

MEMO

TO: Josh Bartus MassDOT Project Manager
FROM: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, WSP Senior Consultant
RE: William T. Reid Overpass Replacement Project – Public Information Meeting #2
DATE: August 6th, 2026

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OVERVIEW

On Thursday, August 6, 2026, members of the MassDOT and consultant team associated with the William T. Reid Overpass Replacement project held the project's second public information meeting. The meeting was held at the Morse Elementary School located on Granite Street. The Reid Overpass and the rotary beneath it are visible from the Morse School's playground and it is an established community meeting location for projects with an impact on Cambridgeport. The meeting was attended by approximately 102 people. The meeting included a formal project presentation by MassDOT and the consultant team, followed by comments from elected officials and a detailed public question-and-answer session. While the Reid Overpass is routinely inspected by MassDOT and remains safe for all users, it is approaching the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced. The replacement offers MassDOT and the community with an opportunity to fundamentally reconfigure the intersection of Brookline Street, the Boston University Bridge, and Memorial Drive so that it serves all modes with greater efficiency, comfort, and safety. There are significant demands on this intersection in that it serves a gateway to Magazine Beach and is an important node in the area's cycling and walking network, it also includes one of the two river crossings closest to Fenway Park, serves the MBTA's route 47 and 85, and is immediately adjacent to a shopping plaza including a Trader Joe's and MicroCenter, a computer supply business with a regional draw.

The meeting was advertised in local print media, shared with offices in the Cambridge city government, and through a flyer campaign including 27 locations in Cambridgeport, Riverside, and The Port. Visibilities took place at the Central Square location of the Cambridge Public Library and at the intersection itself during the PM commute. The meeting followed a workshop for the representatives of advocacy organizations held in April 2026, additional coordination sessions with the City of Cambridge and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and a preview of the materials to be presented to the same advocacy organizations that had met with the MassDOT team in April. The goal of the meeting was to provide the broader community with an opportunity to see and comment on two substantially refined alternatives for the Reid Overpass area:

1. **Alternative 1: At-Grade Signalized Intersection**, which would remove the existing Reid Overpass Viaduct and replace the rotary with a conventional four-leg signalized intersection.
2. **Alternative 2: Grade-Separated Tight Diamond Interchange**, which would replace the existing viaduct with a narrower bridge structure and two signalized intersections beneath it.

The project team explained that the alternatives were revised after the January 2026 public meeting, stakeholder meetings, coordination with the City of Cambridge and DCR, updated April traffic counts, and additional engineering review. Several previous alternatives were removed from consideration because of multimodal safety concerns, operational challenges, geometric limitations, constructability issues, MBTA routing limitations, Morse School operational concerns, and community feedback.

Public sentiment was significantly improved from the January meeting with many audience members thanking MassDOT's team for listening effectively and making positive changes to the concepts reflective of what had been expressed at the January meeting and in subsequent email comments. Public input focused heavily on pedestrian and bicycle safety, vehicle speeds, the width and design of a potential replacement bridge, traffic backups into Cambridgeport, bus delay, emergency access, surrounding City of Cambridge street patterns, air quality, usable greenspace, and the need for continued community involvement before a preferred alternative is selected. While MassDOT does not intend to attempt to make changes to Cambridge-owned streets, the City of Cambridge will begin a planning process of its own to review the network of one-way streets in Cambridgeport to see if it can be improved.

Several attendees expressed concern that the at-grade alternative would require too many lanes and create long, uncomfortable crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Several attendees expressed interest in the grade-separated alternative. Refinements asked for on this alternative included getting the narrowest possible bridge structure, controlling speeds through design, continuing to focus on the safety and ease of bicycle and pedestrian crossings, and making the space beneath the bridge safe and welcoming.

MassDOT explained that the project team will review public comments, advance microsimulation traffic analysis, to further evaluate both alternatives, and identify a preferred concept. The preferred concept would then be presented to the community and the reasons for its selection explained. Even then this preferred concept will remain conceptual and a formal design process, with ample opportunity for public comment and refinement will be needed, before a buildable project is ready to be advertised for construction.

PRESENTATION¹

C: Josh Bartus, MassDOT Project Manager [JB1]: Hello, everyone. My name is Josh Bartus. I'm the project manager. I work at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division headquarters in Boston. I am the project manager for the Reid Overpass Project that we are presenting to you tonight.

During today's presentation, we will explain the purpose of the meeting, provide an overview of the project's design development process, discuss our outreach efforts, and present the refined project alternatives. At the end, we will open it up for questions and comments. We will also explain how you can submit comments and questions regarding the project after tonight's meeting.

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I would like to turn it over to Nate briefly to explain our advertisements.

C: Nathaniel Cabral- Curtis [NCC1]: Thank you, Josh.

For those of you who have your cameras out, there is a project website that launched today. This presentation will be posted there. These plans are already posted there nice and large, so you can download them and review them closely. You do not need to take a picture of everything if you do not want to.

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

If you are in our project database, you probably received quite a few emails about this meeting. We ran advertisements twice in print newspapers toward the end of July, around July 23 and July 30, or July 24 and July 31, depending on the publication. The websites also carried the notices for quite a while.

These are the flyer locations where we dropped flyers around the community. The little power shovel icon is the Reid Overpass project location. This shows everywhere we visited. The two red locations are places where I was physically present to speak to people and encourage them to come to tonight's event.

Because it was such an interesting weather day on Monday, during the peak period, I actually went and stood right there near the Paul Dudley White Path and the bridge and greeted people as they came off the path or the bridge. I told them, "please, come to my meeting."

One of my favorite flyer drops was the swimming pool. I really wanted to stay there and ask if we could hold the meeting in the pool. They said no.

I will hand it back to Josh.

C: JB1: The purpose of holding this public meeting is to provide an established forum through which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can share information with the public regarding proposed roadway construction projects and provide every interested resident, stakeholder, and member of the community with an opportunity to offer comments and feedback on the project.

At the same time, these meetings provide the Commonwealth with a valuable opportunity to receive input from residents and stakeholders. Information and feedback received through this process help inform the project team and assist the Commonwealth in making decisions regarding the design elements and alternatives to be advanced.

Tonight, we will provide an update on the progress that has been made over the last year, including meetings, public outreach, stakeholder coordination, and technical evaluations that have occurred since our previous engagement.

We will highlight the efforts undertaken by the project team to better understand the community's priorities, evaluate constraints, and refine the concepts under consideration. Finally, we will outline the next steps in the project development process and provide information on how to remain involved and contact the project team.

The meeting will conclude with an opportunity for questions and comments from the public.

Joining me tonight on the panel is Joe Doucette from our District 6 office. The state's consultant design team includes Tony Timpiero, Hojjat Barati, and Hutch Meyers from Benesch, Gary McNaughton and Erin Fredette from Bowman, and Nate from WSP.

Here are the project limits. Memorial Drive carries traffic over the rotary, which provides key connections to Brookline Street to the north, the Boston University Bridge to the south, and Memorial Drive to the east and west.

Some notable features within the project area include, the Reid Overpass Viaduct structure itself, the Grand Junction Railroad Bridge to the east, the east-west pedestrian and bicycle facilities via the Paul Dudley White Path, nearby institutional facilities, including Boston University and MIT; the Morse School in the northwest quadrant, where we are holding the meeting tonight, a commercial building in the northeast quadrant, a Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) facility and associated subsurface infrastructure in the southwest quadrant, Magazine Beach; and Goose Park in the southeast quadrant. As you can see, this project area is physically constrained by existing features and facilities in each quadrant. That requires careful design to limit impacts to these abutting features.

The purpose of this project is to address the deteriorated viaduct structure and take the opportunity to reimagine the intersection as a safer and more functional transportation facility. The project will improve safety for all users, incorporate multimodal infrastructure from the beginning, and create calmer, more predictable traffic operations.

The project is necessary to address several key challenges. The existing infrastructure is aging and substandard. There are safety concerns for all modes of travel, and congestion impacts the overall operation of the intersection. These issues highlight the need for a long-term solution that better serves the community and the traveling public.

Our goal is to deliver a safer, more efficient intersection that works for everyone, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

The objective has been to evaluate options for removing or replacing the Reid Overpass Viaduct and reconfiguring the existing rotary to create a safer, more efficient, and more accessible transportation network. Through this process, the project team developed and evaluated a range of alternatives, including both at-grade and grade-separated alternatives, while considering transportation operations, safety, accessibility, environmental impacts, and the community's goals.

Community and stakeholder input has been a critical part of our process. Following the January 2026 public meeting, the team reviewed feedback received and worked to refine the alternatives to better address community concerns.

We have continued coordination with DCR, the City of Cambridge, legislators, and other stakeholders. Updated traffic data and feedback from the April stakeholder workshop helped further shape the concepts being presented today. Lastly, we met with the City, DCR, and stakeholders once again last month to further refine the alternatives and incorporate feedback.

The alternatives we will discuss represent a balanced approach that incorporates stakeholder input while advancing the project's goals of improving safety, mobility, and connectivity. At this stage of the project, MassDOT is seeking to identify a preferred concept to advance into the design phase. The two primary paths under consideration are either removing the existing viaduct and creating an at-grade intersection or replacing the viaduct with a new structure while reconfiguring the intersection.

While these concepts take different approaches, both provide opportunities to improve safety, enhance multimodal connections, and improve transit conditions. They create better connections to the Charles River and support the long-term transportation needs of the area, including future MBTA operations along the Grand Junction. I am going to turn it over to Nate once again to talk about outreach in a little more detail.

C: NCC1: Public outreach is an important part of this project. This really dates back to October 2024, when the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association hosted portions of this team right here in this building.

We had our first public information meeting on January 6. That meeting was virtual. One of the asks at that meeting was that we meet with stakeholder organizations. We have done that twice now. Based on those meetings, we reworked the alternatives that you see here tonight. We have been gathering community, and stakeholder input every step of the way. Many of you sent emails after the January 6 meeting. We got a lot of them, so thank you for that.

Q: Audience Member: Can you say what those groups were?

A: NCC1: Yes. I can certainly provide it for you. It is available on the [website](#), actually.²

What did we learn from all of the stakeholder input? This is an opportunity for real change. The overpass is nearing the end of its life. Today, the rotary, the ramps, and the supports really lock everything in place. If you were to take that away, you could make some fundamental changes. There are shared goals between MassDOT, the project team, and the community, including increased safety for all users. That is priority number one. Other shared goals include providing dedicated and separate facilities for each mode, expanding sidewalks, enhancing bicycle accommodations, improving lighting throughout the corridor, particularly under a bridge if there is one in the future, creating simpler and safer street crossings, and reclaiming excess roadway for park space.

However, based on what we heard at the January 6 meeting and afterward, there was a feeling that we did not go far enough toward those goals. Some of the things we heard in emails and letters included that complex intersection concepts made people feel like it was more of the same. Gentle curves could allow vehicles to go fast on turns.

² <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/documents-and-meeting-materials-reid-overpass-project#advocacy-organizations-workshop>

There were concerns about unsignalized crossings where drivers had the opportunity to yield rather than being compelled to stop. The roadway widths seemed greater than people wanted, and MBTA bus transit was not explicitly addressed.

We really went at those comments directly, and you will see how we have attempted to do that this evening. At this point, I am going to pass the microphone to Tony, who will talk you through how we did that.

C: [TT1]: We did have that virtual meeting back in January, and we heard from a lot of you. We revisited our work. Continuing the alternative development process, the design team built on the completed stage after the January 6 meeting and incorporated public and stakeholder feedback received throughout the process up to today.

As Nate mentioned, there were several meetings with stakeholders, the City of Cambridge, DCR, and others. The goal has been to balance transportation operations with safe multimodal accommodations while also respecting the surrounding community, environmental context, and long-term transportation needs.

Using updated data, including traffic counts completed this past April, refined technical analysis, and stakeholder input, every alternative was evaluated through a screening process based on safety, functionality, multimodal connectivity, community values, and long-term viability. This process helped identify the alternatives that best meet the project goals, objectives, and community vision for the corridor.

The alternatives were originally presented at our first public information meeting on January 6, which generated significant feedback and discussion from the public and stakeholders. As part of that process, we also received a stakeholder-developed alternative, which the project team investigated and evaluated in the same manner as the other concepts.

Following additional public input, updated traffic data, and further engineering analysis, several alternatives were removed from further consideration based on a combination of factors, including public concern, operational performance, multimodal safety, geometric limitations, and constructability. While each alternative had individual strengths, none achieved the balance of safety, multimodal accommodation, accessibility, transportation operations, and community objectives needed to move forward. The multi-lane roundabout and modified partial displaced left turn option presented difficulties in providing safe and intuitive pedestrian and bicycle connections. They also created operational and geometric challenges and increased driver complexity.

The single point urban interchange and the multi-lane roundabout under the bridge alternative required larger structures and increased footprints. They resulted in grading and construction complexity and challenges in providing effective multimodal accommodations. This intersection concept required a much longer bridge span to accommodate the reconfigured intersection layout, increasing the size of the structure and the overall project impact. In addition, the complex turning geometry and less effective left-turn operations created operational challenges and reduced overall effectiveness.

The multi-lane roundabout under the bridge maintained similar characteristics to what is out there today, including ineffective merge operations. The concept continued to present concerns related to traffic operations, larger infrastructure requirements, and the ability to provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle accommodation.

A stakeholder roundabout with an offset bridge incorporated many community ideas, including a narrow bridge, reduced pavement, additional greenspace, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle features. Many of these elements have been incorporated into the two alternatives moving forward. However, after additional technical review, the concept was not advanced due to concerns with operational complexity, user conflicts, Granite Street, Morse School operations, and MBTA routing limitations.

We heard the concerns raised since the first public meeting in January. Following multiple engagement opportunities with stakeholders, the project team revisited and reworked these two alternatives to incorporate that feedback. The concepts presented this evening reflect the collaborative process and represent alternatives that have been further refined to better address the project goals and community objectives. Based on the extensive public outreach, stakeholder coordination, traffic data received, and continued engineering evaluation completed since January, we

reworked these two alternatives. These concepts best align with the project goals and objectives of improving safety and multimodal connectivity, addressing transportation operations, and creating a more accessible and connected transportation network. Alternative 1 is the at-grade signalized intersection. Alternative 2 is the grade-separated tight diamond interchange. The remainder of the presentation will walk through both alternatives in detail.

Presentation of the At-Grade Concept

This is the first alternative, the at-grade signalized intersection. This alternative removes the existing Reid Overpass Viaduct and rotary and replaces them with a more conventional four-legged intersection. The concept simplifies the roadway configuration, improves operations through coordinated signal control, and creates more predictable traffic movements. It also provides more direct and intuitive pedestrian crossings, improved ADA accessibility, and enhanced bicycle accommodations through dedicated and continuous facilities that better connect Cambridgeport, the Charles River, and the Boston University Bridge.

A key focus of this alternative has been incorporating stakeholder feedback to improve the overall user experience. Modifications included from the feedback we received include shifting the northbound lanes closer to the intersection to improve operations, separating bicycle and pedestrian facilities to reduce conflicts, and providing buffers between bicycle lanes and adjacent roadways to increase comfort and safety. The design also incorporates bicycle roundabouts to better manage bidirectional bicycle movements. Those are shown here to the east and west of the intersection.

Additional refinements include tightening the northbound right-turn lane, which was voiced at the last public meeting and through stakeholder meetings. We revised that right-turn lane and tightened it up. However, we need mountable aprons to accommodate larger vehicles. That right-turn lane is also signalized to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

We also removed the median at Brookline Street. That was another comment. We had proposed a median between the two barrels of traffic on Brookline Street, and it was voiced that the median should be removed and that green space should be provided to the exterior of the roadway. Again, these details are at the concept level. We will advance these design elements as we move forward into a higher level of design. Please keep that in mind as we present these designs. They are not fully complete. They are concepts at this level to get to a point where we understand which concept is preferred.

Transit operations are also improved with a dedicated southbound queue jump lane. As you can see here in red, there is a dedicated bus lane to facilitate the southbound movement through the intersection and manage transit operations. As previously mentioned, part of this work involves the Grand Junction Railroad. It is not very visible here, but there is a rail line that runs underneath Memorial Drive. That is also part of this project scope. The proposed profile of that work is shown here and is clearer on the printouts. The profile of Memorial Drive has to be raised slightly to get over the tracks and meet today's standards. As you can see, Memorial Drive would then dip down to meet the existing grades of the intersection with the viaduct removed.

Q: Audience Member: Did you say you are going to raise it?

A: TT1: Right now, Memorial Drive does cross over the railroad tracks, but there will be analysis as we get to a higher level of design to determine how much Memorial Drive needs to be raised. It will only be slight because there are conflicting features, including the BU boathouse and the path to the south. There will be some variation of the existing elevations there.

The railroad bridge will not preclude future opportunities to repurpose the rail corridor for expanded rail operations or potential trail connections.

Q: Audience Member: Can you repeat what you said about the Grand Junction? Could it no longer be used?

A: TT1: No. We are not precluding any future transit or trail connections.

We also provided a green space calculation on the graphic, comparing existing and proposed green space by square footage. Based on this preliminary calculation, the concept provides a net increase in green space compared to existing conditions. This will allow more opportunity for landscaping improvements, pedestrian improvements, and public realm enhancements.

Overall, this alternative reduces structural complexity because there is no bridge. It improves long-term maintenance, creates opportunities for improved river views, streetscape enhancements, and public realm improvements, and advances the project goals by improving safety, accessibility, multimodal connectivity, and transportation operations.

At this point, I will turn it over to Erin to walk us through the operational functionality of the concept.

Q: Audience Member: Would you be saying anything about the estimated costs of these two different alternatives?

A: TT1: We have not done calculations for costs yet.

C: Erin Fredette, Bowman [EF1]: What we have up here is a more zoomed-in view of the intersection itself. As Tony mentioned, one of the things we have included is the bus lane coming out of the Cambridgeport neighborhood. That was implemented because we worked with the MBTA to identify where the most delay was experienced by buses through this intersection.

We have crossings for both pedestrians and bicycles on all four legs of the intersection. All of these crossings, as currently conceived, are concurrent crossings. They would happen at the same time as vehicular movements through the intersection. On the right-hand side, we have a phasing diagram. In pink, we have vehicular movements. In blue, we have pedestrian and bicycle movements. In orange, we have transit movements.

One key thing we wanted to ensure was implemented was a protected crossing specifically for the Paul Dudley White Path because the volume of vehicles turning over those crossings is so high, as is the number of pedestrians and cyclists along that crossing. The concurrent crossings also help us use the available time in the signal more efficiently so users, not only vehicles but also pedestrians and cyclists, are not waiting as long at the intersection.

Otherwise, it would operate like a typical signalized intersection with protected left turns from each of the movements. There would be no left-turning vehicles waiting to find gaps in traffic like in other places on Memorial Drive. They would have a protected phase so they would not conflict with pedestrians and bikes, particularly on the southern crossing and the east side.

The other key element to this at-grade intersection is that without the bridge, where Memorial Drive through traffic today is elevated out of the intersection, all of that traffic would come down and intersect with the traffic going north and south between Cambridgeport and the Boston University Bridge, as well as all of the turning movements to and from those side streets.

With that at-grade implementation, all of the through traffic on Memorial Drive would have to stop each cycle. That is the biggest difference between what is out there today with the elevated structure and what you will see with the grade-separated option later and because we have traffic down at grade, we have a few more lanes to accommodate that traffic. We have two through lanes in each direction on Memorial Drive and two left-turn lanes on Memorial Drive to the Boston University Bridge.

We are in the process of doing a more refined analysis using a microsimulation tool. As part of that process, it will give us an opportunity to further tweak and evaluate these concepts. Ideally, it would be great to get these crossings a little shorter and narrower so there is less exposure for pedestrians and bikes crossing.

Q: Audience Member: Can I ask a question?

A: NCC1: If folks can hold questions, this is a short presentation. There are maybe six or seven more slides. You may find that the question gets answered. Let's keep going.

C: EF1: The only other thing I wanted to note is that the crossings here are intended to be single stage. We are not intending for people to get stuck in these medians on the Memorial Drive approaches. In the phasing, we are giving enough time for people to get all the way across in one stage.

On the east and west sides, and for the Paul Dudley White Path, there is a phase that will allow the full crossing. There is a smaller phase that crosses people over the right-turn lane, mostly because people will do it anyway, so we will signalize it and include it in the signal timing. Then the other phase allows them to cross fully.

With that, I will turn it back to Tony.

Presentation of the Grade-Separated Concept

TT1: Alternative 2 is the grade-separated tight urban diamond intersection. This is where we replace the existing viaduct with a new bridge structure. It is a more compact structure than what is out there today.

It is a conventional diamond intersection configuration with closely spaced signalized intersections beneath the bridge on either side. There would be two signals, one on either side the overpass beneath the bridge structure. What you see highlighted here is generally the span of the bridge, with retaining walls or piers to stay elevated on the easterly side and then eventually come down on the westerly side. The details of the bridge, retaining walls, and architectural features would be worked out through more public engagement if this becomes the preferred concept.

The railroad bridge is part of the project. Memorial Drive goes up and over the railroad bridge, continues high over the new intersection below, and then comes down to the west. Again, the reconstruction of the railroad bridge will not preclude future opportunities for expanded rail operations or potential trail connections.

This concept separates regional traffic along Memorial Drive from local intersection movements, improving overall traffic operations and providing a more predictable roadway environment. Signalized ramp termini manage turning movements, improve intersection capacity, and reduce vehicle conflict points compared to the existing rotary configuration.

Like the at-grade alternative, this concept incorporates a dedicated bus lane southbound on Brookline Street through the intersection and onto the Boston University Bridge. This improves transit reliability, reduces delays, and enhances bus operations through the corridor. It also improves pedestrian and bicycle accommodations by providing direct ADA-compliant crossings at signalized locations.

The design incorporates several stakeholder-requested modifications, including the dedicated northbound right-turn lane from the Boston University Bridge, an additional southbound receiving lane at the Boston University Bridge, and a second southbound lane that also serves as the transit priority lane. The southern intersection has been shifted closer to the overpass to provide additional queuing storage at the Boston University Bridge. Additional multimodal improvements include separating bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Details such as curb widths, elevations, grass strips, and other elements would be worked out as we move into final design.

We have also incorporated bicycle roundabouts at the concept level. The intent is to separate bicycle movements from pedestrian movements. The pedestrian paths are shown in one color, and the bicycle paths are shown in green. The Brookline Street median was requested to be removed, and the design allows additional green space for pedestrians, bicycles, and landscaping to the exterior. We are also looking at refining the layout as we move forward, such as adjusting the skew of the southerly side. Right now, it is somewhat skewed, and we are looking at making it more perpendicular to shorten the crossing.

The green space calculation is provided on the graphic and compares existing and proposed green space in square feet. Compared to previously evaluated grade-separated concepts, this alternative reduces the overall bridge footprint and structural complexity. It minimizes community impacts while maintaining future operations along Memorial Drive.

Overall, we feel this concept balances regional mobility, local access, multimodal connectivity, safety, and long-term goals.

If this concept advances as the preferred concept, bridge design will continue to be developed during the next phase. Elements such as the architectural character, appearance, and treatment of the bridge would be evaluated and coordinated as design progresses. This next slide discusses the bridge width, or in engineering terms, the cross section. This was a primary topic of discussion at our first meeting. Originally, the bridge consisted of four lanes, two in each direction. With additional traffic data and refined analysis, we have now reduced the bridge to two lanes, one lane in each direction.

The bridge width, or cross section, was developed using the preferred MassDOT and FHWA design criteria for a federally funded bridge, which includes 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders. However, we are evaluating a reduction of width consisting of 10-foot lanes and 2-foot shoulders. This option aligns with the DCR parkway context and reduces the overall bridge width. Since MassDOT will own and maintain this bridge, the final cross section and width must meet MassDOT requirements. Advancing a reduced section would require a design exception from the preferred criteria.

Our goal is to present a technically sound and context-sensitive solution that balances safety, operations, and the historic parkway character. At this point, I will turn it back over to Erin to talk about operations.

C: EF1: Similar slide setup: we have a zoomed-in view of the intersections and the signal phasing on the right side. You will note the lane in the southbound direction and pedestrian and bicycle crossings across each of the exterior legs of the intersection. There will not be pedestrian or bicycle crossings along the bridge itself, but along the exterior. Similar to the four-way intersection, these crossings would be concurrent, but all of these crossings would also be protected. You will note that the crossings themselves in each of these diagrams do not conflict with turning vehicles. The concurrent crossings allow us to use time in the signal more efficiently.

You will also see that these crossings, particularly across the ramps, are much narrower than what is in the four-way signal option. The crossings on the north side and the south side, where the Paul Dudley White Path is, are similar in scale, but as I mentioned before, we are looking into ways to make those as narrow as possible. The biggest difference between this and the four-way option is that Memorial Drive through traffic no longer intersects with the side streets or the turning vehicles to and from the Boston University Bridge. That traffic is on the elevated structure, which means it would incur little to no delay from the signals at grade. Our intention is to have these crossings occur at the same time, but we would not be able to allow a pedestrian to start at the southern end and get all the way through on the same signal phase. With this option, the intention is that a bicycle could make it through in one shot if they are there at the start of green, but for pedestrians, these crossings would essentially have to happen in two stages because they are separated.

The signals themselves would operate essentially as one signalized intersection. All the vehicles would clear through the interior area, so there should not be much, if any, stacking between the two nodes of the intersection.

As before, we are doing another round of analysis with microsimulation. In addition to further evaluating and tweaking these concepts, we will get better outputs from that microsimulation, including pedestrian and bicycle travel times and delay, as well as bus delay and travel times through here. It will give us a better idea of how long it might take someone to cross north to south under each scenario.

With that, I will turn it over to Josh to wrap us up.

JB1: Where do we go from here? The project team will carefully review and consider all comments and feedback received during tonight's hearing, as well as any written comments submitted. The public comment received will be used to further refine the two alternatives and help decide whichever preferred alternative is identified.

We will also perform a high-level traffic operations analysis in VISSIM, as Erin discussed, to compare the operational performance of the remaining alternatives under existing and future traffic conditions.

For the grade-separated alternative, we will continue to refine bridge concepts using detailed ground survey information to evaluate structural feasibility, geometry, constructability, and how the proposed bridge integrates within the surrounding project area.

Collectively, these efforts will help the project team identify the preferred concept that best meets the project's transportation, safety, multimodal, environmental, and community objectives. That preferred alternative will be presented for additional public review and input before moving forward. Once a preferred concept has been selected, the project will advance into preliminary design, followed by final design and eventually construction bid preparation.

Thank you. That is the end of our main presentation before we get into questions and comments.

I would like to put up our contact slide. We will leave this up here for a little bit. Anyone interested in receiving project updates, additional information related to the project, or providing feedback should use the links shown here to navigate the project websites or contact the project email. Any questions related to Memorial Drive outside our project limits can be rerouted to DCR for their response.

I will turn it over to Nate to get started with Q&A.

Discussion

C: NCC1: This is how we are going to do this.

First, there is a four-slide PDF on the website, which includes these two concepts and a synopsis of the remarks that were made about them. We expect that all of you will go to the website, download those plans from the documents page, and send a comment. That is what you did after the last meeting, and I expect you will after this one.

If you read those and think you need more information to make an informed comment, write to the email address and we will get you an answer so you can make an informed comment. This is not a formal comment period like you would have after a 25 percent design public hearing, but try to get comments in within the next couple of weeks, by the end of the month, so that any really good ideas can get into our team's modeling earlier while it is easy.

We are first going to hear from people who won elections to be in the room. Then we will hear from anyone who has a small child who might need to go home. Then we will go to general hands. I will walk the microphone around and try to make this equitable.

C: Representative Mike Connolly: Thank you. Let's hear it for our project team one time. I know this is not easy.

And let's hear it for ourselves as a community showing up in August for a complicated presentation.

My name is Mike Connolly. I have the honor of representing Cambridgeport. This is perhaps the most packed I have ever seen in this auditorium. I want to offer a couple of quick points about what I am thinking about in this project.

First and foremost, I think this project has to serve the abutting neighborhood, the Cambridgeport residents. I always make the point when I am talking to state officials that the Cambridgeport neighborhood is officially designated as an environmental justice neighborhood, as are several neighborhoods here in our Cambridge community.

We know how traffic bunches up at the rotary. One of the points I want to commend the project team for is that I believe each of these designs would help with that queuing at the rotary. Instead of fighting to get through a roundabout, signalized intersections would give people more of a fair chance to get through. We also should acknowledge that the 47 Bus gets terribly stuck.

This is such a challenging location. We are standing here in the Morse School. We have to be cognizant of safety for school drop-off. We also have to be cognizant of the need to integrate with the City of Cambridge. It is not enough to have the most perfect design possible on state infrastructure. There is also the question of how it relates to the surface roads under the control of the City of Cambridge. We need a holistic design.

Another big concern of mine is cyclist and pedestrian safety. We have to remember that we lost John Cochran, who was killed by an SUV driver almost two years ago. A big part of preventing that in the future is controlling speed, and I think there are opportunities to do that in this project. Cycling and pedestrian safety is not just for other

people. It is also for us in the Cambridgeport neighborhood. It is about eliminating a barrier to get to the Charles River and making the Charles River more inviting.

I heard “potential trail connections.” I want you to know that as state representative, I intend to see the vision for a multiuse path on the Grand Junction corridor fulfilled. We know the City of Cambridge is very committed to that. In the House economic development bill, I passed an amendment that calls on MassDOT to work with the City of Cambridge to complete the design.

As I mentioned the economic development bill, I want to give a shoutout to Senator Will Brownsberger. In the Senate economic development bill, they passed automated traffic enforcement, which is something we have pushed for many years. That is an opportunity to ensure that we do not have more fatalities on Memorial Drive, that cars are not treating the flyover as a speed track, and that we can control speed. We expect final votes on that bill in October.

I want to thank the project team again. We had a meeting in January. It was an initial conversation. We are not even at the 25 percent design stage. This is really the public process to exchange ideas. Coming out of that January meeting, there were a lot of frustrations. The project team met with stakeholders and several neighborhood leaders in April for a real working session at the Transportation Building, in which I participated. Last week, that same group of stakeholders had a pre-meeting for tonight. We are really going deep on the engagement. I expect you will process all the feedback from tonight, and we still have a long way to go with this design. I think it can keep getting better as we go.

I could talk about it all night, but I will wrap up there. I look forward to continuing to move this forward.

C: Senator Will Brownsberger: Thank you so much. I am Will Brownsberger, State Senator. I represent Watertown, Belmont, West Cambridge, Fenway, Allston, and Brighton, so I do not actually represent this space. I am here as a cycling and pedestrian safety advocate.

I am really grateful to MassDOT for starting this process early and giving people participation in the process of coming up with ideas and abandoning ideas before anything is conceptually set in stone. I want to thank Mike Connolly for his engagement. I want to thank everybody here for engaging in the process. I know the final result has already moved a lot as a result of the engagement that has occurred, and your continued engagement is going to help make it better and better. Thanks, everybody, for being here.

NCC1: If we have no elected Cambridge personnel, I am going to do what I promised. For those who have a small child in the back, either one of you have a question?

C: Audience Member: Thank you. Thank you for the presentation and thank you to the project team and everyone involved. I have had less time than I would have liked but have been paying attention. I think it shows that the project team has been working with the community, and those of you who know me from previous meetings know I would not say that if I did not think it and mean it.

I think we have a conundrum here. Looking at these two designs, both have really moved the needle. If we do not have a bridge, we get lots of lanes to cross. I counted six lanes for pretty much everyone crossing. If you are on the bike path, you are going across six lanes. If you are going in or out of Cambridge at the Boston University Bridge, you are going across six lanes. That is a lot of lanes to cross. The bridge alternative has a bridge for cars, but all the bicycle and pedestrian users still have to cross that roadway. What we are saying there is that we are going to prioritize vehicles crossing the intersection, while bikes and pedestrians still have to cross heavy turning movements and wait at lights.

There are four crossings of the Charles River between downtown and Allston, and this is one of them. It is the most complex because the intersections are so close together and the crossing is so short.

What I would like to see as an alternative, and I will send this as well, is something that integrates a bicycle and pedestrian crossing. Usually bicycle and pedestrian advocates do not want those because it means cyclists go up and down a hill, but because of the Grand Junction Bridge just upstream, it is not that much of a hill to climb. What I propose is making the overpass for eastbound traffic only. Most of the conflicts here are crossing eastbound traffic.

If we had an overpass for just eastbound traffic, that would reduce a lot of conflicts, and we could use most of the signal for the turns while westbound traffic was at grade.

If the overpass was the rightmost lane, the turns could stay to the left and go under, while bikes and pedestrians could go up and over adjacent to the eastbound vehicles. It is somewhat counterintuitive, but I would love to see that analyzed because I think it is a compromise between what we see here. It keeps some bridge element to reduce congestion and lanes, but it does not say people walking and biking are second-class citizens waiting at a two-minute light while the cars go overhead.

I also track the 47 Bus through the neighborhood. The longest I have seen is 55 minutes from Putnam Avenue to [unclear location]. That is untenable. I lived off Pearl Street near Magazine Street for nine years, and I knew that if I was driving somewhere at rush hour, I was not going to touch the Boston University Bridge because it might be five minutes or it might be 45. Hopefully we can get to something that helps fix that.

C: Audience Member: Thank you very much to MassDOT for these alternatives. I am a cyclist. I cycle from Cambridgeport into the Longwood Medical Area twice a week, and I pass through this intersection on my commute home. Unfortunately, I would say this is the most dangerous part of my commute. When I am cycling into the intersection, cars often accelerate to turn right onto Memorial Drive. I have almost been hit a few times as a result of that.

I appreciate the work that has gone into thinking carefully about how cars can turn right onto Memorial Drive. I would encourage MassDOT to consider keeping the lanes as narrow as possible and keeping the bicycle facilities separated throughout.

A: NCC1: That thing you just mentioned is real. I actually saw that happen Monday when I was handing out flyers to bicyclists. That is very legitimate.

C: Audience Member: Thank you very much, and thank you for the presentation.

I live in the lower part of Cambridgeport, maybe 800 feet from this intersection. I have lived there for about 23 years. I did not hear any part of this presentation talk about the traffic that constantly backs up into my neighborhood. If anybody walked outside when this meeting started, from Waverly it was backed up from Granite. It was backed up past Pearl Street by two cars, and of course the rotary was a mess. We used to have that during rush hour. Now we have it regularly at different periods of the day, seven days a week. I am disappointed that nobody talked about how either of these schemes would improve the traffic congestion that this neighborhood suffers through.

I am primarily a pedestrian. When I need to drive, this is my exit out of Cambridge, and I never exit Cambridge between 4PM and 7PM because of what is outside right now. As a pedestrian, I have to cross just two lanes of traffic to get to the Boston University Bridge. Scheme 1, someone said six lanes. I thought I counted ten, but I cannot see that well. There is an enormous number of lanes to cross. For me, experientially, that is terrible. To me, that is a nonstarter. I do not support that scheme whatsoever.

Scheme 2, with the overpass down to two lanes, seems interesting. I like that there are green spaces going through there. It certainly makes it a more hospitable experience than a major intersection. The intersection in Scheme 1 reminds me of Edwin Land Boulevard and Charles River Dam Road. "Don't block the box" is always there, and people always block the box. I imagine that is going to happen here too.

A: NCC1: Before we move on, as Representative Connolly said, we have been working on decanting some of that traffic out of Cambridgeport. Erin, would you like to say a few things about the signalization?

A: EF1: As it relates to traffic coming out of the Cambridgeport neighborhood, signalization under both concepts will give us the opportunity to better manage that queuing. We recognize that is a pain point.

Each of the options presents challenges with managing that traffic. Some of that will require coordination with the City of Cambridge to identify what, if anything, might need to change at the Waverly and Granite intersection as

well. The microsimulation analysis we are doing right now takes into account the Waverly and Granite intersection, the Commonwealth Avenue intersection, the River Street intersection, and other surrounding intersections. We will have a better sense of how this fits into the overall network and how we can best manage that traffic, not just for people exiting Cambridgeport, but for all approaches.

I did see exactly what you are talking about. We understand it.

C: Audience Member: Hello. I am a Brookline High School student. I am a very avid cyclist and bike through this area very frequently. The current setup is not very safe for cyclists. I have a couple of comments on the designs presented.

First, Alternative 1, with the fully at-grade intersection, does not appear to be very safe for cyclists and pedestrians because of what was mentioned about cars blocking the box. Additionally, it features a slip lane, which is frequently used for high-speed travel as cars quickly zoom through it.

Not all crossings are protected, especially the turn from Memorial Drive westbound to Brookline Street, which could complicate pedestrian safety for anyone trying to cross Brookline Street.

For Alternative 2, my concerns lie with the bridge width, especially the fact that you are considering 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders, which is similar to a highway. With a median, that would definitely generate high speeds. I strongly encourage you not to include a median and to use 10-foot lanes.

A: NCC1: A couple of things on that.

The slip lane you talked about has been heavily tightened since the first iteration. That was something we worked on a lot. It is fully signalized, so it is not a true slip lane. It is tightened to the point that it needs a mountable apron for trucks that may need to access the Boston University boathouse. It is intended to slow cars down and get them facing toward the right place to see a pedestrian.

I also want to commend you for being a high school student and being here during summer vacation.

C: Christine Liu, Charles River Conservancy: Hi, my name is Christine Liu from the Charles River Conservancy. It is really great to see the turnout here. Thank you to the project team.

I will keep it brief with three river-specific things. One, road diet. We are very pro road diet and very pro fewer uses of concrete, both for heat issues and runoff into the river. I appreciate that Erin is working hard at reducing lanes as much as possible. I really want to promote that.

Second, Memorial Drive is DCR on other parts, and there is a great road diet happening in other parts near Harvard Square. I really encourage a parkway narrowing of the lanes and keeping Memorial Drive consistent. Getting that waiver or exception is important. It would also be helpful to have DCR in the room or have their comments presented.³

Lastly, Representative Connolly talked about speed concerns. I want to challenge the designers to create an efficient and safe design. Those two things involve tradeoffs. If you make it more efficient, you can trade off safety and vice versa. This is a dense, complex urban area, and I want to ask how safe or unsafe we are willing to go.

C: Audience Member: Thanks for the presentation and thank you all for being here to support the community which I am part of. I am primarily a pedestrian through this intersection when I am not a driver. I want to support what Frank said. Right now, it is very safe for pedestrians because there are a lot of gaps and opportunities to cross without conflict. I challenge the designers to make this not less safe for pedestrians than it is today.

I was horrified to see what you thought pedestrians would be able to get across in the first presentation. I do not see it. This is a family area. People have baby carriages. People have children. There are people in wheelchairs.

³ DCR's Acting Chief Engineer Robert Lowell attended the meeting

I also want to second the idea of working with the City of Cambridge because the intersection out here is designed bizarrely, so you cannot relieve congestion by going across to Waverly. It creates backups that do not need to happen.

Are Cambridge officials here this evening?

A: NCC1: Yes, they are. We met with them in preparation for this, so we are working together.

C: Audience Member: Thank you very much for all the work that has gone into this. I want to zoom out a little and look at the streets that lead into Granite Street. They all go in the same direction, and you cannot get out of there. It would be helpful to rethink some of those one-way streets so you could get out of this trap and get back onto Magazine Street or somewhere else. It is like a vortex.

A: NCC1: That is outside our limits of work, but Cambridge officials are listening.

C: Ken Carlson: Hello. I am Ken Carlson. I live in Mid-Cambridge. I commute every day by bike to the Fenway and Longwood Medical Area. I am also one of the organizers for the BU Bridge Safety Alliance. I have many friends in Cambridgeport and fully understand the concerns of Cambridgeport residents.

For the at-grade intersection, I think to a lot of us, that is a nonstarter because of the number of lanes. It is interesting to look at, and maybe if the lanes were reduced, that could be considered, but right now, every crossing is very daunting for pedestrians, cyclists, and any vulnerable road user. I do not know if you have considered this, but there are about 15,000 cars going east-west on Memorial Drive every day, maybe more. If you have at-grade cars stopped at a traffic light and idling, has there been any consideration of the air pollution that would be put into the air? You have Morse School there, children, and Cambridgeport residents.

For the second alternative, I think a lot of us like it because of the simpler intersection at the at-grade portion. The main concern, and I think this is true of Cambridgeport residents and anyone cycling, walking, or running on Memorial Drive and the Paul Dudley White Path, is the speed of cars. Presently, by MassDOT's own speed data, 15 percent of cars that go east-west over the Reid Overpass are 20 miles per hour or more over the speed limit. If that is 15,000 cars, that is more than 1,000 cars going 20 miles per hour over a 25-mile-per-hour speed limit. That is a major concern.

If the Reid Overpass is reconstructed, cars are going to fly when there is not traffic stopping them. There needs to be serious consideration for traffic calming. One idea would be placing some kind of median or other road diet features on either side of the bridge.

The BU Bridge Safety Alliance also did analysis of traffic on the Commonwealth Avenue side. Peter Furth has suggested additional tweaks to that intersection that could increase throughput for cars going south toward Boston. I would say please take a look at what Peter Furth has suggested because that may give a 15 percent increase in cars getting through north-south.

A: NCC1: If he does not send a comment letter on this, I will eat a doorknob.

C: Charles Franklin: Good evening. Thank you for the presentation. My name is Charles Franklin, and I live in the Port. I drive, bike, and walk.

I was pleasantly surprised by the overpass plan. I did not think I would like that one, but I definitely support that or something similar. If the lanes were tighter so there was less green space separated from everybody else, I think that would be better.

I want to push back on the bridge being so wide for no other reason than speed. Drivers tend to drive the design speed of a road, not the posted speed limit. Even myself, I will find myself stepping on the gas a little more on Memorial Drive and then realize the speed limit is 35 and I need to slow down. My instinct is to go faster. A bridge that wide is going to signal to drivers that they can drive faster and that it is safe, even though it is not.

When I first saw the at-grade intersection, I thought it looked unsafe for everyone. Nothing about that looks like something I would want to walk through, bike through, drive through, or live near.

A: NCC1: I will channel some of my engineering friends for a moment.

The widths on the bridge are not necessarily just for speed. We have gotten good input about ways to control speed. There are reasons for having extra width on the bridge, including disabled vehicles, emergency vehicles needing to get past, snow spread, drainage, and future maintenance. Those are contributing factors.

C: Audience Member: I wanted to say that I appreciated the signalized designs for both intersection options, and I wanted to push back on the idea that the current design is safe for pedestrians. When there is not traffic in that circle, cars really fly through. They are not always sure which lane they are going in. The last time I almost got hit by a car in that intersection was about five weeks ago because someone decided at the last minute that they wanted to go up Brookline Street and did not see me in the crosswalk.

I also have a question for the bridge design. How much of that greenspace is outside of roadways? How much of it is within the roadway or not usable? Because that is not usable greenspace.

A: NCC1: A couple of things. I saw some of what you are talking about in terms of drivers. This right turn [Memorial Drive westbound to Brookline Street] has been made very tight specifically to deal with that problem.

When I was handing out flyers to cyclists and pedestrians, I saw someone crossing one of the approaches to turn onto the bridge. Cars were backed up. He picked a gap, and the cars were inching up. He stood in the crosswalk, pounded on the hood, and shouted something like, “Thou shalt yield to me.” It was very Cambridge.

We understand some of the challenges. I have observed it during flyer distribution, and I have driven it recently. It is bad for drivers. It does not work for anybody.

For green space calculations, the existing geometry gives you approximately 61,999 square feet of green space. The four-way intersection gives you approximately 73,291 square feet. The grade-separated option gives you approximately 84,329 square feet. How much of that is exactly accessible is something we are working to figure out. We are trying to get to a baseline decision. Once we pick a concept, we will fine-tune it to maximize usable, accessible green space, stormwater areas, native pollinators, and the other things people have emailed us about.

C: Chelsea, Cambridgeport Resident: My name is Chelsea. I have lived in Cambridgeport for about eight years. My only comment is on the overpass alternative. I want the team to think about the experience of walking underneath it. That large structure will be a physical barrier, more so than it seems on the image. I want to make sure it is pleasant and that people are not uncomfortable walking underneath it.

A: NCC1: Excellent. That is something we would take into account if we pick that alternative. That kind of thing would be part of formal design. We heard that loud and clear.

Audience Member: My name is Jessica. I live in Boston. I have been working in Cambridge for 50 years. The Boston University Bridge has been on my commuting route by bicycle for much of that time, although it is no longer because I have been hit twice in the last three years.

I also have experience with the removal of the Forest Hills overpass, which is more like this than one might think. One of the things we got there was, instead of two lanes in each direction on the ground, we got six lanes with a lot more traffic. It became a barrier between the southern and northern parts of Jamaica Plain. Big intersections are a pain. They take too long to cross. The overpass is much better. Walking under an overpass can be scary for some people, but it is easier than crossing a huge surface intersection.

I would do away with the six lanes. Maybe you can make it four, but it will still be four lanes with a lot of traffic. I think the turn lanes will be necessary to keep traffic from backing up, so I do not think you can shrink it too much. I am totally in favor of the overpass. I lost the overpass at Forest Hills, and I think it is much worse than it used to be. I have been going through this intersection for 50 years in almost every possible way.

The one trick will be cars coming down off the overpass westbound. Right now, the columns supporting the overpass keep cars coming down from seeing people moving along there. They have a stop sign, but they do not always stop very long. I came through this morning on my bike and had to stop the second car by putting my hand out. I avoid it now because I have been hit twice and do not want to get hit again because I could die.

C: Tamara Edgerton, Cambridgeport Resident: My name is Tamara Edgerton, and I live in Cambridgeport on Pearl Street. Someone else mentioned this, but I think it is really important.

If you want to reduce traffic at that intersection, after Chestnut Street there are streets that come into Pearl Street, and there is no way for them to get out except to go through Granite Street and then the intersection. If those streets were one-way going the other way toward Magazine Street, that would take traffic off the major intersection. Anything you could do would be an improvement.

A: NCC1: Point taken. We do have limits of work. We are continuing to coordinate with the City of Cambridge. MassDOT does not charge into the neighborhood and tinker with Cambridge streets, and Cambridge does not come charging down onto the corridor and tinker with state facilities, but we are talking, we hear all of this, and we will try to make it work together.

Q: Audience Member: If funding might be an issue, including federal funding and duration, can anyone on the team compare and assess the cost of the projects and how long construction might take?

A: JB1: The project either way is federally funded, usually with an 80/20 split. We are not far enough along to know exact numbers. Tony mentioned that we have not run detailed costs on either of these. There is a roughly \$50 million placeholder figure, but I do not know how accurate that will be. That is to get us on the TIP eventually and project outward into the future. Timeline-wise, we do not know the duration of construction yet. It will vary between options.

Q: Audience Member: Which one would be longer?

A: JB1: Building a bridge would take longer. We do not know exactly how much longer yet. That will narrow down as we go into design.

Q: Audience Member: Thank you for the presentation. I am a longtime Cambridge resident.

With the bridge, if that is chosen, how do you work it with a temporary structure?

Second, you mentioned the 47 Bus. Are there no problems with the bus coming over from Longwood?

I also like the idea of changing the neighborhood around Granite and Morse Street because that would reduce traffic. Longwood Medical Area was my commute for about 35 years, and it was tough. With baseball games, it has only increased. Also, you mentioned stakeholders. You have put up signs and done outreach, but you also met with key stakeholders. It would be great to know who those stakeholders are. I was only aware of the January meeting.

Finally, I want to say we should not separate people who drive versus people who walk versus people who bike. We are a mixed community, and it should work for everybody. We all just want to get through safely, whether we are walking, biking, driving, or using wheelchairs.

A: EF1: For the 47 coming out of the neighborhood, that is the one we prioritized right now. With this next round of analysis, we will get better outputs about how buses are traveling in each direction, knowing that they come from different directions.

We prioritized that approach because we coordinated with the MBTA, got data, and that was the most impacted direction. I expect that when we get into more refined analysis and ultimately design, there will be additional transit signal priority or other measures we can work with the T to implement.

A: NCC1: And in theory, where that lane is shown on those plans, the 85 could get into it as well. The geometry works that it could come down that way.

Q: Audience Member: My name is James. I lived in Cambridgeport for 35 years. I now live in North Cambridge. My main interest is the bus, the 47 Bus, which is how I got here, and walking, usually from the other side of the river. One of the problems with the increase in congestion was when the travel lane over the bridge was removed. I would love to see that revisited and see whether restoring that travel lane while still accommodating bicyclists safely is possible. I think that is a huge part of the problem in generating congestion, especially for the 47 Bus.

Do you have any preliminary data or assessment on the difference in time for the 47 Bus between these two alternatives?

A: EF1: Right now, we do not. That is what we are working on in this next iteration.

Q: Audience Member: You mentioned updated traffic counts. What did those indicate, and how might that be relevant to the comparison between these two?

A: EF1: We did updated counts in early April. It was a nice day, so we captured good pedestrian and bicycle activity as well as typical traffic. There was no Red Sox game, but otherwise relatively normal.

We did see changes from the prior traffic counts, which I believe were from December 2022. One of the biggest changes was more traffic coming off the Boston University Bridge into the rotary with the new count. That is why we have two through lanes and a right-turn lane there. There is more traffic coming north. We also saw differences in the directionality of Memorial Drive. Previous counts showed a dominant eastbound flow toward Land Boulevard. The newer counts show a more typical pattern where in the morning traffic is heading in, and in the afternoon traffic is heading out.

Q: Audience Member: There seemed to be an option of reducing the buffer so the bridge would not be that wide. Federal funding may be a factor. Is it possible to reduce it? Could you appeal to the federal side and get changes to their criteria?

Also, I think I heard that bikes could go through one phase, but pedestrians would have to go through two. Did I hear that correctly, and why would bikes not have to go through two phases?

A: EF1: For the four-way option, both bicycles and pedestrians could go at the same time and go all the way across.

For the bridge option, where the ramps are, the distance between the signals is longer as currently laid out. A pedestrian starting at one end would need a lot of time to get all the way across in one cycle. That is why it would essentially be two phases for pedestrians. Bicycles may be able to do it in one phase because they are moving at a faster pace.

A: TT1: The project will be federally funded regardless of bridge width, but typically the preferred design criteria are what we match. Based on other factors, we can apply for waivers. That is typically done on many projects. The waivers we are looking at are probably 10-foot lanes and 2- to 4-foot shoulders. That is part of design development and has to go through approvals, but that is the waiver process.

Q: Denise Sullivan: My name is Denise Sullivan, and I live in what someone earlier called the vortex of the neighborhood. I live on Pearl Street near Henry Street.

To correct an earlier comment, after Chestnut Street, there are actually three streets that feed into Pearl Street, not just two. They are Tufts Street, Henry Street, and Glenwood Avenue. I have lived here my entire life. My family is generational. My kids are the sixth generation to live here, so I can tell you from family history all of the changes that have happened.

As a lifelong resident of Cambridge, I do not necessarily believe that the City will work hand in hand with you and support this neighborhood. They have made many traffic changes over the last 25 years that the community spoke out against, and they did not care because their data and charts did not support what we were saying. Now, 25 years later, we are living with the nightmare we have. I understand you are limited and working with the City. Could your microsimulation go back as far as Granite and Pearl so you can give that data to the City?

There has been discussion that Glenwood Avenue could switch. I can tell you why all three streets come down into Pearl Street. They all used to be two-way streets, but as car ownership grew, they made changes to make it safer because there were a lot of children here. Glenwood Avenue was the last street to become one-way. It was proposed in the 1970s to go the other way toward Magazine Street, but one family on the corner opposed it and rallied neighbors. That should never have happened, but it did. Now everyone on Glenwood has lived with the street going in that direction. That is a battle, in all fairness.

I think you folks are actually listening, not just hearing. There is a difference between hearing and listening, and I think you are hearing what is being said. That is important because the City has had many meetings and has not heard what has been said. No current city councilor is here at this meeting. When I talk to those I know on the City Council, they almost dismiss me.

I have videos that I sent to Mike [State Representative Mike Connolly]. He is well aware of the traffic vortex I live in. It is a safety concern because no emergency vehicle can get down Pearl Street or Granite Street if there is an accident at the rotary. God forbid there is a fire or someone needs an ambulance, because it is impossible.

Can your modeling move one intersection back so you can share that information with the City and be strong proponents for change?

My true question is, realistically, are we going to be sitting here in 25 years, with me as a very old lady, asking for the same thing? Can we expect this to be done within 10 years, or are we going to be going in circles forever?

A: NCC1: Our goal is to decide which way we are going between these two, probably by the end of the year, so we can move into a formal design process. Josh is nodding. We do not want to be here forever. I do not want my son to be able to drive me to the ribbon cutting on his learner's permit.

Q: Audience Member: We could all be dealing with worse, like the Southwest Expressway, which would have bulldozed Cambridgeport. Having these choices may not be bad. What is problematic is the fully signalized intersection. If you look at every other fully signalized intersection, traffic backs up forever, whether it is Land Boulevard, River Street, or Western Avenue. By funneling all through traffic right through the intersection, where people will also be going to Cambridgeport, you are going to get enormous traffic backups.

I do a lot of going back and forth to Mass General. I used to be a runner and a rower, so I walk across this current rotary. Pedestrian-wise, it is very safe. I am not a bicyclist, so it may be worse for cyclists. To fully signalize this intersection will make things horrible with all the pollution from cars idling there. It is bad enough now where the rotary backs up almost 24 hours a day. I would much prefer the bridge.

C: Audience Member: I am Joshua. I live in Newton, and I am also an MIT student. I came here because my route between Newton, MIT, and BU uses this intersection and the BU Bridge.

As a pedestrian, I think the bridge design is not terribly bad because if the signal phase is long enough, it may be possible to make it across in one go. This is the case at an intersection in Newton where I have made it across in one go many times.

As a cyclist, I agree with other comments that the bridge encourages cars to go too fast, which makes it more difficult for cyclists going straight.

I have mixed feelings and do not have a specific recommendation right now.

Q: Audience Member: Thank you to the project team. My name is Margaret. I do not live in Cambridge, but I bike through here regularly, multiple times per week. I bike over the BU Bridge going north and south, and I also take the east leg from the BU Bridge.

One of the scariest things about cycling through here, especially going north, is the sightline from under the overpass to the westbound off-ramp. I think this design improves that, and I like that. I do not have a preference right now between the two concepts because I think we need more information.

I have two questions. First, I would like to better understand the decision-making process for choosing between alternatives. Second, I would like to know more about the traffic assumptions, the future year, and how future volumes are being developed.

A: TT1: A more in-depth evaluation matrix would be considered next. We would incorporate safety, construction costs, environmental concerns, and a whole gamut of critical constraints to evaluate between the two, as well as what we are hearing tonight. That includes concerns with right-turn lanes, pedestrian safety, and bicycle safety. It would be a more robust evaluation matrix comparing those criteria. That would help guide us toward a preferred concept.

A: EF1: All the analysis we have done to date has used existing condition volumes. We have not projected into the future yet. We are being mindful of that projection process.

We have been coordinating with CTPS to understand what projections are reasonable. In the next iteration, we will likely consider some kind of future build, but I do not anticipate it will simply be one percent per year for 20 years. That is something we are evaluating carefully.

Q: Caroline Levy: My name is Caroline Levy. I live at 103 Henry Street, around the block.

I have one question. Would it be possible, instead of having Memorial Drive be a bridge, to make it a tunnel? A short tunnel would allow more green space.

My other question is, when you present this to us, can you do it in a video so we can see what it looks like as a driver or a pedestrian?

A: TT1: The next step, once we get to a preferred concept, is to do 3D renderings and more advanced graphics so you have a better understanding of the proposed work.

As far as a tunnel is concerned, that is not an option. We have to get up and over the railroad bridge, and diving underneath the intersection is not feasible.

Q: Audience Member: Thanks for the efforts to make it safer from prior designs. I appreciate DOT incorporating community feedback.

For the at-grade option, I heard concurrent signals. Will crossings use leading pedestrian intervals, especially given the long crossings?

A: EF1: The crossings are currently conceived as concurrent-protected. So, pedestrians are moving parallel to vehicles that cannot turn across them without disobeying the signal. With two very low volume turns, the intent is to include LPIs, or leading pedestrian intervals.

C: Audience Member: I have also been thinking about future reductions in vehicle miles traveled and the obligation to hit net zero by 2050. I am curious about the lifecycle emissions of both the overpass option and the at-grade option. I would think the at-grade option may be easier to road diet further in the future.

If the overpass approach is selected, I would prefer the narrower 10-foot lane with 2-foot shoulder. I am also curious whether it would be possible to get pedestrians across in one cycle, given the high number of pedestrians coming through.

Lastly, neither design seems to have a bike lane in the top-left quadrant of the design. Is there any interest in or possibility of that?

A: TT1: The bike lane continuing westerly is under consideration.

C: Audience Member: Hi. I am Travis from Somerville. I work in Cambridge. I coach at Magazine Beach. I drive through here. I bike through here. I biked through here on September 23, 2024, and biked home through lights and sirens, and that sucked.

My main concern is safety. I think Option 2 is resoundingly more safe than Option 1. I do not think it is close. Keeping cars elevated and crossing smaller distances, rather than crossing six lanes of traffic and relying on cars not to run red lights, seems safer. I have never seen a red light in Cambridge go a day without being run.

One comment on the design: there looks like there is a westbound bike lane on the north side of Memorial Drive in the southeast corner. To my knowledge, there is no bike lane on the rest of Memorial Drive there, so I do not know where those cyclists are supposed to come from. If that is future-proofing for a connection to the Grand Junction, that is awesome. Otherwise, I think that space could be better used. I love bike lanes, but bike lanes that start and end in the middle of a road do not make sense, and there are a lot of them in Cambridge. We do not need more.

C: Audience Member: My name is Iman. I am a resident in Inman Square, and I go to Boston University. I use this intersection at least twice a day, and I have almost been hit at almost every point where I cross the road.

Most of the near misses, besides the slip lanes, are people running red lights, going right on red, or being the last car that wants to go through when the light turns red. My message is mostly on the economic development bill and how that will be implemented in this area. There are two parts of the bill. One is that red light cameras are no longer part of it, so I am interested to hear from representatives how we might push this to happen given the intersection designs.

The second is traffic speeding. My understanding is that the traffic speeding part of the bill can only be applied to safety zones. I know Brookline Street is a safety zone, but the areas on and around this intersection on Memorial Drive are not designated as safety zones yet. Is there an ability to include certain intersections in an amendment for traffic safety cameras for speeding?

A: Representative Mike Connolly: I am happy to address that. I think you are correct. My understanding is that the language would empower cities to help craft those zones. That is something we can work with the City of Cambridge on. As I mentioned earlier, we expect to vote on this in October, so I can go back to the negotiators on the bill and emphasize that we have a desire right here to address this concern.

A: Bill Deignan, Cambridge Department of Transportation: Hello, everybody. Bill Deignan with the Cambridge Department of Transportation. Thanks, everybody, for coming out tonight and letting us know what you think about these two options.

In terms of the discussion about street direction changes, I think we have heard that loud and clear on the Cambridgeport listserv and in other emails to us. The City will start a process at some point. I cannot tell you exactly when. We will talk to neighbors about street direction changes off Magazine, Granite, Pearl, and those streets. I do not know what form that will take. It will probably include larger forums as well as discussions about particular streets. These are always difficult discussions because some people on certain streets like things the way they are, and other people want to see change. It is never an easy discussion to get a broad consensus, but we are going to do our best and figure that out.

C: NCC1: I want to wish everybody a very good night. Thank you all for staying here and giving us your feedback.

To the gentleman who goes to Boston University, good luck. If you go there, you can grow up and become a glamorous public involvement specialist. Be careful going through that rotary on your way home. Somebody really ought to fix that thing. Good night.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will advance microsimulations of the two concepts connected to the adjoining roadway network in the traffic modeling software Vissim, an industry standard product, to see if either concept performs better in terms of delay for cyclists and pedestrians, providing reliable transit conditions, easing congestion in Cambridgeport, and harmonizing with adjoining intersections. An unofficial comment period runs through August 28th, but comments received following the 28th will still be considered and receive a personalized reply from the MassDOT team.

The agency will continue towards selecting a preferred concept by the end of 2026 to allow formal design to begin. While community input is and will remain important, beginning formal design to allow progress towards addressing the deficiencies of existing conditions is a key goal of MassDOT and its consultant team.

APPENDIX 1: MEETING ATTENDEES

First	Last	Affiliation
Marc	Armstrong	Resident
Ed	Ballo	Resident
Hojjat	Barati	Benesch
Patrick	Barton	Resident
Joshua	Bartus	MassDOT
Ed	Baumann	Benesch
Valerie	Beaudrault	Resident
Tim	Berry	Resident
Richard	Bock	Resident
Ken	Bowen	Resident
Rebecca	Bowie	Resident
Pablo	Brenes Coto	Resident
Robin	Brenner	Resident
Will	Brownsberger	Massachusetts State Senate
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	WSP
Ken	Carlson	Resident
Allan	Casassa	Resident
Chris	Cassa	Resident
Mike	Connolly	Massachusetts House of Representatives
Karen	Cooke	Resident
Jim	Curley	Resident
Marhsall	Daly	Resident
Philippe	Daniel	Resident
Donald	Davidoff	Resident
Henrietta	Davis	Resident
Bill	Deignan	City of Cambridge
Mike	DiMaio	Resident
Tamar	Etingen	Resident
Eli	Fenichel	Resident
Pamela	Ferrante	Resident
Amy	Flax	Resident
Charles	Franklin	Resident
Erin	Fredette	Bowman
Shola	Friederisohn	Resident
Andrew	Gibson	Resident

Elena	Glassman	Resident
John	Goodman	Resident
[illegible]	Grall	Resident
Roberta	Green	Resident
Kathe	Gregory	Resident
Michael	Grover	Resident
Joshua	Guo	Resident
Sue Lee	H	Resident
David	Halperin	Resident
Liz	Hanson	Resident
Denise	Haynes	Resident
Mark	Hicks	MassDOT
Carol	Hwang	Resident
Henry	Hwang	Resident
Robb	Johnson	Resident
Jim	Kaufman	Resident
Melissa	Kelly	Resident
Margaret	Kent	Resident
Philip	Kruger	Resident
David	Kroop	Resident
Seb	Kryspin	Resident
Chelease	Kryspin	Resident
Lisa	Kunzl	Resident
Wendy	Landman	Resident
Jen	Letourneau	Resident
Caroline	Levy	Resident
Marc	Levy	Resident
Christine	Liu	Resident
Robert	Lowell	Massachusetts DCR
Ron	Lowry	Resident
Patrick	Lynch	Resident
Mary	Yatema	Resident
Travis	McGrath	Resident
Maggie	McNally	Resident
Gary	McNaughton	Bowman
Connor	Merritt	Resident
Jessica	Mink	Resident
Angelita	Mireles	Resident
Cindy	Mundy	Resident
Hutch	Myers	Benesch
Judith	Nathans	Resident

Bob	Nesson	Resident
Deborah	O'Donnell	Resident
Ari	Ofsevit	Resident
Grant	Olear	WSP
Erinn	Pearson-Breedy	Resident
Lily	Peirce	Resident
Allison	Petrosino	Resident
Matt	Poulsen	Resident
Maanar	Prakash	Resident
Trudy	Regan	Resident
Matthias Iris	Remillard	Resident
Jared	Robinson	Resident
Roy	Russell	Resident
Natalie	Sandoval	City of Cambridge
Jeffrey	Schafer	Resident
Mark	Schneider	Resident
G	Serislow	Resident
Aman	Shankardass	Resident
Frank	Shirley	Resident
Toby	Sillman	Resident
James	Steel	Resident
Denise	Sullivan	Resident
Susanne	Schindler	Resident
Anna	Swan	Resident
Megan	Tan	Resident
Eric	Tencer	Resident
Tony	Timpiero	Resident
Ryan	Turcotte	Resident
Nancy	Woods	Resident
Zachary	Yaro	Resident
Chris	Zegras	Resident
Jerry	Zhou	Resident