60 spaces during construction using existing lots
 - Reduce space for nuisance activities, “ware-trucks,” “shade-tree oil changes,” permanently parked cars, etc.

	Existing Spaces	Proposed Spaces	Notes
Connector Road	10	0	A portion of parking will be maintained here during construction
North Lot	56	0	A portion of parking will be maintained here during construction
South Lot	39	60	A portion of parking will be maintained here during construction
Total	105	60	Parking consolidated on the south side of Chicopee Street between Margaret and Perrault streets

Note: existing lots are not striped; a layout was created assuming standard size spaces to obtain the existing count



**What are the
environmental,
cultural
resource, and
community
impacts?**

Preliminary Right of Way (ROW) discussion Public Information Meeting

- MassDOT is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in public land for design, construction, and implementation of this project.
 - Fee takings, permanent easements and/or temporary construction easements may be required.
- Affected property owners will be contacted by personnel from the MassDOT ROW Bureau or consultants representing the responsible agency.
 - Property owners are protected under Massachusetts General Laws, primarily Chapter 79.
- Preliminary ROW drawings are still being developed and should be available for the 25% design public hearing.

At this stage, design has not been finalized. This meeting is an opportunity for the public to comment on any impacts to properties.

Project Impacts

- A “footprint” replacement
- Design is not finalized
- Seeking to minimize right-of-way impacts
- Known impacts to date:
 - Vietnam Veterans’ Park’s western edge
 - Margaret/Chicopee Street corner
 - Margaret Street temporary easements during construction



The Park is Important

- MassDOT takes the presence of the Vietnam Veterans' Park seriously
- Coordination with Veterans' Services Director Stephanie Shaw began in November 2024
- A landscape architect has been retained and is here tonight to speak with you
- **Any construction impact to the park will be fully restored at the end of the project**



June 19th 2025 Briefing

- Our team briefed the Patriotic and Memorial Committee of American Legion Post 452
- We shared:
 - An overview of the project
 - Our plans to enhance the park after construction
- Our commitments:
 - The park will be kept accessible for the Memorial Day ceremony
 - Memorial columns will be kept in their order and remain on site even if they need to move for construction
 - Coordination will continue with Post 452 throughout design and construction



What We Know

- Some impact to the Vietnam Veterans' Park is inevitable
- The crane's anticipated path-of-travel impacts the park's western-most edge



Existing Conditions



Proposed Improvements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park



Proposed New Fence for Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park



Proposed Birch Grove at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park



Local History

SP5 John J. Laskowski, 21 years old, son of John S. and Emilea (Przybyc) Laskowski of 50 Cross Street, Chicopee, MA, a meteorologist, was killed on May 18, 1969 in Xuan Loc, Vietnam when enemy mortar fire shelled his company. SP5 Laskowski was a member of H.H.B. 2nd BN, 35th Arty, 54th Arty Group, and had three months left of an enlistment in Vietnam.

SP5 Laskowski had been awarded posthumously the Bronze Star Medal for heroism, Purple Heart, and the Good Conduct Medal. Prior to his death, he had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one Bronze Service Star, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, and the Expert Badge with Rifle bar.

He was born in Holyoke, October 23, 1947, was educated in the Chicopee school system and was graduated from Chicopee Comprehensive High School in 1965. SP5 Laskowski played basketball and baseball with St. Mary's of Williamsett.

He enlisted shortly after his graduation from high school and took his basic training at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and had been in Vietnam for about nine months. SP5 Laskowski had 3 sisters, Ms. Linda Hernhe, the late Mrs. Joan Deforge and Mrs. Phyllis Potvin. SP5 Laskowski was buried in the St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Chicopee on May 28, 1969.



THE VIRTUAL WALL ® VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL www.VIRTUALWALL.org

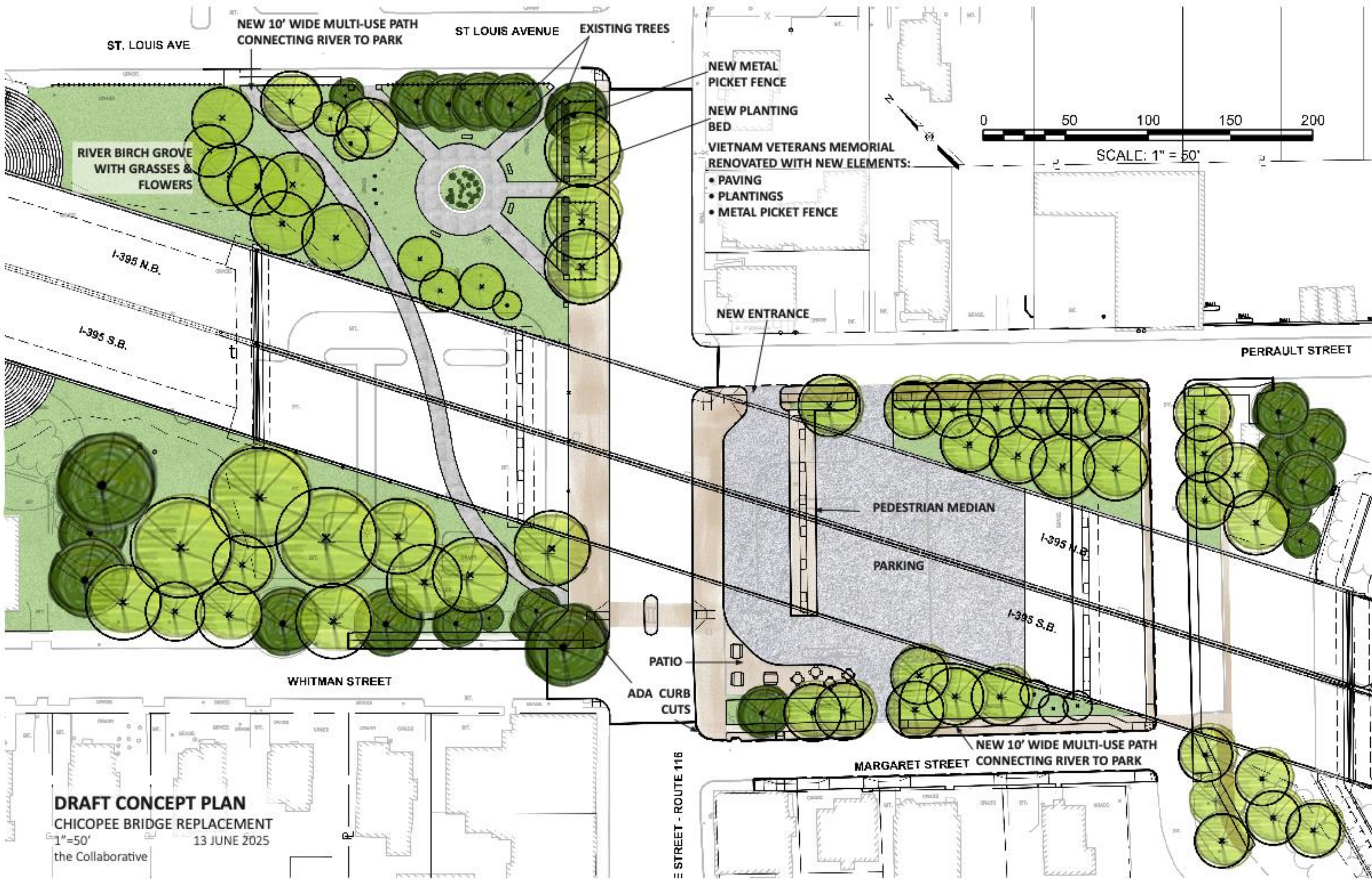
Find A Name ▼ The Virtual Wall® ▼ This Memorial Page ▼

John Joseph Laskowski
Specialist Five
H.H.B. 2ND BN, 35TH ARTILLERY, 54TH ARTY GROUP, II FIELD FORCE, USARV
Army of the United States
Williamsett, Massachusetts
October 23, 1947 to May 18, 1969
JOHN J LASKOWSKI is on the Wall at Panel W24, Line 44
See the full profile or name rubbing for John Laskowski

A collection of military medals and ribbons, including the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, and National Defense Service Medal.
A black and white portrait of John J. Laskowski in military uniform.
Logos for St. Stanislaus Cemetery, the American Legion, and other organizations.



Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Replacement Renderings





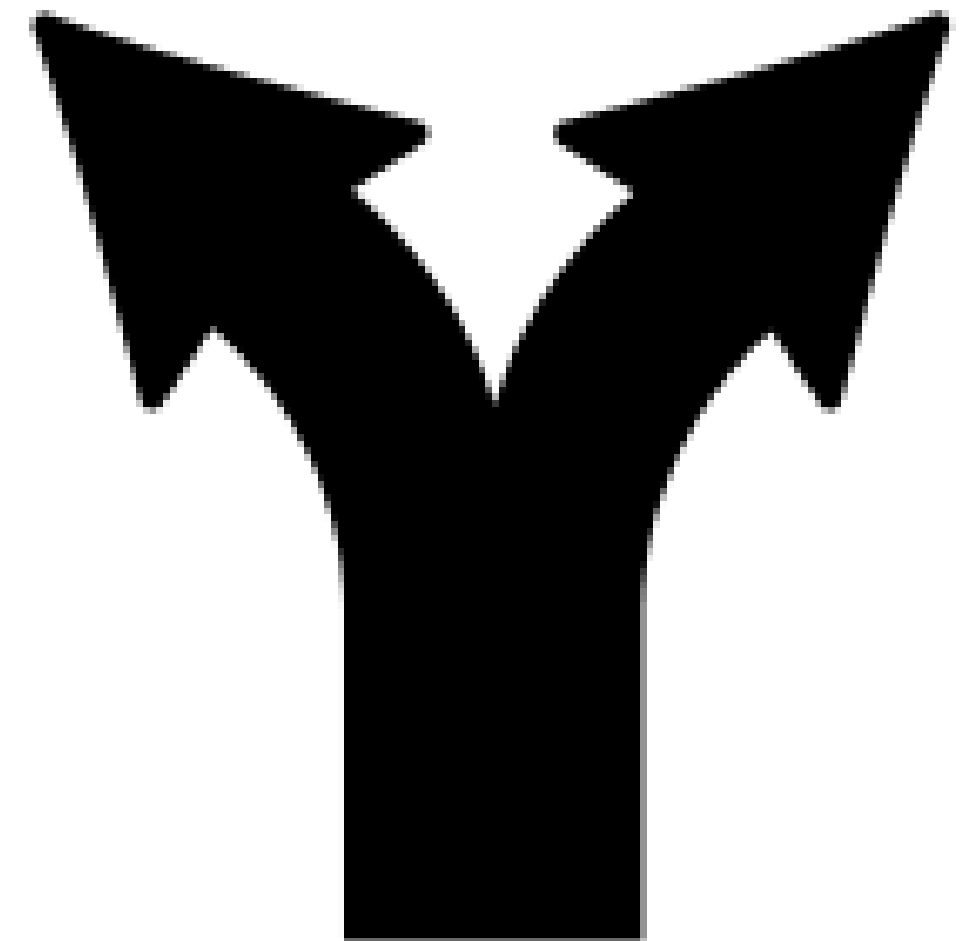
**What is the
construction
approach?**

Proposed construction approach: Design-Build

- Tonight's team will develop a 25% design and base technical concept (BTC) for bid by Design-Build (DB) entities
- DB Best Value procurement
 - Short-List Best Qualified Teams
 - Shorten project duration
 - Promote innovation by teaming the engineer and the general contractor
 - Allow for accelerated bridge construction (ABC) techniques if applicable
- MassDOT's contract with the Design Builder will stipulate requirements for traffic management while also providing the DB flexibility to develop their own approach to staging.

Alternative Technical Concepts (ATC's)

- Design Builders may propose ATC's as part of their bid
- ATC's may address:
 - Construction staging
 - Construction techniques
 - Materials used for construction
 - Structure type
 - Traffic management
- The advantages of any ATC must be proven to MassDOT's satisfaction



Our next steps



25% design public hearing –
October/November 2025



Respond to 25% design comments – early Winter 2025



Advertise for Design Builders – Spring 2026



Issue winning Design Builder Notice to Proceed - late Fall 2026



Anticipated start of construction:2027



How will we
keep you
informed?

Upcoming public outreach

- This fall:
 - 25% design public hearing
- Please reach out:
 - Existing issues the new bridge can address
 - If your community group wants a briefing
 - Thoughts about construction



How to reach us?

- Submit written comments to:
Carrie Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: MAJOR PROJECTS, PROJECT FILE NO. 612187
- Submit email comments to:
i-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us
- Visit the project website and sign up for project emails at:
www.mass.gov/i-391-bridge-replacement-chicopee



Questions & Discussion



Thank You

Veterans' Memorial Bridge Replacement

Public Meeting 2

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Project File Number: 612187

Aleksey Belov- i-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us

