

Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge Replacement - Chicopee



What is the I-391 Bridge Replacement – Chicopee Project?

Constructed in 1979, The Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge carries I-391 over Route 116, locally known as Chicopee Street in the Willimansett neighborhood. At present, the left lanes of both directions of I-391 are closed to traffic due to the bridge's deteriorated condition. In 2023, this bridge carried approximately 27,600 vehicles every 24 hours, roughly 3% of them trucks or buses. Though safe, the structure has reached the end of its useful life span and must be replaced.

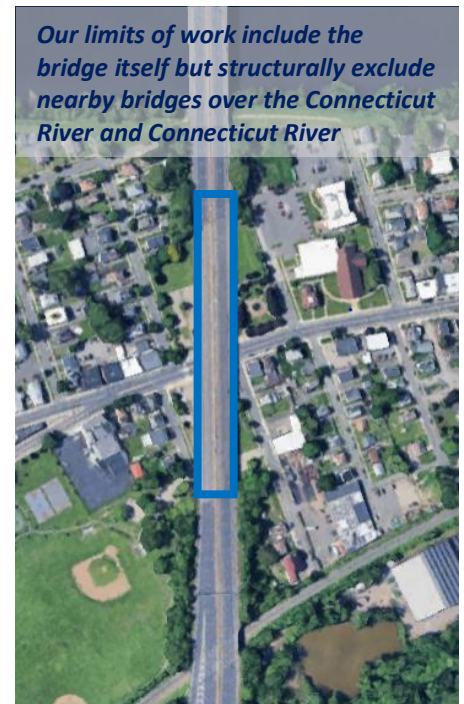
A New Bridge

While repairing the existing bridge is technically possible, the way the bridge is constructed makes this extremely difficult. For the level of effort required, MassDOT has determined that making the investment of a full replacement represents a better value for the people of Chicopee and the Commonwealth. Any replacement bridge should:

- Lend itself to staged construction to reduce traffic impacts on Willimansett residents, business, and area-commuters.
- Avoid impacts on abutting sections of I-391 through changes in height or alignment.
- Avoid permanent impacts on abutting properties.
- Offer opportunities for MassDOT to address issues the community experiences with today's bridge.

Robust Public Outreach

Willimansett is a historic neighborhood, having developed as a residential area for both downtown Chicopee and neighboring Holyoke in the 19th Century. Though the parish has since been disestablished, the bell of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary remains in the nearby Legacy Church. Local grocery chain, Big Y, was founded within sight of this bridge in 1936. MassDOT is aware of the local importance of Vietnam Veterans' Park and will make every effort to avoid construction impacts on it. If such impacts are unavoidable, they will be repaired as part of this project.



Our limits of work include the bridge itself but structurally exclude nearby bridges over the Connecticut River and Connecticut River

Though MassDOT's goal is to reach the 25% design level by the summer of 2025, we want to hear from you. Community input will be welcomed and integrated to the extent feasible in developing the design for the new bridge.

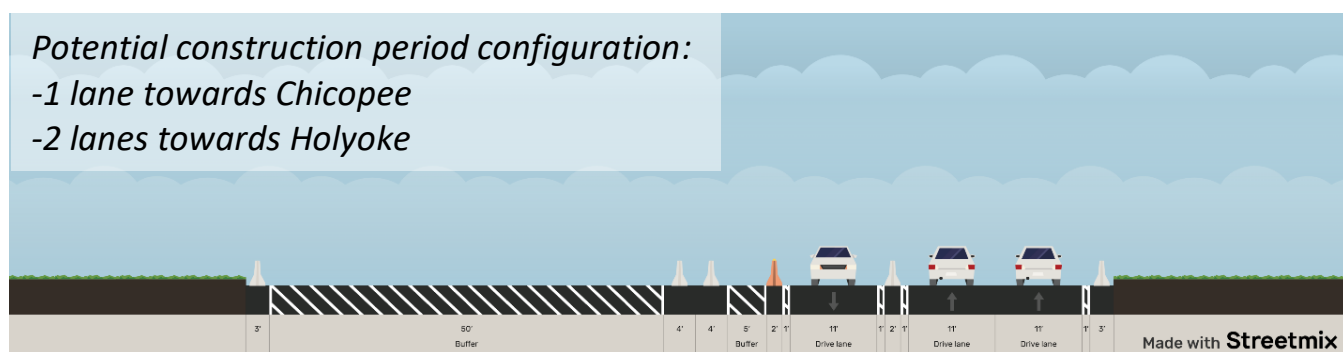
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Public meetings will be held at convenient locations in Willimansett and noticed through multiple channels including staffed tables and flyers provided at a range of community-friendly locations. Interpretation in Russian and Spanish will be offered at meetings automatically. Interpretation in other languages can be had by request.

We Want to Hear from You

You tell us:

- Are there issues that the existing bridge contributes to in Willimansett today a new bridge could help solve?
- As we think ahead to construction, are there local events or holidays we need to consider?
- When we demolish the existing bridge over Chicopee Street, ensuring public safety may require short, temporary closures of this road. Would a closure and detour be more disruptive at night or on a weekend?
- What else do we need to know?



Anticipated Timeline

November 2024-
January 2025:
Coordination with
local officials

March 2025:
1st Public
Meeting

March-May
2025:
Briefings to
interested
community
groups

June-August
2025:
2nd Public
Meeting

September-
October 2025:
25% Design
Public Hearing

How can I find out more?

Please visit the project website below for more details, to sign up for updates and email alerts, and to view the latest resources on the I-391 Bridge Replacement Project

Project website be www.mass.gov/i-391-bridge-replacement-chicopee
Project email I-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us

