



MEMO

TO: Joseph Stasio, MassDOT Resident Engineer
Michael Ortler, Middlesex Superintendent
Richard Lenox, WSP Vice President/Senior Project Manager

FROM: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, WSP Assistant Vice President

RE: I-495 Andover-Lawrence Bridge Replacements Public Information Meeting 1

DATE: May 8th, 2024

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OVERVIEW

On Monday, April 8, 2024, members of the MassDOT and design/build team staff associated with the I-495 Andover-Lawrence Bridge Replacements held the project’s first public information meeting. The meeting took place at the South Lawrence East Elementary School, located at 165 Crawford Street, in Lawrence. The project consists of the full replacement of the four bridges which carry I-495 over Route 28 and the two bridges which carry the highway over the MBTA Haverhill Commuter Rail Line. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public with the opportunity to become acquainted with the construction phase of the I-495 Andover-Lawrence Bridge replacement project, and to offer an opportunity for the community to ask questions or note concerns, particularly regarding the project’s detour routes. The presentation outlined the phases of construction, project timelines and milestones, information on the required closures and detours, and highlighted the measures being taken to help the project be a good neighbor.

The meeting was advertised through local newsprint, public access cable television, and WHAV FM, a radio station with a considerable “drive time” audience in the Merrimack Valley as well as MassDOT social media. Flyers for the meeting were dropped at 12 different locations in Andover, including flyer drops at 195 homes surrounding the interchange in Andover and Lawrence, and 18 different locations in Lawrence, totaling to 30 locations. State and municipal officials, community organizations, medical providers, schools, and service providers shared the information through their networks and websites. Interpretation was provided in Spanish and Vietnamese.

The meeting’s tone was generally neutral. Most attendees were satisfied with the information presented, but a few voiced their concerns about traffic impacts and congestion. Questions were asked regarding traffic studies, nighttime work hours and activities, detours, traffic impacts, and public outreach.



PRESENTATION¹

C: Nathiel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): Hello, I'm Nathaniel Curtis and I work for a company called WSP. Among other things we conduct public outreach for this very fine project. I'm going to be back up in a little bit, but for starters, I'm going to hand this (the microphone) off to our MassDOT Resident Engineer Joe Stasio.

C: Joseph Stasio: Thank you, Nate. Good evening, everyone, my name is Joseph Stasio, I'm the Resident Engineer on this project. Thank you for joining us tonight. Our agenda for this presentation is as follows. What do we want to accomplish? How will we build this project? How will roadway users be affected? How will we keep you informed? And then at the end, we will have plenty of time for a Q&A.

Our team tonight is comprised of representatives from MassDOT and the design build team. We have Dan Fielding, who is the legislative liaison from MassDOT and Peter Tramontozzi who is the Assistant District Construction Engineer from MassDOT. From Middlesex, we have Michael Ortler who is the Project Manager. From WSP, we have Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, who is the Public Information Specialist, Erik Maki, who is the Lead Traffic Engineer, and Rich Lenox, who is the Design Manager.

I will now take a moment to go over MassDOT's policy on diversity and civil rights: All MassDOT activities, including public meetings, are free of discrimination. MassDOT complies with all federal and state civil rights requirements preventing discrimination based on sex, race, color, ancestry, national origin (limited English proficiency), religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or veteran's status. We welcome the diversity from across our entire service area. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/nondiscrimination-in-transportation-program> to reach the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights.

To participate, we ask that you listen and view this 30-minute presentation, ask any questions to the project team during the question-and-answer period, and submit comments into the comment box at the sign-in table out front. Any representatives of the media can direct media inquiries to Jacquelyn.Goddard@dot.state.ma.us.

I will now take a moment to go over how we got here. The six bridges in our project area back to 1962, when this section of I-495 was opened to traffic. In 2011, MassDOT identified the need to replace the six bridges in our project area. While the bridges are safe for everyday use, they require frequent inspection and frequent maintenance to maintain safety, and they are at the end of their useful lifespan. The new bridges will be built to modern standards and the current bridges do not meet those standards. From 2015 to 2021, MassDOT advanced the preliminary design, and we conducted some initial outreach in 2018, we held a 25% design public hearing in 2021, and then in February of 2023, we advertised this project for bids to design build teams. And in 2024 we initiated public outreach for this project, and that brings us to this meeting tonight, so I will hand this back over to Nate for a moment to go over our outreach process.

C: NCC: Thank you very kindly, I appreciate it. So, this is where we advertised this meeting. We are fortunate in having some of the folks from Lawrence Community Access TV with us this evening. You can see these are all of the various mass media outlets, as well as the MassDOT Gov-Delivery system, which some of you have received in an email. You can read all of these (pointing to the meeting advertisement information slide), but I think the important part is to look at these dates. There are two meetings associated with this project. One is tonight, in Lawrence and if you really love this presentation, you can see it again in Andover on the 23rd. The idea behind doing all of this advertising, think about it as being like the 4th of July fireworks display, there is this constant rolling sort of drumbeat of "please come pay attention to this." This is important and we can go through these if you want, but I think the main thing is to get a sense of all of the outlets and the dates.

Now you might also have gotten a flyer from us. These are the locations in Andover where we did drops of flyers in multiple languages. If you see one of these red circles, that means that we also have a staffed table there, which meant we had a kind of living advertisement. We set up a small folding table like the one out in the hall, and as

¹ "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer.



people go by, we flag them down, and say, “Hey, this project is coming to your neighborhood, we think you might want to take a look at this because it will have some impact on you.” One thing that’s worth noting, and I apologize because the two maps sort of split the area I’m talking about, but if you look right here at the top of the slide, this is where the interchange and the bridges over Route 28 would be. We specifically picked 195 homes that really have what I call ringside seating. Those folks got a flyer dropped directed at their door, which would have been last Monday (Monday, April 1). Then here we have where we dropped something in Lawrence. Again, we have our two staffed tables, the Public Library and America’s Food Basket grocery store, and then a whole bunch of other sites. When we drop these flyers, we look for some place that is neutral. You don’t tend to put it in a church or a hospital because some people are afraid of doctors. So, we try to put it somewhere lots of people go, and everybody goes to the grocery store, lots of people go to the library, sometimes people have to go to the registry. One thing I will note is obviously we feel that dropping things off at this public pool is a good idea, but we couldn’t do that for this meeting because going to a public outdoor pool would not be fun at all given the time of year. We also want to thank everybody who shared our flyers, the state delegation for both communities, the various selectboards, the various school departments, the disability, the elderly and veteran services departments, area healthcare providers, social service organization and the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce—everyone has been really nice to us. The area Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO if you’re in the know, they’ve helped push this as well. Thank you to everybody who did that. At this point, I will hand it back over to Joe, who is going to talk you through some more of the project.

C: JS: So here is our project area. We’re right on the edge of the Andover/Lawrence line. You can see the six bridges labeled by the yellow boxes on the screen, four of them are over Route 28 which splits underneath the highway and two of them go over the MBTA commuter rail, which is the Haverhill Commuter Line. We know these are very busy roadways and they have many impacts on everyone. All of the work that we are doing is with the goal of having as little impact as possible. We understand I-495 carries 57,000 vehicles per day in each direction and Route 28 carries 14,700 vehicles per day in each direction and provides has access to homes, businesses, educational opportunities and medical care. The limits here you can see on I-495 stretch for about a mile from the left side of the screen to the right side of the screen and that will include roadway work on the highway and then the limits of the roadway work down below on Route 28 will stretch about 400 feet in either direction.

So now I will go over what we want to accomplish with this project. As you can see on the slide here, we are looking to improve conditions for modes of transportation. We are trying to update everything to modern standards. We want to provide six new bridges with fewer joints and supports. We want to have fewer impacts to the traveling public from maintenance activities that are currently more frequent than we’d like. We would like to complete all of the roadway work and provide safer acceleration and deceleration and merging between the I-495/Route 28 and I-495/Route 114 interchanges. We will have fully compliant breakdown lanes at the end of the project as well as auxiliary lanes in between those two interchanges and will upgrade all of the guardrail and improve safety on the corridor. The last note I have here is that this project gives us an opportunity to make bicycle and pedestrian improvements down below the bridges within the limits of work.

Now getting into our planned construction approach, this project is a little bit unique. We are going with a design/build procurement. The typical method of procurement that we use on a job is design-bid-build. MassDOT would develop a set of plans and put it out for a bid, then contractors would bid on that set of plans, and the lowest bidder wins, and they would build that project exactly how it’s shown on the plans. With this project, we’re going with design/build. In a design/build, MassDOT develops what is called a base technical concept or BTC. The BTC is then put out for bid to teams of contractors and engineers. The winning team works together to finish the design and construct the project. The reason we do that is because it allows coordination, flexibility and innovation between the members of the design/build team. So that’s the Middlesex and WSP teams we have here today, they provide MassDOT with a price to finish the design and construct the project. The winner of that bid is based on best value, not just lowest cost. We also looked at their technical proposal, what innovations they have to improve the timeline, lessen the impacts to the public, and just make for a better project overall. It gives them the flexibility to come up with the design instead of us just telling them exactly what to do. So, the goal of all that is to deliver the project in a shorter time frame because we’re only going to 25% design so that saves time on the front end and it allows us to progress the rest of the design and the construction simultaneously.



So, at this time, I'm going to turn it over to Michael Ortler, the Project Manager at the Middlesex Corporation to talk to our construction staging approach.

C: Michael Ortler (MO): Good evening, everyone. Like Joe mentioned with this being a design build right now, the Middlesex and WSP team is currently finishing the 25% BTC design in conjunction. On the construction side of the house, we are completing the shop drawings and plans, getting ready for mobilizing equipment and labor resources, so when construction does start, we will hit the ground running. Joe mentioned that design build is really all about innovation and optimization. One thing I do want to highlight here is that the original design that people may have seen it when that was released a few years ago had split barrel traffic patterns. So, what that means is on your three-lane highway, you would have one lane of travel, a split with barrier protecting our work zone as well as the public, and then two more lanes. You can picture that in your head. There comes a lot of challenges with that and in my career, I have done that a few times, and the biggest thing is that if someone gets into an accident in that single lane takes a lot of time to get them out and there is a buildup of congestion, it's just not good for everyone who travels on the daily. So, what our team has done is we've created a traffic pattern, so that at all times during the peak hour, all of your rush hours, you will always have three lanes with no splits between them.

Now, I'm going to start clicking through and I'll walk everyone through what it will look like over the next few years. The conditions up on the board right now, that's what everyone sees and drives today. Three lanes on either side, northbound and southbound. This year, in June, we will start our construction, which is our stage 1, which is the summer of this year to the fall of next year. All of our work is taking place in the median there. So again, during peak hours, we are not affecting the flow of traffic. We make some additional space for ourselves in the median by shifting the travel lanes towards the outer edges of the right-of-way, but the travel lanes will remain very similar to what everyone sees today. In the fall of 2025, the northbound traffic gets moved to the center median. From there, our team then moves over to the northbound lane, which will be closed and behind barrier, where we will then demolish and rebuild the northbound lanes. This is sort of mirrored in the next stage, we just flip everything. So, the northbound now goes to the new permanent bridge, southbound gets moved to the median, and we take our work zone into the southbound lanes to demolish and rebuild the new bridge. Then at the end of our project in the fall of 2027, everyone is in their permanent alignment with new bridges and roadway.

OK, with that I'm going to turn this over to Erik and he will run through in a little bit more detail what you'll be looking at as far as traffic control.

C: Erik Maki (EM): Thanks, Mike. So, there will be some unavoidable traffic impacts on both I-495 and Route 28 throughout construction. However, lane reductions and detours will occur outside of the peak commuter hours. All three lanes on I-495 will remain open, as Mike said, but there will be some closures on Route 28, one direction at a time.

I'm going to walk you through the various features associated with the project, one by one. As I do, just keep in mind that these detours are short term and implemented at night only. They won't be in place day after day impacting rush hour. All detours shown will be used in each of the stages that Mike just went through and the reason for that is to allow us to work safely over Route 28 or to adjust one of the ramps between Route 28 and I-495. Our goal is to sign these detours to keep drivers on larger roads and off of smaller residential streets. We have also looked for intersections with dedicated left turn lanes and traffic signals so traffic doesn't back up where we can. We have tried to provide two detours to get to the same place, so if you miss your first chance, you're not out of luck. Don't feel like you have to memorize these, part of our public outreach later in the job will be putting these detours out on e-mail, and the project website prior to one being implemented so everyone knows what to expect. In addition, signage will be in place to direct you along the detour routes.

As we walk through these detours, you'll hear me refer to things like Ramp A or Ramp B. Unlike streets in your town, ramps don't have easy names, and "I-495 northbound to Route 28 northbound" gets to be a mouthful after a while, so we assign a letter to each ramp for easy reference. Again, no need to memorize these, you will get to see them again before they are in place.



Ramp A is I-495 northbound to Route 28 southbound. Ramp B is I-495 southbound to Route 28 southbound. Ramp C is Route 28 southbound to I-495 southbound. Ramp D is Route 28 northbound to I-495 southbound. Ramp E is I-495 northbound to Route 28 northbound. And lastly Ramp F is from Route 28 northbound to I-495 northbound.

For the closure of Route 28 southbound at I-495 northbound. This detour will be used when demolition of the bridges over Route 28 southbound or setting beams for the replacements take place. If traffic is coming towards I-495 from downtown Lawrence, the signed detour will be left from Route 28 southbound onto Andover Street, right onto Route 114, under I-495, right onto High Street, right onto Haverhill Street, and then a left back onto Route 28. For traffic that is already south of Andover Street or heading south to the I-495 main lane, those vehicles would get to stay on the Interstate at or through the Route 28 interchange. They would then travel south to the interchange to I-93, use the ramps to reverse direction, come back to the I-495 and Route 28 interchange exiting to Route 28 southbound heading for Andover.

For the closure of Route 28 northbound and I-495 Ramps D and E, this detour would be used during the demolition of the bridge over Route 28 northbound or when setting beams for their replacements. For traffic coming north from Andover, the movement is a reverse of what we stepped through for the Route 28 southbound closure. Traffic will take Haverhill Street to Route 114 under I-495 to Andover Street and then back to Route 28. For traffic that has missed the first detour or originates between Andover Street and I-495 and wants to head into Lawrence, we would reroute those drivers one exit north along I-495 to the Route 114 interchange where they could pick up the local detour to Andover Street and back to Route 28. Traffic from Andover seeking access to I-495 southbound, likewise has two options, one is to take the local detour using Haverhill Street and Route 114 to the Interstate. The other is to continue north past Andover Street, get on I-495 northbound, and then use the Route 114 interchange to reverse direction and head south.

For the closure of I-495 on Ramps C & D. This one is a little tricky because Ramp C & D merge into as single ramp before they funnel into I-495 southbound. Ramp C collects traffic from Route 28, heading towards Andover and Ramp D collects traffic from Route 28 heading towards Lawrence. Traffic coming from Lawrence that would normally use Ramp C will be detoured along Andover Street to Route 114 to the interchange of I-495 where they could go south along the Interstate. For traffic coming from Andover that would normally use Ramp D, we would pick them up at Haverhill Street, send them to Route 114, and from there to the I-495 interchange where they could go south. For any traffic originating between Haverhill Street and I-495, their best option would be to get on to I-495 going north up to the Route 114 interchange and reverse direction.

For the closure of I-495 northbound off Ramp E. Ramp E takes northbound traffic from I-495 to Route 28 heading towards Lawrence. Again, maybe detecting something of a theme, here we would send drivers to the Route 114 interchange and then have them get off on the Route 114 northbound at Andover Street, and back to their desired path along Route 28.

For the Closure of I-495 off Ramp F. Ramp F takes traffic from Route 28 northbound to I-495 northbound and when that is closed, traffic has two options. The first is to travel along Haverhill Street to Route 114 where drivers can get onto the Interstate and head towards Lowell. The other option is for drivers originating north of Haverhill Street or those that have missed Haverhill Street, is to get onto I-495 southbound to the ramps in the I-93 interchange to reverse direction and then head north.

Now for the reversal of South Union Street. This next detour is a little tricky, so we are going to take this one slow. This image shows our larger map with the section of Route 28 immediately to the north of I-495 highlighted by the blue block. There are some unique challenges associated with this area, when we have work taking place on Route 28 northbound. I'll go over those now. There are two images on this slide, the one on the left represents existing conditions. The one on the right is the anticipated detour condition when Route 28 northbound is closed. First, I will go over the existing conditions and then address the proposed conditions, so just bear with me as we walk through this. As I'm sure you are aware, Route 28 splits a little bit before it passes under I-495. As you're going under the bridge, northbound traffic is on South Main Street and southbound traffic is on South Union Street. Traffic can either go straight and continue onto Union Street or bare left onto South Street, crossing below a bridge that carries southbound traffic from South Union Street to Route 28 going towards Andover. There are homes along Shepley and



Binney Street, as well as businesses like Stewart Electrical Contracting that could only be accessed by traveling north on South Main Street. That's not that big of a deal under normal conditions because just south of I-495 is a U-turn which allows traffic to reverse direction to reach those destinations. That's how things work today. When we have to close Route 28 and I-495, there is not really a good way for residents on Shepley and Binney Street to get back to their homes after they've left. They can go north, but there is no good way to get back. To make sure they have access, we will convert a short street of South Union Street to a two-way operation so folks can get out and then back to their homes. I want to emphasize a few things about this change. This would only be implemented during the overnight hours after most folks have already gone home. As you can see with the little police officer graphics on the image to the left, we will have two police details present while the change is in effect to help keep everyone safe. Lastly, this is getting a little into Nate's territory, but anytime we are going to change the direction of operation on a section of roadway, we will flyer out at the impacted homes and businesses along with the usual email distributions and website updates.

For the South Union Street northbound return, one last detour slide—This is the South Union Street northbound returning. Effectively this is for traffic originating around Sheffield, many streets that has a destination on South Union Street to the south of Route 114, such as the RMV or America's Food Basket who would send drivers north to Andover Street and then over to Route 114 where they can connect to South Union Street to go wherever they need to go.

I will now turn this back over to Mike.

C: MO: All right. So obviously, we are going to be here for four years. There are residents that live pretty close to the job, some just over 400 feet away. So it's important for us that the project is making sure that we're good neighbors. As part of our project requirements, we have to create a bunch of different plans to ensure that we meet our obligations to be good neighbors. The first plan we have to do is a real time traffic monitoring plan. I'm sure many of you have seen the big VMS boards telling people how fast it's going and how long it's going to take from Point A to Point B. We will be implementing that on this project. That is big effort to make sure that if people see some congestion, they know exactly how long it is going to take to go through our mile long project. That typically keeps people on the main road and off of the back roads and also just gives us a better way to manage traffic on a day-to-day basis.

We have to prepare and submit to MassDOT dust and noise control plans. Those plans are enforced by MassDOT and they make sure we adhere to the commitments we've made. So just some mitigation that we will be taking throughout the entire project to make sure that we don't have too many dust and noise issues. To start with dust: we'll have water trucks on site consistently, so anywhere we have exposed ground, we will be wetting the soil, so as the material gets moved around and vehicles move in and out you don't get dust leaving the site. We will be doing the same thing with any of the concrete piers of the existing bridges when we demolish them. As far as noise, all of the message signs that I mentioned that will be part of the real time traffic monitoring, those will all be solar powered, so you won't hear a gasoline generator powering them at night. The noise control plans define three different noise levels based on time of day: daytime, evening, and nighttime. Daytime is obviously the loudest, evening is right in the middle, and nighttime is when we have to be as quiet as we can. Throughout the course of the project, we will be in touch with the community so you know when we will be working nights and when some of our major operations come up. We are also coordinating with MassDOT to avoid as much confusion and congestion as possible.

So, a quick look ahead. If the weather holds out for us, we're looking to start construction in May-June time frame. You won't notice too much of us for the first 30 days, a lot of it is going to be mobilization. We'll be starting to establish our work zones, we'll have some minor clearing and grubbing that will be going on in the median and there will be signage installation for traffic control, but the bulk of our work will be down along the MBTA right-of-way commuter rail line installing a duct bank with National Grid. For the MBTA right away commuter rail, we are not disrupting train service, so if you do take the train, you're going to be good to go.

I've mentioned this quickly before, but to run through it again in broad terms, the project is roughly four years. We are starting in the Spring/Summer of 2024 to 2025, and then enter stage two (Fall 2025 – Fall 2026), as I mentioned,



is taking the northbound lanes, and shifting them into the median to give us the space to build the new northbound bridges. That stage is approximately a year. The following year, in 2026, traffic moves onto the new northbound bridges. The southbound lanes shift into the center median to let us demolish and rebuild the southbound bridges. Then into the Summer/Fall of 2027, traffic will be aligned into its final position and improvements will be made to the shoulders, merging lanes, and exiting lanes.

So, with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Nate to talk about how he will keep everyone informed.

C: NCC: Thank you very much. All right, very close to the end here. So, this is how to stay informed. I don't know what your cell phones will do with this range, but I encourage you to try it. That QR code on the screen will allow you to sign up for weekly updates. MassDOT usually has these projects issue an update which goes on the website and usually come out every other Friday or Thursday, whichever day we pick, but we usually try to pick something close to the end of the week. With this one, the goal is to really try and keep people informed, given the impact and again given how tight the community is on the project with those homes in some cases under 400 feet away. So, these will be going out every week and what it will say is: What did we work on this week, what have we gotten done on major project elements and then what can you expect in the next upcoming week ahead.

You can always e-mail us with questions or concerns, that email is in fact live at this time. We've already answered some questions and had some nice conversations. The account comes to me, it comes to our legislative liaison, Dan Fielding, and it comes to Joe. We do get back to folks, typically that takes a day or two, could be a little longer if it's a complicated questions because I get the email, I make the ring around with kind of everybody who's involved. I massage all that together, then it goes back to Joe, he checks it for accuracy, and once he says yes, it's ready for public consumption and the response goes out.

We have the project hotline that is being handled for us by a company that's right down the road in Billerica called AnswerNet. It was nice to be able to find something local. This is not active yet, there is no reason to have it active in the month of April, but we will probably be activating it at some point in May. I'm going to give you an over-the-top example that won't happen, but here's kind of how I like to think of when I do use the hotline versus when I use the email account. If you want to know if there is going to be a detour this weekend or there's a VMS board near my house that stopped working, that's a great thing for the email. If there's something on fire in the work zone, call the hotline. Again, that's an over the top, probably-not-going-to-happen example, but it just helps to parse it in your mind. And that's that.

DISCUSSION

C: NCC: I don't believe we have anybody in the audience this evening who won an election to hold their job, but if there is anybody who, yes, sir, you get to go first, I will walk the microphone down to you and you can ask your question.

Q: Marc LaPlante (ML): Thank you so much, my name is Mark, I'm part of the City Council that actually represents all of where this is going in Lawrence. A couple of technical things- One, there is no North Main Street in Lawrence, we call it South Broadway Street, so if you're going to be making any kind of maps, I would hope the maps have South Broadway as opposed to North Main Street. One of those you mentioned a couple of times is peak driving times, what is peak driving time? The other thing is that they're going to be tremendous... in your studies that you've been doing, I'm sure you have what kind of impacts you detected that you could give us a heads up on? That you anticipate? As I'm watching the popsicle headache different places where the detours are it is obviously that there is going to be confusion and there's a tremendous amount of work—my mouth is still open. There is a tremendous ride around for somebody and I'm presuming that there is just no other way you do it, but with those tremendously long detours, there are going to be issues. My question would be what are your anticipated impacts that you would have, more in the Lawrence side than the Andover side for obvious reasons, so what would be the impacts on the Lawrence side? I think that's my question.



C: NCC: I will take credit for the incorrect road name, I will also desperately try to pass it on to Google although I doubt that they will do anything with it, but we will correct those maps. I think your other questions are probably best handled by Erik so I will pass that over to him.²

A: EM: So, there's a few different ways that we look at traffic. The first thing that we did as a team was, we made some changes to the base technical concept. We are very aware of impacts and reducing impacts. The first thing we did as a team on the project was remove the split barrel that was in place in the base concept that we received from the previous designer. You saw from the images that we put up to show you the staging, we're keeping I-495 running in three lanes. Continuous lanes will be shifted in and out of the median, but we removed the split barrel approach that we feel was the first thing to help I-495 at least maintain its current level of operations. On Route 28, as we mentioned, the detours are only going to occur when we're doing a demolition up top on I-495 and we have to shut down the road, but those will all be done at night. I don't know what time frame, usually it's after 9:00 PM, so when we talk about affecting the rush hour, the commuter hours are typically when people are coming to and from work. I know it's often busy throughout the day as well, midway with all the different activities and schools and hospitals. Usually, rush hour is 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM, but all of our detours would be occurring later at night, 9:00 PM or later so the majority of people should be home by then. Haverhill Street, Route 114, and Andover Street is the major detour route, but for local residents, they can take whatever streets feel comfortable to them, but we do have to sign at least one particular route. We have an advantage with the Route 28 and Route 114 interchanges being so close together: if you missed that detour coming into the village center and you're still headed towards I-495 where the road's closed, there's on-ramps to the highway that allows us to detour traffic to the Route 114 interchange to reverse direction or using the I-93 interchange. We know that these roads are busy, but the project limits those detours only to the times when we're demolishing or setting beams on the bridge, which is limited and not occurring every night. It's probably a few dozen times over four years and it's also later at night.

C: NCC: If you would councilor, before you go today, just come see me because I'll want to go into this PowerPoint and put a text box over where it should be South Broadway so that I can communicate it back to our graphics folks so that when we give this on the 23rd it's correct.

Q: ML: The other thing I would add as well is if you would be more affirmative in your definition of when the peak time is, I've heard 9:00, so a lot of us think peak times for different times and if you get that one hour, whatever it is, 3:00 to 6:00 pm or whatever you determine is the peak time so there is no confusion. Folks are thinking of when they're going to have these kinds of impacts and so you said a couple of dozen times, is it fair to assume three or four dozen times? And of course, the next four years we will see those impacts, but I heard with respect to detours, did I hear that correctly?

A: EM: Yes, late at night. Traffic is much reduced after 9:00 PM, it's not the level of traffic that you would see during rush hour. There's a lot of traffic, let's say, in the afternoon between 3:00 and 6:00 PM you see a lot of traffic on the streets, because the detours are happening at 9:00 PM, the traffic has already greatly reduced so the number of people there we are detouring will be less.

C: NCC: Other questions? Yes, Sir.

Q: No Name #1 (NN #1): Thank you, quick introduction: I was Mark's former colleague on the City Council in Lawrence. Quick thing about my history, I have over 50 years of land surveying experience. I worked on I-95 in the early 70s up in Topsfield. I have worked on three or four projects in Essex County, I-93/I-95/Route 1 in Salisbury, so I'm quite familiar with this. I have three questions. First question is what is the cost of this project? What process do you have in place to prevent this from becoming the Merrimack Valley's Big Dig? I'm pulling stuff out of my head, was the concept of what they did in Medford by replacing the bridges about six years ago in a weekend, was that concept ever considered for this? Thank you.

² The road changes its name from North Main Street to South Broadway in the middle of the work zone at the municipal border.



Q: NCC: Do you want to fill out an application when we get finished with this?

A: NN #1: You know, I'm 78 years old.

A: JS: Thank you for your questions. So, the cost of the project is \$98 million, just over \$98 million. That includes the six bridges and the one mile of highway work. We're going to be repaving everything, we're going to have all new overhead signs, everything will be brand new on the highway through that one mile. As far as cost over runs, the great thing about design/build, I mean, these guys might not think it's great, but we don't really put too much on the plans. We put very general information on the plans and the contract and the design. The design/build team really owns what they design, if they design something and there's utility in the way, well, they designed it, so they own it. A lot of overruns that you saw on the Big Dig were changes that were unforeseen. The agency said this piece of bridge needed to get installed in this location, but there were six utilities in the way and since they said it had to go there, they had to pay for the change. Now, what was the other part to your question?

C: NN #1: The bridge replacement that they did in the Middlesex area about six or eight years ago now.

A: JS: Fast 14, yeah, so really, I would say the biggest thing is cost. We could have done a Fast 14 type project here, but that typically comes with lots and lots of overtime and it increased the cost. So doing it this way, we're able to maintain three lanes of traffic in each direction on I-495, so we're building the project without many impacts to traffic at all. For the Fast 14 project we had to install a zipper barrier, split the barrel, and you actually had I-93 down to two lanes in each direction, so this approach was better for all.

Q: NN #1: So, time was more important than money on the Fast 14?

A: JS: I would say yes.

Q: NN #1: On the Fast 14, they did a bridge all weekend Friday night at what 9:00 PM and then the bridge was in place and usable at 5:00 AM on Monday morning?

A: JS: Yes. That was just the one portion, the bridge deck. On Fast 14, they didn't replace the substructure. We're fully replacing these bridges; we have new piles going all the way down into the ground. So, it's really just a completely different project.

Q: No Name #2 (NN #2): Hi, so my question is if there's 14,700 each way using Route 28, has a traffic study been done on this project and if so, is it available to the public?

A: NCC: So those numbers came from a thing called the Functional Design Report, which gets done as part of the base technical concept...[here the questioner interrupted with a clarification]

Q: NN #2: Is there a new traffic study given the impact?

C: NCC: Got it; that one is for Eric.

A: EM: So, there will be no new traffic study and the way that these design/build projects occur is that the original team studies it, comes up with the mitigation for the traffic impacts. We're the design/builders. We buy the project the original team offered up and we're building the project under a lump sum price so any studies we do would be maybe some spot study, just look at the sight lines or things like that, we're not doing any new traffic studies because there's no work on traffic signals or other similar alternations.

Q: NN #2: Come on, let's be realistic here. We're going to change traffic around on Lowell Street, we're going to change it around on all these interchanges, there's going to be traffic problems, so you guys are saying you haven't studied it, and you don't a traffic study?

A: EM: No that's not true, we have the studies, we've adopted the study, it's available. It's available on the website for the project.

Q: NN #2: Where is the MassDOT website for the project? I haven't seen that.



A: EM: I'm sure we can get you the study. We have the study; the study has new data. The prior consultant studied everything as far as traffic control. They studied the traffic assuming a split barrel configuration on I-495 but we're maintaining three lanes on I-495 with no split barrel so there's going to be less traffic impact. Anytime you build something there's always an impact but what we've done is mitigated it.

Q: NN #2: What's the impact?

A: EM: We don't really expect much of an impact so when we do the detours...[here the questioner interrupted]

Q: NN #2: So, you could have studied that or are you just saying that?

A: EM: No, they did the study. We have their numbers. You can certainly see the study and one thing that we're doing is we're leaving all the lanes open during the day, so there's no impact to traffic...

Q: NN #2: Right. So, no traffic impact in Andover...?

A: EM: We don't expect much of an impact. We don't take lanes out of I-495 during the peak hour. They may be a little narrower and we'll lower the speed limit to 55 through our work zone, but we're maintaining full lanes on I-495 and Route 28.

Q: NN #2: I want to see the study; you really believe that's going to work?

A: EM: So, we changed the configuration on I-495, we took out the split barrel so we're having the three lanes continuous with no split barrels, so that's improved. We're building up the median for the temporary three lanes and Route 28 doesn't get affected until we have to demolish the old bridge and we have to shut down the road for public safety. Otherwise, we're keeping the full lanes on Route 28 open all of the time. So, we've lessened the impacts, and the study is available, we can provide it too.

C: NCC: The other thing to bear in mind is that Erik's not going anywhere. If there's a problem, we can figure out a way to address it. I know we went through the detour diagrams quickly, but each time you see one of these symbols that says "detour info," that's one of those solar powered signs that we talked about. That's an electric sign where it says detour or a static sign. So, there's all this signage to help people know what to do. That's one of the key things you get congestion when people get confused. So that's one of the reasons there's all of this here. If we need to get an extra sign somewhere because people are confused and it's causing congestion, we can. It's not as though Erik is going to set these detours out and forget about them. If we discover there's something we can improve, then we'll improve it, that's the goal. It's not as though we're going to tell you "we can see it's not working right too, but you get what you get." I will say, having done another job with Middlesex on I-495 just up the road from here between 2009 and 2011, that one had a split barrel, but when it came to the night, there was a substantial drop in the volumes of traffic, it does help.

To be fair to your point, the project website does not contain that Functional Design Report because prior to going to this construction phase, I don't think they had a standalone website, but we can find a way to get the Functional Design Report to you, if you want to review it, just make sure that you've left us your email and you see me after the meeting, we'll note that it's something you want.

Q: NN #2: I have another question. What percentage of drivers do you think use Waze or Google Maps that will lead them on the speediest path? Is that part of your calculation?

C: NCC: So, the question, I'm just going to repeat it for the media. So, the question was what percentage of people are going to use Waze or Google Maps to take them on the speediest route through secondary roads or rural roads.

C: NN #2: They don't care. They go the fastest route; you think it's 50% of the people on there... Well, so, I don't know that anybody has calculated the percentage on that, I think a lot of people...

C: NCC: Well, hang on. There's a lady that I work with a MassDOT whose job it is to provide these things to those organizations. They don't always cooperate, but we do provide them to us. One of the things that's kind of good about this because I've been driving most of the detours to distribute the flyers, the Shawsheen River Bird Sanctuary



and Den Rock Park are basically impermeable. If you're on the main detour, there's the railroad line, there's this pond, there's places that you can't get through so your kind of channeled into the detour. I'm sure some people will opt to use some other road. The locals know the area, they know every possible route, but again, the signed detours are there because we have to do a signed detour and that's to prevent people from becoming confused, disoriented and going the wrong way.

Q: NN #2: I will give you a hint, people going I-95 to I-93 to avoid that interchange, you're telling me that they're going to start going down there and go around?

A: EM: Again, the detours are only at night when we have to demolish the bridge. We know it's busy all the time, but we're not, we wouldn't put a detour through a neighborhood either. The detours are only for nighttime. It is overwhelming seeing the detour routes but that's not the message. The message is we're only closing the road at night, and we will coordinate with police, fire, and emergency services, the Town, but again, it's at night, it's after 9:00 PM. Then we sign the routes so that nobody gets lost. I agree, most people do use Waze or Google or their GPS, but we don't rely on that. If we could rely on it, we wouldn't spend the money to put out any of this stuff. We put it down to the lowest level for people that don't have those services so that's why we put it in the signs and pass out the flyers. But it's a nighttime activity, so we're really expecting that it's after rush hour. People are at home, they've had dinner already, they're watching TV, and that's when the 2nd shift kicks in for these guys.

Q: NN #1: One last question, picking up on this gentlemen's question about the traffic study. What vintage, how old are those traffic studies? I've gone on the MassDOT site looking for traffic studies and I have found them to be 10 to 15 years old at least in the urban area. Your traffic studies there on I-495 and Route 28, and other roads, how far back are they done?

A: EM: I can't give you the exact date, but I'm pretty sure it was done in 2020. What we do when we do traffic studies is we project out to the year that we feel like the project is being built and also because of the pandemic, you know, there wasn't a lot of good data at some periods of time, so in some cases they used older data, but this was a newer traffic study and it's got all the information you're interested in.

Q: NN #1: 2020 was the pandemic, right?

A: EM: Yes. I have to look up the exact date, I just shut my computer.

C: MO: The other thing just to add to that is since we were designing the project for 75-year life span we also projected well beyond for the traffic volumes, so they do calculations to get the traffic volumes in 2040 for an example. So, we have that data in the functional design report as well.

A: EM: To your point about the pandemic, we have to check on that, but I would assume that was accounted for. Any studies that were done during the pandemic either used older data, pre-pandemic, that's good data that was factored forward or if they did collect data during the pandemic, the state had a whole mobility dashboard and a methodology to increase the data to match previous years. So, there are trends, but we wouldn't want to do a study in a slump and use that data. As I mentioned with keeping all the lanes open, so you know there is the normal construction impact, it's not like we're taking away a lane.

C: NN #1: No, no, we're not talking about traffic on I-495, we're talking about traffic in residential areas.

A: EM: Yes, all of the lanes are going to stay open.

C: NN #1: Right, yeah, yeah, all of the lanes, which is a big cut through as it is now. That's right as it is today, right, anything to that area is going to be worse.

A: EM: That's why we removed the split barrel for I-495 so we could eliminate the reason for people to bail off, so we kept it as three full lanes in each direction.

Q: NN #1: So, are you saying that people who are cutting through Andover are going to stop cutting through Andover because they got a new bridge?



A: EM: It's not going to change any of the patterns and things that are happening today. People already have a way that they make their way home. You know, if you're a local resident, you might think that you can get off now and navigate some local streets. That's pretty typical for all the interchanges and we see it in all the work that we do. If you're a long hauler, you're not going to get off and just start cutting through local streets. These traffic patterns are pretty well set in the I-495/I-93 interchange. It's a bad, it's a busy interchange and there's a very defined period where it's worse, but you know, the project is leaving all of the lanes open on Route 28 and I-495, so we're not expecting to make things worse just because of the projects. We're even putting up shielding so people can't stop and watch.

Q: NCC: Others? Someone who hasn't had anything to say yet? I do appreciate how everybody is super polite and stands up to take the microphone, but you don't have to.

Q: Juan Manny Gonzalez (JMG): Thank you, I'm Juan Manny Gonzalez, I live in South Lawrence what we call Colonial Heights, right there between Route 114 and I-495, right next to the project. I encourage you guys to really disseminate this information. We have people cutting through right now to our neighborhood road and all that, but I'm encouraging you guys to please take advantage of City Councilors, neighborhood associations, anyone that you can disseminate this information to keep it flowing. Understanding the city not only as a firefighter, but as a resident of the city, what if we have an emergency in one of those construction sites? How do we approach it? There's only so many different ways that you can get to it, especially with a big ladder truck, but I think it's important that this community takes time to read everything that the project offers. So, I will encourage you to really distribute this information as best possible. Take advantage of the City Councilors, every district you can. Take the information to neighborhood associations like the South Lawrence West Association, I think it's going to be useful. I understand people are going to learn about other ways to stay away from the construction site, you're going to have it signed, but when you were talking about people coming up north and if people can jump on I-93 north and get into Lawrence different than having to go through the area even though you have the detours. There might be other alternatives that people can actually just go take to go to where they want to go without having to go back around your site, because like you said, it's going to slow down. So, my point was to try to disseminate this information the best you can to the residents of Lawrence so there's a better understanding of the project. Thank you.

A: NCC: So that's absolutely perfect and you're saying it to somebody who, that's his whole job. The email system that sends things out to people, that's going to go out every week. The database that pulls from that now is 300 plus people, the Mayor of Lawrence, Methuen, and the Town Manager of Andover are on there. All members of those communities, respective city councilors, or in the case of Andover, Selectboard are in there. The school departments are in there, the fire departments, police chiefs, they're all in there. The ambulance companies that come out of the various hospitals, they are there. So that's that being done. Anybody who came tonight, we will take your email address and put it in the database. It's going to get passed onto the neighborhood organization. If there are groups that you think perhaps have been overlooked and there's somebody where it definitely needs to go out through them, write an email. Come see me at the end of this, say, "hey, I'd love you to have XYZ in there, can you please make sure they are part of your system?" This is a first for me and I've been doing this for over a decade now, but we're actually in communication with the New Hampshire DOT. We've asked them, we don't want to get into their policies and procedures, but there is someone that we've had a phone call with up there and they've confirmed that, yes, they're alive and yes, they will forward the information and put it out the way that they would because, New Hampshire is that way a little a bit and I'm sure that if we went out and stood by I-495, we would see a good mix of New Hampshire plates in there as well. In fact, I'm pretty sure there's a couple of them, a lot right now. So, we're really trying to make this work. When you saw the outreach slide, you saw the public access channels, the radio station, we're trying to make sure people know what to do. You're preaching to the choir to some extent because this is how I afford my mortgage, but I get you 100% and if there's some group that you think really needs to get this information let me know. I'd like nothing better.

C: JMG: I just want to say to the people that are going to be watching this and people that know me, I will encourage anybody to seek all other alternatives, stay away from the construction site. We have all the ways to get around. If you must go through there, then you have to go through there, but if you can avoid the construction site, seek other alternatives.



C: NCC: A proper pro tip. Thank you, Sir. Others?

As we've said, nobody on this project is going away. All of those resources that we showed you are real. Email us if you want. The hotline will be activated in about a month and you'll be able to get in touch with us if you need something urgently. That will be available in three different languages, English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. It will be staffed, and it will come to us. OK. Locals are going to figure out ways to, as this gentleman said, bypass things completely, but we think we have a reasonable plan to try to keep everybody moving and importantly to maintain livability for the 195 people who are ringside to this while trying to maintain everybody's mobility.

If you think of a community organization, send it to me and we'll do something about getting this gentleman the Functional Design Report. Going once, going twice, you can come and see it again on the 23rd. OK. Thank you for joining us. Have a great night. I hope everybody got a peek at the eclipse today, it was actually pretty cool.

Thank you folks, we appreciate your time.

NEXT STEPS

A second iteration of this public meeting will be held on April 23rd at the Robb Senior Center located at 30 Whittier Court in Andover. Based on a request received at this meeting, the project will also provide a briefing at the June 10th meeting of the South Lawrence West Neighborhood Association. During the month of May, it is currently anticipate that the project's hotline will be activated and initial construction reporting emails will be sent out.



APPENDIX 1: MEETING ATTENDEES

First	Last	Affiliation
Sam	Bidwell	Lawrence Community Access Television
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	WSP
Jenny	Caceres	Resident
Tony	Collins	Resident
Dan	Fielding	MassDOT
Juan Manny	Gonzalez	Resident
Jose	Gutierrez	Resident
Jesse	Jacobson	Middlesex
Mark	Laplante	Lawrence City Council
Richard	Lenox	WSP
Erik	Maki	WSP
Matthew	Nadeau	Lawrence Fire Department
Mike	Ortler	Resident
Brenda	Rozzi	Resident
Richard	Russell	Resident
Thomas	Spitalene	Resident
Joseph	Stasio	MassDOT
George	Thomas	Resident
George	Thorlin	Resident
Peter	Tramontozzi	MassDOT