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MassDOT Liaison - Highway Division

Date: December 11, 2108

From: Nate Lash  
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HSH Project No.: 2013061.17

Subject: MassDOT  
North Washington Street Bridge Replacement Project  
Public Involvement  
Meeting Summary of Public Meeting on Wednesday, November 28

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## Overview

On Wednesday, November 28, 2018, MassDOT Highway Division, along with representatives from the project general contractor, J.F. White, and consultant team associated with the North Washington Street Bridge Replacement Project, held a public meeting to provide members of the public with updates on the project and an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the project.

Nate Cabral-Curtis of Howard Stein Hudson started the meeting by providing an overview of the project and changes to the original construction staging plans which include the construction of temporary bridge on the western side (Charles River side) of the bridge to expedite demolition and construction. He also discussed traffic management plans, construction impact mitigation efforts, and public outreach. The presentation ended with a summary of upcoming project milestones and next steps.

Following the presentation, Rob Nies of JF White showed a video detailing traffic plans in each of the four construction stages for the bridge, Keany Square, and City Square.

The meeting ended with a question and answer period focused on traffic congestion in the West End, pedestrian and vehicle detour routes, and potential opportunities to alleviate traffic throughout the project area.

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## Detailed Meeting Minutes<sup>1</sup>

### Welcome and Introductions

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**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis, Howard Stein Hudson:** Good evening, everybody. I am Nate Cabral-Curtis with Howard Stein Hudson and I am performing public involvement for this project. I just want to recognize a few people in the audience tonight. Representative Livingstone is here. Thank you for being present, sir. Chris Coakley from the Department of Public Works is here as well as Quinlan Locke from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services. As an indication of how important this job is, we also have strong representation from MassDOT District 6 Division, which is administering the contract, and then our stalwart partners, the Boston Transportation Department, in the person of Jim Gillooly. We have a good collection of folks that can answer any and all questions.

### Presentation

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**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Tonight, we are going to go through an overview of the project and talk about construction staging, impacts of construction, traffic management, public outreach, and what to expect next. After the presentation, we will have plenty of time for Q and A.

The notice to proceed, which you may have seen abbreviated “NTP”, was granted in August of this year. We are going to talk tonight about the difference between the original construction duration and the new construction duration. As you can see, it's been reduced by about six months and the dollar amount for the project is \$176 million and change.

Many of you are familiar with this project have probably seen this slide titled *Location & Context* before, but I wanted to help folks orient themselves before we start talking. Here you can see Keany Square at the West End/North End of the bridge. This is City Square at the Charlestown

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<sup>1</sup> Herein “C” stands for comment, “Q” for question and “A” for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. For copies of meeting flipcharts, please see Appendix 2.

end. Rather than use cardinal directions, which can be hard for people to grasp, I'm going to talk about the Charles River side of the bridge and the Boston Harbor side of the bridge. When we talk about where things are, we will try to use those terms.

You are all familiar with the bridge now. There've been multiple attempts to change and rehabilitate the structure over the course of its one hundred plus years of service. It was fixed in the closed position in the 1960's and its elevated train line was removed in the 1970's. A lot of work has been done to keep it open. Right now, in its deteriorated condition, it costs between three and five million dollars a year just to keep safe and open. It's been determined that the bridge really needs to be replaced to ensure long-term safety and accessibility.

What are we going to replace it with? A multimodal bridge for the 21st century. The City has talked about it as a complete street over the water. That will include two vehicle lanes in each direction, four total vehicle lanes, and a dedicated inbound bus lane to help get buses across the bridge and down into Haymarket Station. The 92, 93, the 111 are very heavily used bus routes. This is all about a philosophy of trying to move people, not just vehicles. The new bridge will also have separated bicycle tracks and expanded sidewalks, which will be 19-foot wide over the center span with scenic overlooks. There will be seating and even plantings on the structure. Right now, the navigation channel is split by the center pier and that is going to be removed. The new bridge will have a widened navigation channel and it will be a lot nicer to take your boat under there. And the architecture of the bridge, as you have seen in the various images and our title cards between sections, is very nice. It has trellis work on it and is designed to harmonize with and compliment the Zakim. Here you can see a cross-section of the new bridge. You are looking at the bus coming towards you so, the locks are on the left side of picture and the harbor is on the right side. You have a 19-foot pedestrian area, including the plantings and overlooks. There is the seven-foot cycle track, separated from the vehicle lanes by a barrier which serves as the anchor point for the trellis. The bus lane will be 10-feet, six inches wide. The vehicle lanes will vary between 10 feet, six inches and 11-feet. On the harbor side, the trellis repeats and we have another seven-foot a cycle track and another 19-foot pedestrian area.

This is the cast of characters. As mentioned, MassDOT Highway Division's District 6 is administering the contract. J.F. White is the General Contractor and they are here tonight in the person of Rob Nies, the superintendent for the project. We have a wide assortment of coordinating agencies, all of which we have worked with extensively to get to this point and some of whom are in the room tonight represented, as I mentioned earlier. This is an ongoing partnership. We're speaking to these folks regularly, sometimes as often as weekly or more if needed. We stay in close touch.

For those of you who were familiar with this project, going back into the design phase, you may remember this graphic. This is the famous Stage 1B. The old construction staging had six stages, 1A through 4B. Stage 1B would have been in the summer of 2019 and would have required dropping the bridge to a single lane in each direction, as you see here. That gave a lot of people concerns so, the project team explored innovations that eliminated the necessity for this stage. There is no longer a one-and-one stage, and this is the last time in this presentation you're going to see this. I wanted to show this, so you can see what you are not going to get.

The way that happens is with the temporary bridge. You see right here the temporary bridge in place and we will talk about when it comes in and what it does. Basically, it puts the entire old structure as a work zone under construction and provides two lanes inbound to Boston and a single lane outbound to Charlestown with a sidewalk running along the Charles River side. And this is a picture of what it would look like. This is obviously a snapshot in time, right when J.F. White has finished implementing the temporary bridge and has not yet started knocking out the old one. It will sit between the locks and the old bridge with two lanes coming into the city and one lane going back towards Charlestown.

So, what does this do for you? Well, it eliminates Stage 1B with a single lane in each direction, as we already mentioned, and maintains access for all modes currently on the bridge. It expedites construction by about six months, particularly during the phase of demolition of the old structure and the installation of the drilled shafts which will help support the foundations of the new structure. Those are two of the operations which have more impact so, it's good that we're shortcutting those phases. It does not require a trestle adjacent to the Charlestown marina to launch equipment. It reduces the number of major traffic and pedestrian shifts. You may have seen some of the design phase presentations where I would walk folks through the stages saying "Now, the pedestrians and cyclists and cars are on this side and now, they are on that side". There is still some of that, but it's less and that is an advantage. Every time you make a shift in traffic where the cars and pedestrians are, it inevitably leads to confusion and concern which both lead to congestion, which we prefer to avoid as much as possible. It also reduces the number of nighttime lane closures needed. It's good because it reduces the need to use the structurally deficient bridge for traffic. The old staging had work being done to the old structure while cars were still on it and the temporary bridge provides a new playground away from the active construction site. I will show you that in a little while as we get deeper into this.

On the temporary bridge, the accommodations are equal to those in the original contract. Anything that was going to be provided in the original contract in terms of lane accommodations and sidewalk accommodations are still here. One of the things that's good about the temporary

bridge is that the surface will be a real paved surface. Currently the bridge out there today has an open steel grid deck which, if you're on a bicycle, is very frightening to ride on. Bicyclists may use this bridge as they would a normal street and they will be riding on a surface which is not the scary open grid deck. There will be a sidewalk, again with simplified routes and fewer shifts. Generally speaking, the sidewalk is eight feet wide with the freedom trail striped on it. Due to the placement of the building that has the Converse sneaker store in it, the temporary bridge has to curve around it and the sidewalk at the bend has to drop down to six feet, six inches. The temporary bridge will be signed such that if cyclists don't want to ride in the vehicle lanes, we are going to ask them to get off and walk their bicycles over the sidewalk. It is a tight pinch point with pedestrians, people with dogs, and people with strollers. The temporary bridge, I would argue, is at least on par with what is out there today, if not better. When we get to the end of this, it's going to probably be one of the best bridges for cyclists and pedestrians in the whole city. We realize we have to go through some non-ideal conditions to get there.

This is the video which shows a fly-through of the temporary bridge starting at the Charlestown end of the bridge at City Square and going across to the Boston end of the bridge at Keany Square. Admittedly, the bridge usually has more traffic on it than you see in the video, but we wanted to show you the lane markings and how everything fits together. Here we are, starting off in City Square. You see we are bending towards the locks as we go through the curve and then past the moving truck to the straight away. Now, we take the bend back towards the original bridge, past the second moving truck. You can see how tight it gets next to the Converse building right here. That is where the sidewalk drops down to six-feet, six inches and we come into Keeney Square where you can move on towards Haymarket, the North End, TD Bank Garden, or wherever your destination is.

This is the current Paul Revere Park playground. Under the original staging, the playground would have been right up against the construction. Under the new staging, the temporary bridge is going to cut right through here. Obviously, the playground needs to move and, working closely with DCR, we have identified a new location for the playground. The idea is to have the new playground open before the existing playground goes out of service. And once this land is vacated by construction, it will be turned into a fenced in dog park. The exact design, and what the playground is going to have in it such as features, slides, you name it, is still being worked out. The new playground will be available before the old one goes away.

You can see how the construction stages compare. The old staging was six stages over 60 months. The new staging has been simplified down to four stages over 54 months. Stage 2 is the temporary bridge period and will take 23 months.

Let's walk through what's going to look like. We are in Stage 1 right now. It began in August. The western sidewalk on the Charles River side is closed from Keany Square to City Square to allow us to establish a work zone for the relocation of utilities and removal of the western sidewalk to facilitate construction of the temporary bridge. Right now, the fender system for the existing bridge is being removed so that we can start installing the temporary bridge. This is a preview of coming attractions in December. A section of the harbor walk, which is a subject to flooding, will be closed as part of this contract because it will be under an active work zone. It will be rebuilt at a higher level to make it less subject to flooding. This set of stairs at the Converse building is also going to close at roughly the same time in the middle of December because it is too close to the work zone.

As I mentioned, Stage 2 is when you have your temporary bridge in place. Almost all of the old bridge becomes a work zone with the exception of this southwest corner here where we tie in the temporary bridge. Stage 2 runs from December of 2019 through December of 2021 with two lanes inbound, one lane outbound, and your turns available at either end. This will allow demolition of the old bridge and construction of the new bridge except to the southwest corner where the temporary structure is tied in.

In Stage 3, you have available two lanes inbound and one lane outbound on half of the new bridge structure. All of the temporary bridge then becomes work zone, including the place where it was tied in to the old structure. By this point, we are able to move traffic and pedestrians to the new structure.

In Stage 4, as you can see, you've got almost all of your new bridge there. The temporary bridge has gone and the work zone on the new bridge is concentrated to the western (Charles River) side where the bus lane, bicycle facilities, and sidewalk will be. That will run from September 2022 to February 2023.

This gives you a sense of the big picture one more time. Under the original contract, you had four lanes dropping to two, going up to three and then back to four. With the temporary bridge, you will never get below the three lanes and you have a shorter duration. And again, this your final conditions on the new bridge. On both sides of the bridge there will be two travel lanes, separated bicycle facilities, and sidewalks. There will also be a dedicated bus lane coming in from Charlestown which will help facilitate the movement of the 92, 93, 111, and other MBTA buses.

Let's talk about how this is all going to happen with some construction impacts. The working hours are 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM. It is expected that the contractor will work overnight in a third

shift as needed. In all stages some night work is required, particularly in Stage 1 for utility work, which we're now in, and in Stage 3 for putting up the steel. The goal is to use those 24-hour periods to get us through the more impactful operations.

Regarding noise, maximum noise levels are specified in the contract. There is a baseline which has been established by the contractor through noise monitoring before construction started. As you can imagine, there are noise levels that they have to adhere to which, again, are specified in the contract. As you might be able to guess, in the daytime, you can make more noise; in the evening, a little less; and at night, the least. It is the contractor's responsibility to comply with the contract specifications and the City of Boston noise ordinance. Noise monitoring has been undertaken so we understand what is out there already. The contractor will use some tactics as needed to manage the noise such as the shielding of noisy operations with noise blankets. These are temporary screens you can put up around equipment if you have a hammer going or something like that. Additionally, all J.F. White vehicles onsite have white noise backup alarms. Instead of that that beep, beep, beep, it's more of whooshing sound. A lot of the machinery that will be used on the project will be mounted on barges or it's not going to be backing up because it's been tied down on the barge. The contractor will also schedule operations to comply with the different noise limits.

Dust protections will also be in place. The project's health and safety plan includes dust control on site during demolition of the bridge, particularly the deck of the old structure. Water will be used to minimize dust emissions and dust monitoring will be conducted during dust producing activities. I have seen one of these dust monitoring plans in action at a MassDOT construction site that I actually live in, the Arborway at Forest Hills, and, believe it or not, it does work. The water is very effective. It keeps the dust down.

Hazardous materials. We know that there's some asbestos on the bridge in the lines which fed the old control room that was used to turn the bridge. That will be removed using all applicable state, federal and municipal guidelines. Regarding water quality, we know we are over an active waterway which has been cleaned up through a lot of hard efforts. Obviously, things won't just be dropped into the water. It will be controlled. There are fish runs which happen through the locks and the contract limits what can be done during certain times that correspond to those fish runs. For anyone who went through the Big Dig, rodents are always a concern. The contractor will be conducting an active baiting and trapping program. A similar baiting and trapping program was implemented in Forest Hills during heavy work on the Arborway and I can tell you that it does work. It is not as though you suddenly have a family of mice or, even worse, rats living in your basement.

Our primary traffic management goal is to provide early and accurate information to help drivers make good decisions. We know that there is a certain regional audience on this bridge that does not necessarily have to be there. Our goal will be to try to warn them away so that if they have somewhere else they can be, they can try being there. Traffic details will be provided and Keany Square and City Square. We've heard from folks in Charlestown and they have concerns about Chelsea Street. What we've seen in our observations is if we can keep City Square going, Chelsea Street does pretty well. As with anything I'm going to show you tonight, the traffic management piece is not just set and forget. We'll be working between the City, the General Contractor, and District 6 to continually monitor it and make improvements as needed.

Regional signage has already been set in place warning folks that this project is underway. These are variable messaging boards that are often used for construction. You can see we put signs all the way up in Lynn and Chelsea and at the tunnel where people are coming in on 1A and further to the west and south on the turnpike and I-93. We are really trying to cast a wide net and give people a good opportunity to divert away before they've committed to this course. We've also set up local signage you can see here on I-93, on the Tobin Bridge coming in along I-93, near the various tunnels, and on a lot of other streets near the bridge. So, there is no way people are going to miss this. There will be plenty of signs.

This may be less of an issue for folks in this neighborhood in the North End, but we want to talk about it anyway. Coming in from Charlestown, this is the left turn off the bridge to take you onto Commercial Street and towards the Steriti Rink and Coast Guard base. In the original staging, we were looking at just completely taking this left turn lane away during construction. The current stage and allows us to keep this. In Stage 2, that left turning lane is about four cars long. It's currently about double that length. This is one of those things where we're committed in principal to keeping it in all stages. That said, like with any part of the traffic management plan, it's going to be continually monitored. The City very much wants to keep it and we would like to help them keep it, but we're all going to keep watching it to make sure that it is working and doing what it needs to do. There could come a time in the project where it becomes a shared thru/left. I'm sure you've all seen the two headed arrow pavement markings. It might be time limited. But again, the commitment is to try to keep it open and available throughout all stages.

I've talked about this bridge being a complete street over the water. We are trying to make it friendly for all modes. If you cross this bridge today, you'll see there's this kind of highway-style slip lane that allows you to take a very gentle right turn and head down towards the Navy Yard. That is going to go away as part of the final condition. You'll still be able to take a right turn, but you'll come up to the stop bar and you'll make a more conventional, 90 degree turn to go towards



the Navy Yard. However, because there's going to be a single lane going outbound during the instruction, we're going to keep that slip lane available through construction to help pull traffic through that intersection and keep this single lane flowing.

Here are some of the alternate routes. Here's our project. Going North, folks can use I-93, crossing the Zakim and going up to Sullivan Square. Let's say we are going into the Navy Yard. We would come back down Rutherford Avenue and connect to Chelsea Street and enter there.

There is also a southbound alternate route. This uses the Leverett Connector, coming in from City Square, making the loop, passing Boston Sand and Gravel, coming over the Charles River, dropping down onto Nashua Street, heading around on Martha Road, passing TD Bank Garden, and ending in Keany Square.

**C: Mary Beth Karr, *community member*:** Problem.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes, problem. Admittedly, we are providing capacity at the bridge with the temporary structure that was not necessarily provided before. This is not the only alternate route. It is just one of them and we are not necessarily assuming that everybody will do this, and we are not directing everybody to do this. We expect some people will simply divert to other routes and this is one option that is available to people.

Now, this next slide is normally presented by Amy Getchell of MassDOT. Her job is chiefly dealing with regional construction coordination and traffic management. She was sick last night and is still feeling sick so, she is not able to join us this evening. I'm going to try to do it justice. This is a heat map of MassDOT projects in District 6, the metropolitan highway zone. We are mostly interested in this Mystic River area, which includes the Tobin Bridge, Chelsea Viaduct, and North Washington Street Bridge. This is a joint effort between the Highway Division and the MBTA to look at all the projects they have out there and see where there are conflicts. As Amy always puts it, we do not want to divert people from one group that's under construction to another group that's under construction. We want to keep those bus routes, the 92, 93, and the 426 coming down from the North Shore running.

Additionally, MassDOT has a traffic model called the Charles River Basin Model, which has been expanded recently to include more projects in the Charles River Basin Area so that they can determine what's happening around a wider variety of places within the basin. The idea is to try to coordinate the projects so that they don't all fall at once and to ensure that we are giving people good information. Any questions about this? I'm having to take them back to Amy and we'll get people answers through the usual channels.

Let's talk about outreach. We have construction look aheads for upcoming work. Those are made available on the project website and via email direct to your inbox if you sign up with us so, please give us your email on the sign in sheet if you're not getting emails about the job. There will be specific, independent notifications provided for major operations and network. If things are going to change out there, it will get its own standalone notice. I talked earlier about closing that piece of the harbor walk and stairs; that will get its own notice. I don't know if any of you frequent your West End library branch. When we closed the portion of sidewalk on the bridge that is currently closed, we dropped flyers there to make sure that people had yet another way to get it. But these are your best two ways of staying up to date right here: the project website and email updates which come right to your inbox.

These are our public information meetings. We had one last night in the North End. We're here tonight. If you have friends in Charlestown, let him know we will be there tomorrow. We will have more public information meetings as needed, especially for major project milestones such as going to the temporary bridge. These are our methods of outreach that we use for these meetings and for other major operations. If you look at that list and there is something you think is missing, let us know. We are happy to do stakeholder briefing. Contact Donny or contact us through the website and we can arrange those if you feel there's someone that we missed when we get deeper into this. We are going to use MassDOT's social media accounts. They are already being used, but they will be used to try to broaden our outreach towards the North Shore. We have about a year before the temporary bridge goes into operation and we will really use that social media to try to push people away from the corridor once we get to that temporary configuration.

Next Steps. You will probably see this slide several times over the course of the project. When you see us next, these earlier dates will get dropped off and we will add new future ones. This timeline goes out through January 2020. So right now, we're almost into December. MassDOT and the City are finalizing and getting ready to implement the temporary bridge design. By February, we'll begin to see pilings going into the water. By April, the new playground will be in place and the old one will close. Over the course of the summer, you begin to really see some work, happen for the temporary bridge construction including construction of the two tie-ins. Eversource will move their cable to the temporary bridge. They have a very impressive power line on the bridge, which feeds all of Charlestown. December of 2019, you will see traffic shift onto the temporary bridge. You will see the contractor begin to tear down the old structure right away. But January 2020, Eversource will have moved over and major demolition of the existing bridge will begin.

This is what the current construction look ahead looks like right now. This is up on the project website and you can see how it is broken out. As we get into this, we know some things will change and some of these headers will get replaced. Eventually, there will be a *Demolition of the Old Structure* heading and an *Installation of the Temporary Bridge* heading. TD Garden events are also included in our look aheads so that people are aware of them and you have one more place to find them.

Here is contact information for the project. If you search “MassDOT North Washington Street Bridge” on Google, you'll get this right away. And we have a dedicated email address that comes to the team.

At this point, before we go to Q and A, I'd like to bring up Rob Nies who has a slightly longer film to show you. We'll take questions after that is finished.

**C: Rob Nies, J.F. White:** I'm going to show you through the intersections in each stage of the construction project. I will pause at each intersection and talk about the intersections in each stage.

This is what the future bridge will look like. Two lanes inbound, two lanes outbound, and an inbound bus lane.

The existing bridge right now has two lanes inbound and two lanes outbound. This is a shot of City Square today looking southbound towards the bridge. We have three lanes heading southbound with a dedicated left turn lane. This is looking north bound in City Square. Right now, it has three lanes heading northbound and the slip lane that Nate was talking about heading to Chelsea Street. And this is a shot of Keany Square looking southbound where we have two dedicated through lanes heading towards Haymarket, a right turn lane, a left turn lane heading into the North End. And heading outbound over the bridge is two through lanes and you pick up the lane coming in from Commercial Street.

This is construction Stage 1, which we are in right now. You can see the temporary bridge is being constructed off to the side. We have two lanes southbound and two lanes northbound. The west sidewalk is removed while temporary bridge is being constructed. This is a view looking northbound at City Square where we have two thru lanes and a dedicated right slip lane. Southbound at City Square, we have three thru lanes and dedicated left/right turn lanes. And here is a snap shot of Keany Square, which is the same as existing conditions. Southbound, there will be two thru lanes and dedicated left/right turn lanes maintained throughout construction and northbound, you have two thru lanes.

Stage 2 is when we shift the traffic onto the temporary bridge. This is where the big change happens. You can see the freedom trail is clearly marked on the western side. There will be two lanes inbound and one lane northbound across the temporary bridge. Now, we have a change in City Square in order to facilitate the two lanes heading over the temporary bridge because we now have two lanes heading southbound and the left turn lane heading to Chelsea street. This view is looking north at City Square. We are coming off the temporary bridge. It will open up to three thru lanes heading up Rutherford Avenue and you can see the slip lane heading Chelsea Street.

**Q: Mary Beth Karr:** Those red and white striped dividers that you have in the middle of the road, is that in fact what you are going to have?

**A: Rob Nies:** We will need delineators to make sure that people stay within the lane. The person that made the graphic chose to show barrels.

**C: Jim Gillooly, *City of Boston*:** They will be much smaller.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** And there will be a lot more of them.

**C: Rob Nies:** Here is an image of Keany Square. On the temporary bridge, we have two lanes heading inbound which will then become the dedicated through lanes heading towards Haymarket. There will also be a right turn lane and a dedicated left turn lane to go in the North End. Heading outbound over the bridge from Haymarket will be two thru lanes that are going to merge right before you head over the temporary bridge.

**Q: Mary Beth Karr:** I have another question. You said that left turn lane on Commercial Street is going to be allow for about four cars at any given point in time?

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** It will be about four cars in Stage 2 and might vary some depending on the stage. Rob can tell you more about that.

**Q: Mary Beth Karr:** And will the right-hand turn lane be the same size?

**A: Rob Nies:** Yes, it will be about the same.

**C: Rob Nies:** Now we are moving into Stage 3 where we rebuild the eastern half of the bridge. This will be two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. Over on the right-hand side, where the piers are, is where people will be working on finishing the bridge. The sidewalk will be moved over on the left-hand side and you see the freedom trail. This is a view looking northbound into

City Square where we have the Chelsea street on the right. The slip lane has now gone away and has been replaced with the permanent right turn lane. Two through lanes heading northbound at this point and one two lanes heading southbound. There's an image of Keany Square. It's basically a duplicate of Stage 2 with right turn and left turn lanes and two through lanes heading northbound bridge.

In Stage 4, it will be two lanes heading southbound and two lanes heading northbound. The sidewalk be on the left-hand side, which is the east side of the bridge. We will be completing the work on the right-hand side, which is the locks side of the bridge. Looking in at City Square, we still have the one right turn lane to Chelsea Street, and two through lanes heading northbound and two southbound. Keany Square has now opened up where we have the two thru lanes inbound, two thru lanes outbound, and turning lanes.

At the end of the construction, this will be the traffic flow. Two lanes inbound, one inbound bus lane, two lanes outbound, and both sidewalks open. Passing by the trellis, the green that you see painted on both sides are dedicated bike lanes, so you could see that it's separated in the main part of the bridge, and then as you come off the bridge into the approaches, the bike lane is painted green like you normally see it. The image at City Square is basically back to what it was originally. It will be two through lanes, a bus lane which replaces one of the through lanes, and a left turn lane to Chelsea Street. You'll see the dedicated bike lane start north of City Square. Looking north in the City Square you can see it's still the two through lanes northbound, two through lanes southbound, dedicated bus, and the right turn lane to Chelsea Street. Here's Keany Square where now it's the full lanes for the left and right turn lanes, two southbound and two northbound thru lanes, and you can see the dedicated bike lane in green.

## Discussion

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**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, we are open for Q and A right now. Representative Livingstone, would you like to go first if you have any questions?

**Q: Jay Livingstone, *State Representative*:** One of the questions I have is about the diversion through Leverett Circle. Around here, traffic is complained to me most often. With the changes that you made, there isn't the same capacity loss as originally planned. Is the diversion still needed? That is my first question. And the second question is about the heat mapping. It showed the highest levels in this area. Is there any other way to divert that traffic? Is diversion needed with increased capacity and the temporary restriction?

- A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** There is a difference between a full-fledged detour, which this is not, and an alternate route. We expect that some people will move over there. So, it is signed appropriately for people using the alternate route, to allow them to say, “Okay, I’m getting ready for my next right turn, I’m getting ready for my next left turn. This is the way to get back to where I want it to be”.
- C: Rob Nies:** The approach signs, the signs leading up to it, say “Seek alternate routes” and then it does give an alternate route with smaller signs that say, “You can go this way”.
- Q: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** And then in terms of the heat map, again, I’m representing others who know better about it, but can you, can you just repeat the question one more time about what the plan with the heat map would be?
- A: Jay Livingstone:** The heatmap reflected that traffic was awful at Leverett Circle.
- C: John McInerney, MassDOT:** I think the intention of this slide is this: there is an ongoing review of all projects at MassDOT. We are checking construction jobs and current jobs. We are working with the MBTA to get a handle on all of the jobs and much work is going on. Make no mistake, there is a large quantity of work going on in the area. And there is an ongoing effort to keep track of it and manage it as best possible. And the image is a snapshot in time but, Amy, who is in the traffic ground at MassDOT, is updating this periodically as the jobs are progressing. Some of the jobs they identified when they started this have ended. Alfred Street on Route 99 is a big project that has a big impact now, but it will be wrapping up in April. It’s a very fluid process that’s going on and to reflect it, there is an effort behind the scenes to get a handle on everything that’s going on, so the left hand knows what the right hand is doing as best possible.
- C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** And just so that everybody’s aware of this, these colors are not designed to represent traffic. These colors are representing density of projects. I’m sure there is a traffic heat map somewhere available. This shows density of projects, the number of projects in a given area.
- C: John McInerney:** You are looking at a map of Suffolk County. Again, the point is there is an effort to try to get a handle of all these jobs. The jobs are not being managed individually in a vacuum. We are coordinating with other people. Work is happening concurrently, that is without question, but there is an effort to track it and make sure one project is not in such a way shutting down a detour or alternate route from another project. There is a lot going on and there is inter-agency coordination between the city and state.

**Q: Jay Livingstone:** I guess I could ask in different way. Is it a good idea to have as an alternative route one of the places that has some of the worst traffic around? That is really the heart of my question.

**A: Jim Gillooly, City of Boston:** I'll just speak up for a minute as I am a representative of the City of Boston Transportation Department. This is reflecting the reality that we have with a whole bunch of bridges being rebuilt across the Charles River. In one sense, you only have one way to get from Charleston to the North End: you have to cross the river. So, your options are somewhat limited. I think you saw an effort to discourage traffic coming through this area in the first place with the signs that are placed way out. That is a very good first step. Secondly, when you get closer in, if it is a really bad day and people just can't get over the North Washington Street Bridge, you have to tell them another option. That is what the alternative route is. It is one option when things are really dicey. Everybody is going to be using Waze and they are going to be watching this area. If it is smooth sailing, like we all hope it will be but are not sure it will be, Waze will tell them to go right over the North Washington Street Bridge. But if it is not smooth sailing, it's probably going to reroute people over through Leverette Circle anyway. This is intended to be helpful to the drivers who are not familiar with that detour.

We went over to Charlestown a number of times during the course of the Longfellow Bridge being rebuilt and people said, "We used to use the Gilmore Bridge as our alternative when things were really bad trying to go down the North Washington corridor and that doesn't work so well anymore". That was a good reason to wait to do this bridge until after the Longfellow Bridge was done. Think of it as a system of bridges and a collective means of getting across the bridge from one side to the other. There is no bridge we can tell them to take further out to the east. The Craigie Bridge by the Science Museum is the next bridge to the west. And the Longfellow is also there. We are hoping that people will disperse and make good decisions. That is the message that MassDOT is putting out there with our blessing to make sure that people get lots of information, know their alternatives, and try to find the best one. We do not want people stuck on the bridge with fumes developing. We want the emergency vehicles to go through. There is not a way to send them three bridges over. We have to send them to the next bridge over and hope that helps along with the diversion of regional traffic. We are even taking a step of putting a dedicated bus lane next spring along North Washington Street so that when buses get through Keaney Square, they will be able to progress down to Haymarket a lot more efficiently than they can today.

We want more people to get onto trains. We want them to use Sullivan Square. We are getting work done up in Sullivan Square right now with the help of the mitigation from the Wynn Casino. We are going to have, for the first time, signals in the Sullivan Square area connected

back to our traffic center. This project is adding about seven more cameras on top of about twenty cameras that were put in for the Longfellow Bridge. They're being transferred, and this project will maintain all of those. There are a lot of individual steps happening. I believe we need to reduce some of the traffic in this corridor. If you think this needs some relief and we need to deduct people from those normally going over the North Washington Street Bridge, the ways to do it comprehensively are being hit upon with this project.

**C: Mary Beth Karr:** I live at Whittier Place. My only exit from Whittier Place is on Martha Road and I appreciate you saying, "We're working on it". There is nothing that we see. We don't see anybody working on anything to alleviate any of the pain we had before the Equity project and we are having now. You are only going to add to it by possibly suggesting that people come across Leverette Square and down Lomasney Way. We keep hearing, "We're working on it". If you could just promise us that for every event at the Garden, there would be two or three cops directing traffic. We see nothing. In my experience, I see no relief. I see the Garden people trying to get into the Garden off of Martha Road and Lomasney Way. That is all backing up. You guys need to talk to the Garden and say, "You cannot do that. You cannot tie up that intersection". We can't even go left and go down Nashua Street. It is really, really, really untenable and you need to show us your doing something to alleviate our pain.

**C: Jim Gillooly:** In the contract, there are restrictions on work that can take place during Garden events. That's one measure. Collectively, it is a challenge throughout the city. Volumes of traffic are growing. One of the factors we are seeing lately is all of the Ubers and Lyfts that are circulating thousands and thousands of vehicles that are further congesting things. We are using the tools and we are getting good help from MassDOT to increase the number of tools we have available, so we can see more from our traffic management center. And we will continue to communicate with the Boston police about the presence of details.

**Q: Pat Flaherty, community member:** Do you know you are giving people an alternate route into another construction site? That Equity project is going to be going on for a long time on Martha Road. They have closed lanes there too. So, you are doing that even though I know that's not your intent.

**A: Jim Gillooly:** I think that is where people like DCR permit work out in the streets. A lot of work on those buildings is what happens when they connect utilities and shut down all lanes. That was the case today when I went by there. So, it's good that some of that stuff is happening now. The Alford Street Bridge is getting done now so that will not still be a factor. The Wynn Casino work is getting done now, so that won't be a mitigating factor. And, similar to that heat map, we



are trying to make sure we are not programming too many things simultaneously. So, the good part of the story is that we've got a year before the real detour comes in with the 23-month temporary bridge phase. We are going to be working with MassDOT to continue to explore better ideas if we can come up with them. So, it's good to get your feedback. I greatly sympathize with you and wish I had a bridge to the east side to send them over to that didn't bother anybody's neighborhood.

**C: Pat Flaherty:** What was already bad situation, the Garden and Equity make even worse. No one puts any requirements on the Garden saying, "You cannot have people entering your garage backing up onto Nashua Street and Lomasney Way". Nobody does it, so it just happens. Traffic does not move. And you say you're concerned about emergency vehicles getting over getting over there to North Washington Street Bridge. You better be concerned about and getting down to Martha Road.

**C: Jim Gillooly:** Absolutely. I hope you'll be monitoring any discussions about the Longfellow Bridge because there is an effort to try to take off another lane to convert it for bicycle use. Just being mindful of that because I'm very mindful of it and I see how an impact to that bridge could affect you too. It's all connected. It's one big interconnected system and we are watching on all fronts trying to make sure that the flexibility is there even while we are trying to bring the bikes and improve those facilities. This will have beautiful facilities for bikes and they will be out of the traffic and we will not the same dynamic that we have right now.

**C: No Name Given:** If they use them.

**C: Jim Gillooly:** I think they will.

**C: Pat Flaherty:** One of them got killed by the Museum of Science last week.

**C: Jim Gillooly:** I know. What we are trying to do with the off-road bike facilities is eliminate that possibility because people don't pay attention for a half a second and it's tragic.

**C: Steve Capasso, MassDOT:** And that is a suggested route. It's not a detour where the bridge is getting shut down. At the end of the day, like Jim said, most people will be looking at their GPS and they are going to follow that.

**Q: Pat Flaherty:** I have one other question. Can you still walk across the locks to Charlestown?

**A: Rob Nies:** Yes.

**C: Pat Flaherty:** We walk from the West End to friends at Flagship Wharf. So, we walk over the locks through that circular park to in front of the Marriott there.

**C: Rob Nies:** There will be times that that the walkway near the playground that goes under the bridge will have to be closed for safety reasons. When we are demolishing the bridge above, obviously, we do not want you walking underneath. It originally was going to be shut off the entire time when construction was going on. We talked with DCR and they've asked us to keep that open for as long as we possibly can. There are times we will want to close it and then you will be detoured down Water Street.

**C: Pat Flaherty:** Okay,

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** So, sign up for the email because then you will know when that will happen. That is the kind of thing we can send an email about.

**Q: No Name Given:** I have a question that has nothing to do with traffic flow. It just always puzzled me. Are there the numbers of people walking across the bridge that you need a 19-foot-wide sidewalk?

**A: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** The 19 feet is chiefly at the center span of the bridge where the seating is. That's where the overlooks of the Zakim, the USS Constitution, and the Bunker Hill Monument are. The sidewalks as you head out onto the bridge are not 19-feet all the way. There is a bit of a bulge in the middle. They are still bigger than they are today, but the 19 feet is really designed to give you a reason to stop. You have people using the Freedom Trail, on their way to Charlestown for the national historic park or any number of things and it's designed to make being on the bridge a more pleasant experience than it is today. Right now, as a pedestrian, you just want to hustle across it and get off. This is designed to give you a reason to linger.

**C: Rob Nies:** Think of it as a park in the middle of the bridge. There are going to be full grown trees planted in there and wisteria growing up the trellis.

**Q: Pat Flaherty:** What part of government is going to be responsible for long term maintenance of the plantings?

**A: Rob Nies:** The irrigation system would be the City of Boston.

**Q: Pat Flaherty:** The City of Boston will be maintaining the plantings?

**A: Rob Nies:** Yes.

**C: Steve Capasso:** The City owns the bridge.

**C: Pat Flaherty:** They own a lot of things that they don't do anything with.

**C: Rob Nies:** Most of the plants will be hardy plants that will survive the salt and sand.

**C: Jim Gillooly:** It sounds like we have the beginning of a friends' group!

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** I knew an old lady in Jamaica plain who actually planted the plastic plants. She used to put them in the ground in the winter time. They would look great. You got close to them and then realized they were plastic.

**C: Rob Nies:** Green grasses do very well like center of Massachusetts Avenue.

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Any other questions? No? Thank you everybody. We appreciate you coming out tonight.

**C: Steve Capasso:** Nate, you want to let everybody know that this will be posted up on the website?

**C: Nate Cabral-Curtis:** Yes, absolutely. The presentation will be going to the project website after we've given our last meeting, which is tomorrow. The videos you saw will also go up and you will be able to download these meeting minutes. Thank you and have a nice night.

## Next Steps

The third and final public meeting to provide updates and answers questions about the project will take place on November 29, 2018 in Charlestown, MA where the project team will present the same presentation and videos as those presented at Shriners Hospital for Children on November 28, 2018.

Beginning the morning of Monday, December 17th, 2018, the Lovejoy Wharf stairs leading to North Washington Street near the Converse building and the adjacent section of the Harborwalk passing under the North Washington Street Bridge will be closed to all pedestrians in order to begin installation of temporary supports for the 115-kilovolt electrical line which crosses the bridge.

## Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Ed	Baumann	Benesch
Dana	Benjamin	City of Cambridge
Nate	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Steve	Capasso	MassDOT
Chris	Coakley	City of Boston, Public Works
John	Collins	
Donny	Dailey	MassDOT
Pat	Flaherty	
Jim	Gillooly	Boston Transportation Department
Ahmad	Ilyas	MassDOT
Mary Beth	Karr	
Nate	Lash	Howard Stein Hudson
Jay	Livingstone	State of Massachusetts
Quinlan	Locke	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
John	McInerney	MassDOT
Robert	Nies	JF White
Chris	Standing	
Mauricia	Yeb Tauros	MassDOT