

**Rourke Bridge Replacement Project
Construction Phase Public Information Meeting #01
July 15, 2025, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Collegiate Charter School of Lowell Gymnasium
1857 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA 01851**

Meeting Summary

On Tuesday, July 15, 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) hosted an in-person Public Information Meeting at the Collegiate Charter School of Lowell to present a status update for the Rourke Bridge Replacement Project. The project team presented the project background, the project design, the proposed schedule and construction phasing, methods for public involvement, and next steps. Following this presentation, time was allotted for public questions and comments. Attendees included elected officials, community representatives, and members of the public. MassDOT offered Spanish, Khmer, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for the meeting. 88 attendees signed in at the Public Information Meeting.

Please note that the information contained herein serves as meeting notes and not an exact transcript.

Meeting Notes

Project Team Presentation:

- Billy Parent (HNTB) began the meeting, noting it would be the first in a series of meetings during the construction phase of the project.
- Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) provided a background of the project. The temporary Rourke Bridge is nearing the end of its useful life and must be replaced. This project will replace the bridge, which carries approximately 27,000 vehicles daily, and improve surrounding intersections. The existing bridge will remain in place during construction and will be inspected on a set schedule throughout the project.
- Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) outlined bridge design elements. The new bridge will be wider, accommodating two vehicular lanes of travel in each direction, along with dedicated lanes for bicycles and pedestrians. Additionally, the intersections of Pawtucket Boulevard and Old Ferry Road and Wood Street and Middlesex Street will be reconstructed.
- Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) outlined what residents can expect during bridge construction. A traffic management plan will be implemented to minimize traffic on local roads, and most work will be carried out within established work zones. Other

mitigation measures will be in place to minimize noise, dust, and environmental impacts during construction. It is anticipated that the project will achieve full beneficial use in 2029, at which time vehicles will be able to travel on the new bridge. Project completion, including landscaping, is planned for 2030.

Discussion and Comments

Elected Official Comments:

- MA State Representative Rodney Elliott, 16th Middlesex District, commented on his excitement for the project. He thanked the project team for their work to move this project forward and specifically thanked MassDOT for the inclusion of \$1.3 million to maintain the current, temporary bridge.
- MA State Representative Tara Hong, 18th Middlesex District, thanked the MassDOT team for coming to Lowell and providing this update. He noted his team is working hard with MassDOT to make this project as efficient as possible.
- City of Lowell Mayor, Daniel Rourke, thanked the project team, noting the importance of this project.
- Patti Kirwin-Keilty, Chief of Staff, MA State Senator Edward J. Kennedy's office, noted a prior meeting announced the completion date as 2028, and asked why it had shifted to 2029.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) noted the design was still in development at the prior meeting, and new right-of-way acquisitions identified since the time of the last meeting necessitated the schedule change.

Public Questions and Comments:

- Mary Murphy, resident at 1821 Middlesex Street, asked if her condominium complex would be impacted by construction, specifically, if the property would need to be demolished to accommodate bridge construction.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) noted that all properties adjacent to the bridge will have access during construction, and this location will not be impacted by land takings. No properties will be demolished as part of this project.
- An unnamed attendee asked for a timeframe on the expansion of Middlesex Street.

- Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that utility relocation work will be the first operation, and major roadway reconstruction operations are not scheduled to begin until the 2026 construction season.
- Jairo Reyes commented that his children attend the Collegiate Charter School of Lowell and asked if construction noise would be present during school hours. Additionally, he asked how water quality will be monitored during construction, noting there are beaches downstream of the project that could be impacted.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that there are no plans to close downstream beaches during construction. Cofferdams will be constructed in the waterway during pier installation, which will create a contained work zone with a silt curtain to minimize debris. Environmental monitoring will be conducted throughout the project to ensure regulations are being followed.
 - Additionally, Andrew Pramberger explained that there are limits in the project contract that outline allowable noise levels at various times of the day. The majority of the work will be performed during the day shift to minimize noise at night. Cofferdam work will be the noisiest and is anticipated to be completed in the winter during the daytime, resulting in minor noise impacts to the Collegiate Charter School of Lowell. However, this will be a brief period, and noise monitoring will be conducted throughout the project.
- Paul Early, Pine Street resident, asked if any measures would be in place to mitigate heat island effects on the new bridge.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) noted the proposed trellises on the bridge will provide shade for pedestrians, along with tree plantings.
- Dennis McCarthy noted his affiliation as a rower and asked if the project team would create a schedule dashboard marking progression as work is completed.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that schedule “lookaheads” will be available for traffic impacts, and a similar schedule for rowing impacts could be created.
- An unnamed attendee asked if there would be an elevated walkway incorporated into the design, expressing safety concerns about the shared-use path being at the same level as vehicular traffic. Noting recent events, the attendee asked if the project team had taken flooding into account in the design. Finally, the attendee asked if the cofferdam construction would impact the surrounding water.

- Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) explained that the shared-use path will be at the same level as vehicular traffic.
 - Kristen Whitman explained that drainage is an extensive part of the design process and will be monitored throughout the project; however, there are no plans to change the roadway grade in relation to the Merrimack River.
 - Kristen Whitman noted that a hydraulics design team will be performing an analysis of the temporary condition with cofferdams in place.
- Richard Maloney commented that he would like a pedestrian walkway across Pawtucket Boulevard incorporated into the design, similar to what is above the Charles River.
- David McCabe asked if the project is dependent on federal funding.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that federal funds have already been secured and obligated to complete the project.
- Joshua Warhurst, a Chelmsford resident, commented that the current bridge has a path underneath that provides access to the Vandenberg Esplanade, and would like to see that incorporated in the final design. He asked if the traffic signal wait time for the Wood Street intersection has been defined.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) noted this has not been finalized, but traffic counts from the prior design phase will inform the final condition.
- Michael Williams, a Pawtucket Boulevard resident, asked if any speed control measures would be in place on the new bridge. Additionally, he noted ice in the winter will be a hazard, especially given the new curved design of the bridge. Finally, he asked how the former sewage treatment plant site will be remediated.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) explained that the design speed is 40 miles per hour, and the bridge design is being completed with that in mind.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that there is a sampling plan for the former wastewater treatment plant, and all MassDEP regulations for the site will be followed.
- Paul Early asked where shade trees would be placed along the bridge approaches. Additionally, he commented that the project team should work with the City of Lowell so that the shared-use path matches other bike facilities in the city.

- Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) noted that a landscape designer will define planting details further along in the design process and will present them at a future meeting.
- Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg noted that many local children ride their bicycles without a helmet and expressed concern about how safety would be incorporated for bicyclists. She commented that she would like more protection for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Pawtucket Boulevard.
- Sean Dillon, Pawtucketville resident, asked how drilled pilings will be completed.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that cofferdams are rectangular-shaped “bathtubs” within the river that will have a casing comprised of four sheet walls, which will allow water to be pumped out. These cofferdams will keep water separated, allowing drilling to take place.
- William Nickles, Lowell resident, asked if the new bridge will incorporate turn lanes onto Pawtucket Boulevard, and if traffic counts informed this decision. Additionally, he asked what the estimated lifespan of the new bridge is.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) explained that a left-turn lane with signage will be in place and that all design decisions are informed by traffic counts.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) added that the realignment of the new bridge relocates the northern terminus of the bridge to Pawtucket Boulevard and Old Ferry Road, which accommodates through traffic movement.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) explained the new bridge will be designed to last at least 75 years.
- Robert Atkinson asked if co-op students would be given construction jobs.
 - Robert Pine (Skanska) explained that the team will provide learning and co-op opportunities.
- An unnamed attendee asked if any plans have been made regarding emergency access during construction.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that MassDOT requires a contingency plan, which the Skanska team has drafted. The Skanska team will meet with emergency services to discuss this further and coordinate the construction with emergency services.

- Dimitri Belov, Middlesex Street resident, asked if the widening of Middlesex Street would change building regulations. Additionally, he noted the widening will likely result in increased traffic and asked if fencing would be incorporated in the design.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) explained that fencing will be included; however, specific locations will be defined once the design is finalized.
 - Kristen Whitman noted there will be some property easements along the right-of-way, which will be shared with owners further down the line. On building regulations, this is defined on a case-by-case basis by MassDOT.
- Joy Talbot, a Chelmsford resident, noted concerns that the project could go over budget and asked how they would secure funding if it did.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that MassDOT has a contingency budget, which is secured.
 - Joseph Stasio (MassDOT) explained that this is a design-build project, which provides fewer opportunities for an overrun in cost.
- Chris Baker, Lowell resident, asked who is overseeing the project, and if any Federal representatives will be involved.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that Skanska is the General Contractor and will perform quality control, but MassDOT will oversee quality assurance and manage the project. There will also be a representative from the Federal Highway Administration involved.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) added more context to the oversight structure, noting Jacobs will design the project, which is reviewed by Skanska and MassDOT before moving forward. All materials must meet MassDOT specification requirements; otherwise, the project contractors will not be paid. The team is committed to delivering a quality product.
- David McCabe explained at a prior meeting that he saw a graphic that showed a beautiful arch and asked if that is what the bridge would look like in its final condition.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) shared a rendering showing the arch trellis, which is meant to be as accurate as possible at this point in the design. The actual height will be provided once the design is finalized.
- Linda Tardiff asked if tariffs would impact the project costs.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that all products for this project need to be made in America, which means tariffs will not impact the pricing

of materials. Additionally, there is a provision for price adjustments.

- Ryan Feria asked for clarification on how much is set aside for the contingency plan, and if the team can confirm if there will be any closures of the temporary bridge during construction.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that the contingency plan includes 10% of the \$273 million bid price.
 - Andrew Pramberger (Skanska) explained that the project is being designed to allow the current bridge to remain open throughout construction. There may be cases where a temporary, full closure of the current bridge will be necessary for maintenance, but that would be announced to the public in advance.
- An unnamed attendee commented on their safety concerns, noting that electric scooter use is increasing, and the bridge is close to local shopping centers. They requested an elevated walkway for bicycles and pedestrians.
- An unnamed attendee asked for details on speed control measures to be taken at bridge intersections.
 - Kristen Whitman (Jacobs) reiterated that this will be defined once the design is finalized.
 - Billy Parent (HNTB) explained that all new information will be provided online and presented at similar public meetings.
- An unnamed attendee explained that the coating on the current bridge came off and was never fully reapplied.
 - Peter Tramontozzi (MassDOT) explained that there are provisions in the contract to maintain the existing bridge. MassDOT will review the coating condition and make necessary repairs.
- An unnamed attendee asked for a direct answer on whether there can be an overpass incorporated into the design for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Billy Parent (HNTB) explained that there is no plan at this time for a pedestrian crossing over the river, as it is not a part of the project scope.
 - Joseph Stasio (MassDOT) explained that the project scope has already been finalized, which is what went to bid. The design being finalized currently involves more specific details, such as trellis height, for example. If the team

wanted to incorporate an out-of-scope item in the project, the cost would come out of the contingency funds.

Project Team Attendees

Entity	Name
MassDOT	Daniel Boland
MassDOT	Mustafa Sadeq
MassDOT	Joseph Stasio
MassDOT	Peter Tramontozzi
HNTB	Billy Parent
HNTB	Alex Murray
HNTB	Katie Gold
Jacobs	Kristen Whitman
Skanska	Robert Pine
Skanska	Andrew Pramberger
Regina Villa Associates	Emily Meyer
Regina Villa Associates	Kyle Olsen