



To:	Joe Pavao MassDOT Project Manager	Date:	January 3, 2018
From:	Nate Cabral-Curtis Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.36
Subject:	MassDOT Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation Project #605237 Chelsea GreenRoots Meeting Meeting Notes of December 14, 2017		

Overview

On the 14th of December, 2017 members of the project team for the Chelsea Viaduct Rehabilitation appeared before the monthly members' meeting of Chelsea GreenRoots. MassDOT was represented by Deputy Project Manager Michael Trepanier and John Lozada from the agency's office of civil rights. Also present were members of the consultant team for the project. GreenRoots is an organization which works on issues of transportation equity and environmental justice in Chelsea. MassDOT staff presented an abridged version of the November 8, 2017 Public Information Meeting that was translated by GreenRoots staff. The community members had an opportunity to ask questions and leave comments with the team.

The tone of the meeting was generally positive and engaged with many audience members expressing their understanding that the Viaduct needs to be rehabilitated and that repairs to the structure will have a positive impact on Chelsea once the project is complete. In particular, abatement of lead paint which remains on the structure from 20th century paint jobs was viewed as a major public benefit. Significant concerns were however raised regarding construction period including noise and dust, particularly with regard to containment of lead paint during removal. Also noted were existing issues with the 111 bus, particularly delays at Haymarket Station which audience members indicated would be exacerbated by construction on the Viaduct. These delays are especially onerous during cold weather since riders have nowhere warm to wait at Haymarket and are not allowed onto buses laying over even if they will eventually go into service as 111's. It was also noted that during construction, the new Silver Line connection to Chelsea does not represent a perfect 1-to-1 replacement for 111 service since the Silver Line is interrupted by shipping traffic in

the Chelsea Creek triggering bridge openings. Audience members underscored the need for MassDOT to coordinate with the City of Chelsea to ensure that upcoming city and utility projects do not conflict with the work on the Viaduct to the extent that mobility within Chelsea is degraded potentially jeopardizing employment for the community’s many shift workers.

Audience members also suggested mitigations for the project including improvement public spaces, improved lighting under the viaduct, and increased parking for Chelsea residents.

Agenda

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Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

Agenda Item 1 [Welcome & Opening Remarks]

C: Maria Belen Power: Thanks for coming, I want to welcome DOT and their partners and give them a chance to hear from us about the viaduct project and its impact on the community. I will now hand it over to Michael Trepanier.

C: Michael Trepanier: Hi, good evening, happy holidays, thank you for having us, it’s a pleasure to be with all of you. And I will say right up front this is my first time presenting with a translator so bear with me as I get used to the rhythm. Tonight, I want to start by listening to you before we present and talk to this group, we’re here to meet you, learn what’s important to you as an organization and residents. So, let me start by having an open discussion with this group to target what we present tonight. I’ll start, I’m Michael Trepanier, the lead environmental planner from MassDOT and I’m accompanied by my team. This is Mike Beintum, other Mike, our lead structural engineer, Cara our lead traffic engineer.

C: John Lozada: I work in civil rights for MassDOT focusing on nondiscrimination in the programs and services we provide. I focus on race, color, national origin and all protected categories in Massachusetts. Erica who will be recording key points and take aways from the evening, she’s another environmental planner.

¹ Herein “C” stands for comment, “Q” for question and “A” for answer. To maximize attendee comfort, a list of attendance was not taken at this meeting.

- C: Michael Trepanier:** Let me take a few minutes to get to know you, we want to build this relationship and know what motivates you and the key issues in Chelsea from your perspective.
- Q: David Cherrick:** A quick question to Green Roots, I learned about this question from face book and I heard the meeting would be focused on transit as the first part of the agenda and MassDOT would be the second item on the agenda, am I too late for that part?
- A: Maria Belen Power:** We have monthly meetings, the first half, starting at 5 with a dinner and thank you to our members, at 6PM we started in on transit, and this is the part with DOT.
- C: David Cherrick:** I would have been interested in the transit discussion, I go back to the 1970's moving bus stops working for the mayor when Chelsea had a mayor, I was the liaison for MAPC and the MBTA.
- C: Rosie Bongiovanni:** I'd like to try to facilitate this part of the meeting a little bit, let's just go around and say our names. Please make sure you sign in.
- C: Michael Trepanier:** Thank you very much; I will say I usually take the bus. I don't drive. I did get a lift today because it's cold.
- Q: Alex Christmas [Resident]:** I'm concerned about the paint you're doing on the bridge right now and the environmental impacts, you may have good information, but people's perception of what's happening may not be great.
- A: Michael Trepanier:** We will be addressing that in the presentation, but we'll be handling the paint, containing it, and addressing any lead in it.
- Q: Community Member[Mari]:** I'm interested in the viaduct aspect because I take the buses from that spot several times a week, but I also live next to the Tobin Bridge and being in Chelsea where it's so small, everything is everything, I understand your focus, but I understand it's all connected, we don't often have the opportunity to speak with DOT and for a lot of us our relationship with DOT has been one of mutual hostility when the lead paint began falling down 3 years ago, I walk under the bridge every day it's my transit to stores, this isn't to say that any of us put you in with the folks on the phone, but there's a lot of stored up stuff.
- A: Michael Trepanier:** That's why we are here tonight because we recognize this is an important facility that conveys regional commuters, but also transit riders which are crucial to this community so we're here to address the lead paint and some of those bad feelings that have been caused by the interactions between DOT and the community.

Q: Community Member: That's much appreciated.

C: Michael Trepanier: How about one more question and then we'll do the PowerPoint.

Q: Community Member: For us it's all interconnected and I know this is about the viaduct, but I'm on the 111 bus and the delays on the 111 are bad, I have to wait at Haymarket for the bus and you can't wait on the bus and you stand in the cold, it's not the case in other places. People wait on the bus at City Hall, I don't know what you can do about that, but it's very discriminatory, they are going to Medford or Somerville, this is just Chelsea and we feel like we're being discriminated against.

C: John Lozada: So, thank you for that, that's very important to share, I work with MassDOT and the MBTA, we're trying to make sure we talk together very well to ensure we do the job well over the years. I will share this thought with the MBTA and the GM at the MBTA. These are the questions that need to come out to ensure we do a good job.

Q: Community Member: They should take time to see the supervisors, before they had supervisors who would use common sense –it is cold, if there are 2 busses going to Cary Square and the third would go to Woodlawn, and then you would be stuck waiting for the Woodlawn bus for a long time. People should provide some leeway to make some decisions, please mention that to the GM.

C: John Lozada: The last thing I'll say briefly is that the MBTA is looking at restructuring the bus routes to make them faster so that should be fed into that conversation as well.

C: Community Member: You talked about working closely with us, this is the 3rd project where the MBTA has promised to help us, we're a small city and each project affects us greatly and we have already made suggestions, I feel like we keep reiterating the suggestions, the same ones, and that's frustrating.

Q: John Lozada: I will say this, the Secretary of MassDOT wants that we improve the coordination between the divisions on this project; this project is very important, I will relay what you will share.

C: Community Member: I have heard some decisions have already been made and we haven't been able to weigh in on these decisions.

C: Michael Trepanier: That's probably a good segue to our presentation, that's why we want to do it.

Q: Community Member: I have a very big concern with regard to noise and dust, he lives just beside the bridge and there's already too much noise and dust and in other areas they would do something for noise and dust and what have redone to address that.

A: Michael Trepanier: That's a real concern, and we're going to treat this community as if it were any other community, there's no bias in our contracting or methods, we're taking great steps to ensure those concerns are discussed and addressed.

Q: Community Member: Green Roots care about the environment and these types of projects take up a lot of space and maybe we could create some parks or basketball courts, I'd like to see that sort of thing. Also perhaps some affordable housing.

Presentation

A: Michael Trepanier: Well thank you, this is a great start, I enjoyed doing that, we wanted to have the conversation and thank you for starting it, let's continue. We've covered the welcome and introductions, we'll give you an overview of the project, look at context, needs, goals and schedule for when this will happen. And we'll discuss potential impacts and how we'll address those, the environmental review which is a technical, required documentation and process and continue our discussion.

We have a large team, this is a MassDOT project that is funded, the majority of the funds are coming from FHWA and we have a consultant team led by HNTB and we're in coordination with the City of Chelsea and the MBTA. This area highlighted on this aerial view is the project limits, we have two bridge structures which carry Route 1 from the Tobin northward to just about the High School near County Road. This is another view highlighting the two bridge structures we will rehabilitate in the darker blue and in orange the ramps connecting to and from the local streets. The viaducts carry Route 1 which carries a high amount of traffic, regionally and locally. The volume is 62,000 VPD.

As you all know of course, one of the most critical issues is the viaduct and the Tobin carry the 111 which we have discussed. The bridge is currently in pretty rough shape, it's very rusty. The project has a number of goals, these are what we have stated we want to accomplish for the asset and the community: address the deficiencies for the structure and get the project out to line up with the project currently in construction with the Tobin. The major takeaway from that and why we want to coordinate the projects is to minimize the time that construction is impacting the community.

C: John Lozada: This presentation is already in Spanish, we will make sure it's made available to Chelsea Green Roots to share with their members.

A: Michael Trepanier: Mike Beintum is going to go over this in detail in a bit, but we are going to use Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) tactics to compress the worst part of this into a single construction season. That's to make sure we reduce the impact to regional commuters, but especially the local community. We have put a lot of work into making sure that is feasible and something we can do. In terms of timeline, we'll discuss it in two ways, right now we're in design

and then we'll go into construction. Right now, we're in pre-25% preliminary design: it's the first milestone in the engineering process.

During this period from October to today and leading into January we've been doing our best to get out into the community and hear your concerns. We have some milestones leading up to a formal design public hearing in January 2018. Ultimately, we want to get to final design in February and putting the project out to bid in March 2018. The scope of work, what we're going to do includes fully repairing and retrofitting the substructure to meet current standards and be safe for travel above and below for decades to come.

A: Mike Beintum: If you think about the bridge in two ways, there's the substructure, that's the supports, the steel columns. And that supports the superstructure, the steel beams and the concrete deck on which the cars ride. So, we'll be repairing the substructure and replacing the superstructure. With that replacement, we'll use accelerated techniques using prefabricated bridge units (PBU's) which I'll get into in a minute. Lastly, we'll be bringing the bridge barriers up to current standards, putting a snow fence on the bridge, bringing the drainage and lighting up to standards on and below the bridge, and redoing the parking lots underneath it. The substructure work, what you see on the left is what the bridge looks like today and on the right, what we are proposing to do. What we propose is to encase the existing steel columns in concrete and install a new beam atop the encasements. That new beam will support the PBU. A PBU is essentially steel and concrete which is made off-site and trucked to the site and placed at one time using large cranes. This method will accelerate construction such that we can do the superstructure replacement in one season. This method was successfully used on Fast 14 on I-93 north of Boston.

C: John Lozada: When we talk about a construction season, we're talking about it being within one year.

C: Mike Beintum: The majority of the work will be the PBU work as you can see in the dark blue. You can also see we have some small sections where we have to use traditional methods to replace the deck and repair the beams. The construction schedule, as Michael mentioned we want the project out to bid for contractors in March of 2018. From the fall of 2018 through winter 2020, we'll do all the substructure work including the concrete encasements. This will lead into the superstructure replacement between spring and fall of 2020 in conjunction with the last year of Tobin rehabilitation work. And that's the year when we will have the most traffic impacts on Route 1. After that we'd complete the job the following spring. More on traffic impacts, as I mentioned before the project is split into sub and super structure phases. The substructure phase will have very limited impacts to Route 1 and small impacts to local streets. The one-year superstructure replacements will have the most impacts to North and Southbound Route 1 with each barrel reduced to 2 lanes. Though Northbound will already be in two lanes with the Tobin work, we'll just extend that condition through the viaduct. To facilitate the superstructure replacement, during the nights we'll go to a single lane in each direction to accommodate cranes to construct the new bridge deck. Lastly, we'll have local detours when working above local roads, some on and off ramps will be closed for night work, and parking will be closed where it is below the work going on above. Also, as part of this project we're considering closing the Arlington Street on-ramp permanently and we'll be reaching out through MassDOT to keep drivers and residents informed.

A: Michael Trepanier: As the MassDOT official in the room, I'll point out that the Arlington Street decision hasn't been made, there's a justification report being done at MassDOT, but it's not a done deal, it's under consideration. We think internally that at this point based on our technical analysis without public input that it's a good idea, but it's on us to work with you to see if we can persuade you to agree with us. Ultimately the decision will be based on a number of factors with the decision resting with MassDOT. The final point about this issue, which we can discuss, is that the 111 bus is being considered for rerouting by MBTA independent of the ramp's closure. That is out of the hands of this team, it's an issue we are coordinating. With lane reductions on the Tobin, there's the potential for impacts to traffic in Chelsea and in the greater North Shore region. We're conducting, using a technical model, we're conducting analysis to determine where the cars go when we cut down capacity on the Tobin and the viaduct. So, we're looking at all other major regional roadways serving the North Shore and impacts to the local roadways in Chelsea and looking at the entirety of cumulative impacts, with great attention to major projects like the North Washington Street Bridge and lastly looking at opportunities to shift commuters to other modes, getting folks using the 111 today to look at the Silver Line or commuter rail. With that, and I see you shaking your head at me about the 111, let's go to Q&A.

Discussion

C: Community Member: It's not that simple, I can't just go onto different buses, there are tankers going into the Chelsea Creek. I don't disagree with the project it needs to be done, it's making me nervous, I don't feel like we've been consulted, I feel like you care more about everyone else than us.

A: Michael Trepanier: I understand that sentiment. I understand it's not just going from one bus to another. Logistically it's not simple either. We're trying to best figure out how to address the issues in part by consulting you. That's why we are here tonight.

C: Community Member: I don't disagree with you, this needs to be done, it's just this is the third project for which we're stuck at Haymarket for 45 minutes.

A: Michael Trepanier: Understood.

C: Community Member (via translation): She's talking about how in the cold weather, usually the 111 bus takes longer to get, but even more when there's construction.

A: Michael Trepanier: That's an issue we're trying to address with the MBTA and figure out if we can improve the service and offset the impact.

C: Community Member (via translation): She's saying that usually construction effects everything and in cold weather it takes longer to get places and they're stuck waiting.

A: Michael Trepanier: We heard already about something we are aware of that construction is noisy and dusty and impacts quality of life. We're looking at best practices from projects in the past and looking to apply them here. Dust control measures will be in the contract and we're looking at noise control plans and efforts like that to help minimize what will be an impact on the daily lives of folks around this bridge.

As I mentioned earlier, the bridge is covered in lead paint. We'll have a lead abatement plan which will contain that, clean it up, and remove it from this community for good. Ultimately during the construction overhead, and during all phases of construction, parking will be impacted under the bridge so we're looking to temporarily relocate that to mitigate impacts on the local parking supply which is why it's important for us to get your email addresses or find other ways to get into contact with you so we can notify you through public outreach.

C: Community Member (via translation): She says that sometimes that if there's some way to notify people when specific construction is going on, they have no idea what's going on, maybe if they can create a website or an app where they can have live notifications.

A: Michael Trepanier: Great suggestion, on my way to Chelsea last week I experienced that myself and I learned what you are talking about. I live across the creek in East Boston and I know what an impact that is. Frankly I want to know too. And that is outside this project team's control, but we can have a conversation with folks who can make improvements in that area.

C: Community Member (via translation): She's saying that we mentioned before how we're trying to see the impacts of different projects coming in the future, so if you can get us a list of all the projects that will be going on at once, there's a project going on for Williams Street and she's wondering if there's some coordinated list.

A: Michael Trepanier: If that a readily consumable document, we can share that, but to be clear, we're looking at just transportation, not development.

C: Community Member: So just to be clear, Eversource will be ripping up and paving Williams Street all the way up to here [pointing at the floor of the building in which the meeting took place]. Also, it would be useful if you had a list of all the projects that will go on in Chelsea at the same time as your project.

A: Michael Trepanier: In general, we wouldn't know about that, but we can get that information from the City of Chelsea. It's a good point to make. We need to connect with the City Engineer and get the data from their office and have our traffic team determine the impacts in terms of happening together.

Q: Community Member: Is there some way that you can be reaching out to the City on a more regular basis and not putting the onus for figuring out this information on the City?

A: Michael Trepanier: Really, it's a matter of jurisdiction, they permit those projects, it's not a matter of being burdensome, it's the City who has the data. We're not asking the City to do the legwork for this. The City is a partner and we have to collaborate with them. It's a normal action MassDOT would undertake in any community.

Q: Community Member: With regard to your studies, do you find out from the City what projects are going on and how it would impact things or are you just taking a more general look? We are central what with the Casino coming in and the other bridges going up and down.

A: Michael Trepanier: To be honest, Cara is our traffic engineer, but she's not that traffic engineer, but we have a whole other team of people doing that regional traffic analysis, but bear with us, we'll share that information. We'll share that information in January very likely; I am just not that close to that work yet. We have covered a lot of good ground here and giving you guys a chance to address this. This won't be the last time you see us. It's 8:30 and I can see a lot of folks starting to get antsy and I don't blame you, it is a lot of information to absorb and we appreciate your patience.

Q: Community Member (via translation): She's saying that her concern is that when folks want to commute to work and if they're going to close certain routes and maybe have discounted rates for the purple line to make that more affordable.

A: John Lozada: It's not clear yet, but the discussion will happen. Right now in Quincy they are switching off Wollaston Station for a few years and they are using the commuter rail for that very purpose, so there may be an opportunity there.

C: Michael Trepanier: Let me just finish the point, we have some more slides, but we'll clip them, and we'll just do Q&A.

Q: John Lozada: When would we come back? Just quickly, we're talking to the folks at the Collaborative to do a meeting in Mid-January during the week of the 15th. That meeting will be done entirely in Spanish and the translators will just be for English speakers.

C: Michael Trepanier: We are listening and we're taking this as a means to gather your feedback and bring it back to the larger team and discuss it. We're not here to check the box and give you the same old story. This is the beginning of our relationship for this project and this team.

Q: Community Member: I'd just like to say about the 111, the problem I see is right now the 111 is completely broken, it has serious problems right now and if those could be addressed even prior to this, so they could be running better, you can wait for a very long time for a 111 and then two or three completely full buses pass you and there's no stop between Chelsea and Haymarket, there's terrible traffic on North Washington Street and you can't get off the bus if you want to go to Charlestown.

A: John Lozada: Starting with the new GM at the MBTA, he's ridden the 111 and knows that experience. Tomorrow at 10AM, I'm going to the first meeting of the bus rerouting strategic planning work and 111 is central to that project. We have instituted some additional service on this very high demand bus line. It hasn't addressed all the problems, but it is trying to go in that direction.

C: Mari [Resident]: You've talked several times about discussing rerouting the 111 and you need community outreach on that and we're the only organization doing transit justice, so it would be wise if you put a community representative into that strategic planning process.

A: John Lozada: Anytime we are doing a major service change then there is an obligation to do public participation

C: Mari [Resident]: I'm talking about public participation at the beginning not at the end of the process. If we don't we will have a room full of people here.

C: Michael Trepanier: I'm good friends with a lot of service planners, I went to a wedding in Holyoke that was all transit nerds. They are very serious about the 111, they recognize it. It can take a while to get a big organization like the MBTA to respond to concerns, but the right people within the organization really do care.

C: Mari: But the planning to implementation gap needs to be plugged. We went to a meeting at Haymarket yesterday and we didn't take the 111, we took the Blue Line. People won't be able to get into work and they'll lose their jobs which perpetuates the cycle of poverty which is deeply troubling for our community.

Q: Community Member: Three things, you mentioned the Arlington Street closing, what is your justification for that. I'm concerned about the traffic pattern it will cause in the City and want to know about the impacts on the traffic patterns and whether you are coordinating with the City on that issue.

A: Michael Trepanier: The chief reason is a very low observed use, there are only about 110 vehicles getting on during the rush hour in the 7-8AM rush, versus other ramps which have much higher usage. As a comparison, other ramps are on the order of 200, 400, and almost 900. With four access points, this is the least utilized.

Q: Community Member: When did you do that study, was it with construction going on?

A: Michael Trepanier: That data was taken this year.

A: Cara Pirkey: we also did counts in 2015 and those numbers were very similar to what we got this year.

A: John Lozada: I think this may be a meeting we need to continue. We will set up another time to come back here, rather than grinding everyone down at nearly 9PM at night.

A: Michael Trepanier: Part of the reason we're here is because this organization can bring people into a room and this has been very productive for us. We want to lean on this organization to coalesce around themes. We want to be effective in getting to issues everyone will share. And one more point. We spent an entire day here last week after flying downtown and using some traditional methods and it failed, very few people came, we could do one of those here so it's not in a full group setting and we can provide some more personalized attention.

Q: Community Member: My last comment and not to sound morbid, but there's a suicide factor associated with the Tobin Bridge, could there be some preventive measures? Just bring it to your team.

A: John Lozada: There are cameras, but it's hard, if someone is determined, they may well jump.

A: Michael Trepanier: We can certainly look into national best practices, but it's a hard one.

Q: Community Member: Today I tried to get on the Tobin Bridge at Everett Street and I'm on the board of health and I felt it was a very dangerous situation and there were 25 cars on that ramp and I spent 45 minutes trying to get on. You could put a ferry here and that would get people right across the harbor. The 111 is broken right now and a point of comparison is we don't need a ramp closed, we need access. It took me 2 hours to get to Charlestown waiting at the Everett Ave ramp.

A: Michael Trepanier: I'll say this again, the decision on the ramp is not made, it's not a done deal.

Q: David Cherrick: The location on your slide appears to be Walnut and Ford Street looking at the bridge, the building on the right is the Walnut St Synagogue built in 1909, the building has foundation issues. Is the DOT prepared to repair the foundation? I request that you paint the

Viaduct and the Tobin Bridge black to commemorate the damage this bridge has done to this community.

A: Michael Trepanier: If we damage the foundations then yes, we'll repair them, but we're not going to do anything going back retrospectively.

Q: Community Member: I have two and I'll try to break them up. On the 111, you talked about overnight construction, typical commuter hours in Chelsea aren't the same. I've had 2 or 3 111's blow past me at 5:30 in the morning. The second one is you talked a lot about timelines and schedules: will there be incentives and penalties? How will you keep this on schedule?

A: Michael Trepanier: I'll say that MassDOT has been doing a lot better with this and has had a lot of successes with accelerated bridge construction. And we will be including incentive and disincentive clauses, money to the contractor when they beat a deadline and penalties if they run over?

Q: Community Member: Two things: on parking, it's a big issue in Chelsea, would MassDOT build a garage in the space from the ramp you'd close down?

A: Mike Beintum: There's new parking which could be placed if we close the ramp. If we don't close the ramp, we have a restriping plan which makes the existing lots more efficient and we add a new lot across from Chelsea High School.

A: Michael Trepanier: We've been looking at the lots below the Viaduct; we haven't been looking beyond its footprint.

Q: Community Member: The other question, we get a discount on the Tobin Bridge, have you looked at having the bridge or commuter rail free to Chelsea residents during construction?

A: Michael Trepanier: Some of us have been considering that, that's a good suggestion. If this community feels that's a good mitigation we can look at that. The decisions about the mitigation package are being made at very high levels at MassDOT, not folks in this room, and not even our project manager. For clarity, our charge from the administration is to go out and tell people what we're doing and listen.

Q Maria Belen Power: Where is your project manager? People still have a lot of concerns that they would like to share with MassDOT.

A: Michael Trepanier: We will commit to continuing this conversation. Joe Pavao sent me in his place because he's on vacation this week.

C: John Lozada: Please suggest some dates and we'll talk to our team. The next two weeks are a little nutty, but the beginning of January sounds very good.

C: Michael Trepanier: I'll make this point, beginning in the first week of January, we'll be collaborating with the Collaborative to assist us in knocking on doors. We're still not reaching everyone but, we've made a lot of progress tonight. We're only working with them on a volunteer basis. We're not paying them. We'll be hosting our next major public information meeting in Spanish at the Collaborative then conducting a design public hearing. We'll come back here after that, or right around that, after we've had more of a chance to get the message out on that grass roots level. We are very grateful for your assistance in this matter. We will work with you to answer all of your questions, comments, and concerns. We look for you to be a conduit for us; reach out directly to us. Using this as a nucleus is a very effective way to get the message to MassDOT in an official way.

Next Steps

Members of the project team are working to schedule the Spanish language meeting at the time of this writing. The 25% Design Public Hearing has been scheduled for the 24th of January, 2018 and outreach for it has begun. Pop-up meetings were held throughout the month of December and will continue following the 25% DPH.