



Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge Replacement

Design Public Hearing

Chicopee | December 15, 2025 | 6:00 PM

Project File Number: 612187



Notice of MassDOT / MBTA Policy Diversity and Civil Rights

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All questions and comments are welcome and appreciated.

Please refrain from any disrespectful comments.

How to Participate

- View the 40-minute presentation
- Ask questions to project team during question-and-answer period
- Submit comments into the comment box at the sign-in table
- Representatives of the media can direct media inquiries to Jacquelyn.Goddard@dot.state.ma.us

General Public Information Meeting Notes and Procedures

- MassDOT may retain and distribute transcripts / written records of this meeting
- All parts of this meeting are considered public record.
- Information from this meeting will be posted on the Mass.gov website.
- This hearing will be open to questions and answers at the end of the presentation

Agenda

1. Welcome & Overview
2. Why was this project initiated?
3. What do we want to accomplish?
4. How has our design progressed?
5. How will roadway users be impacted?
6. What are the environmental, cultural resource, and community impacts?
7. What is our construction approach?
8. How will we keep you informed?
9. Questions and discussion



Welcome and Meeting Overview:

- MassDOT Highway Division
 - Aleksey Belov, Project Manager
 - Brenda Codella, Right-of-Way
 - Dan Racicot, Government Affairs
 - Matthew Minihan, District Two Operations Engineer
 - Paula Simmons, District Two Project Development Engineer
 - Sean Milligan, District Two Assistant District Engineer for Alternative Delivery
- Design Team
 - Andy Benkert, Project Management/Bridge Engineering, WSP
 - Kaye Lynn Johnson, Landscape Architect, The Collaborative
 - Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, Communications and Public Involvement, WSP

Language Translation Speakers

- **Russian**
 - Diana Janinyan
- **Spanish**
 - Marwel Padilla

How did we get here?



Design Public Hearing – 12/15/25 - Advertisement

- MassDOT email burst: 12/2, 12/8, 12/12 & 12/15
- Newsprint:
 - *The Chicopee Herald*: 12/4 and 12/11
 - *The Chicopee Register*: 11/28 and 12/5
 - *The Holyoke Sun*: 11/28 and 12/5
 - *The Springfield Reminder*: 12/1 and 12/8
 - *The Springfield Republican*: 12/1 and 12/8
 - *Vocero Hispano*: 12/12 and online from 12/10
- Radio:
 - Neuva 98.1 FM – 12/8-12/15
 - WNEPM 88.5 FM – 12/8-12/15
- Public Access Cable TV
 - Chicopee: 12/2-12/15
 - Holyoke: 12/2-12/15
 - Springfield: 12/2-12/15



Flyer Drop and Staffed Table Locations



Thank You To Those Who Shared Our Flyers

State and Municipal:

- State Delegation for Chicopee
- Municipal governments for Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield
- Chicopee municipal departments:
 - Disability
 - Housing
 - Seniors
 - Veterans

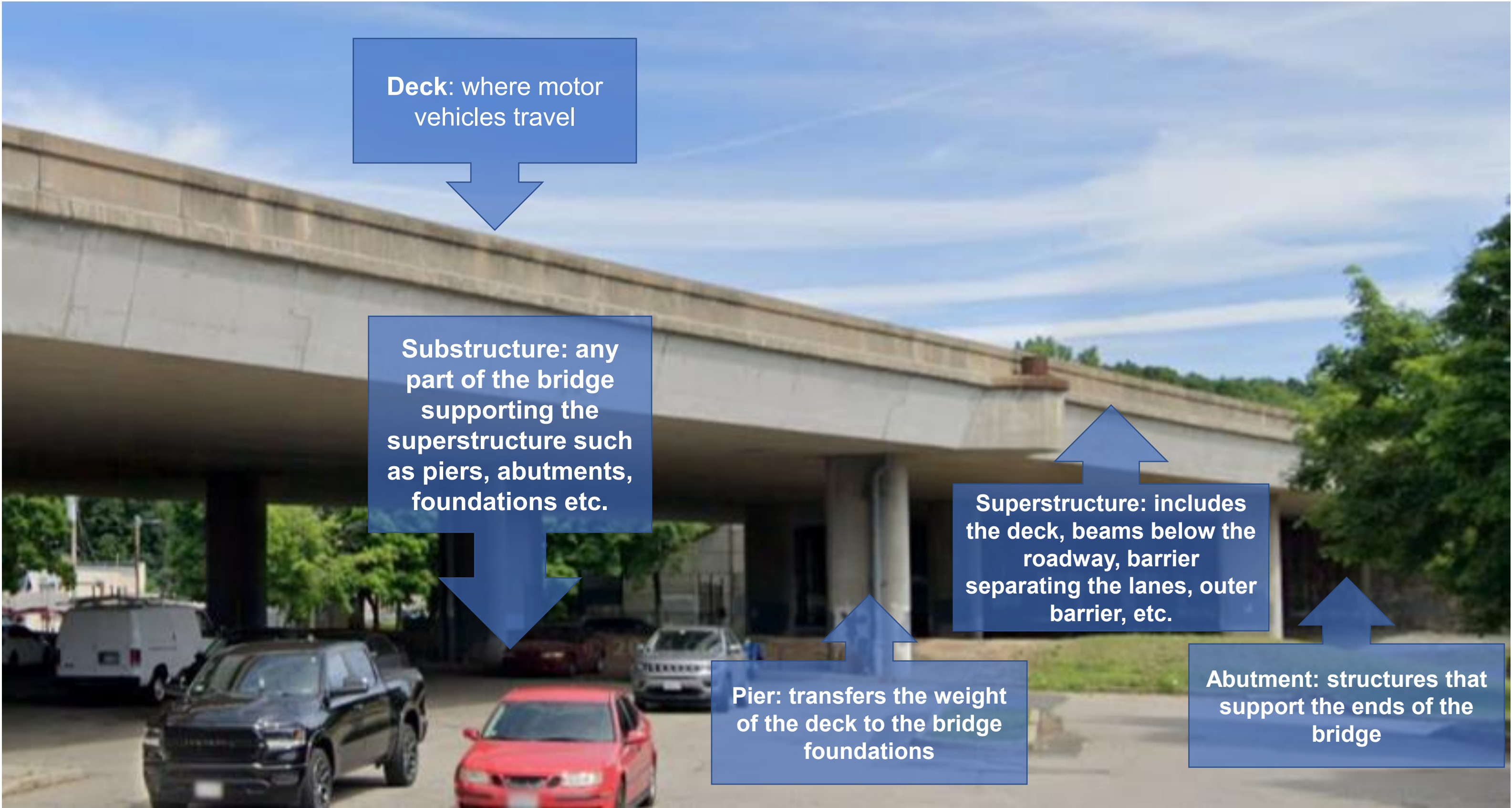
Local community organizations, medical providers, schools, and social service providers

Thank you to Chicopee city staff for helping access our meeting site



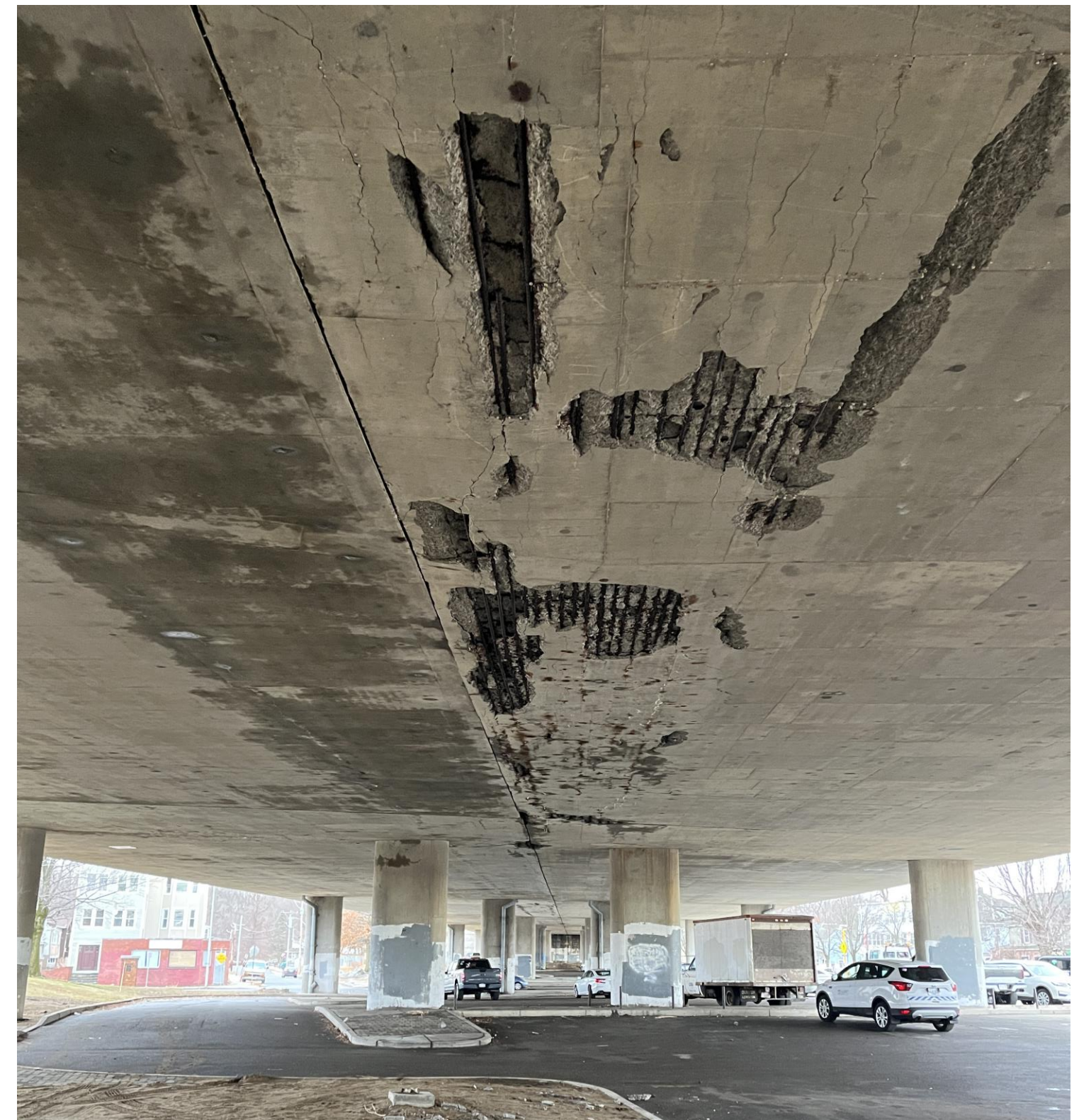
**Why was this
project
initiated?**

Key Terms



Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge: Key Facts

- Configuration
 - 840' long
 - 111' wide (edge-to edge)
 - Concrete box girder superstructure
 - Six piers
 - Two abutments
- Approximate daily traffic:
 - 31,760 vehicles per day
 - 4.8% heavy vehicles (buses, trucks)
- Three lanes in each direction
 - Left lanes closed in both directions due to structural deterioration



A Deteriorated Structure

- Super- and Substructure are in poor condition:
 - Spalled/delaminated concrete
 - Exposed reinforcing steel
 - Damaged expansion joints
- *Remains safe for all users*
- Has reached the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced



Work Completed to Date

- Bridge Type Selection Worksheet
- Initial and supplementary traffic data collection
- Preliminary Structures Report
- Survey
- Additional field visits
- Ongoing coordination with Berkshire Eastern RR
- Ongoing coordination with City of Chicopee
- Public outreach and coordination
- 25% design submitted to MassDOT and reviewed
- Advancing documentation for Federal Highway Administration





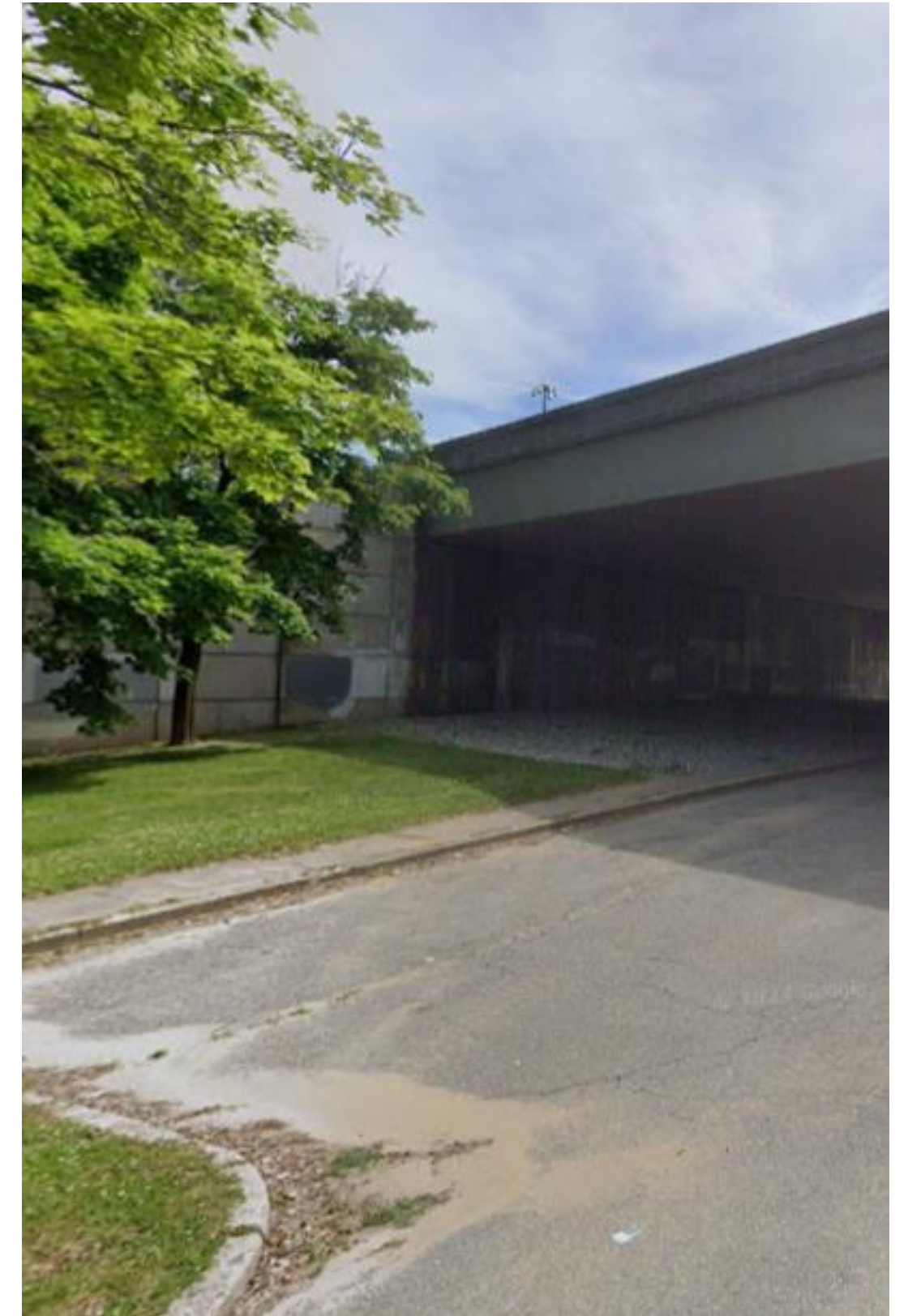
**What do we
want to
accomplish?**

Project Goals

- Replacing the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge will deliver the following benefits:
 - Improved mobility for private vehicles, freight trucks, and transit buses on I-391
 - Improved conditions on Chicopee Street below the bridge:
 - Improved lighting
 - Reduction in vacant “nuisance activity” space
 - A rationalized parking supply to support local business
 - Improved neighborhood views through replacement of a deteriorated structure
 - Enhancements to Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park

Other Considerations

- A new bridge should:
 - Be constructible in halves to maintain four lanes of highway traffic during construction
 - Have foundation and pier locations that avoid current bridge foundations
 - Provide a 100-year design lifespan to reduce long-term impacts to local and regional motorists and transit users
 - Avoid permanent property impacts to the extent feasible
 - Be a candidate for accelerated construction techniques to reduce abutter impacts
 - Avoid impacts to the abutting sections of I-391 with changes to horizontal or vertical alignment
 - Minimize demolition and construction impacts to local access along Chicopee Street
 - Maintain Margaret/Perrault Street Connector
 - Maintain parking for local businesses during/after construction



Benefitting from Robust Public Outreach

- Significant aspects of design and construction approach have been impacted by public input:
 - Parking and under-bridge space
 - Detour and timing of Chicopee Street closures
- Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Park
 - Construction period access
 - Post-construction enhancements



Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Bridge Replacement In-Person Design Public Hearing

What is happening?

The purpose of this design public hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project to replace the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge which carries I-391 over Route 116, locally Chicopee Street, in the Willimansett neighborhood of Chicopee. The bridge, though safe for all users, has reached the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced to ensure continued multimodal connections along I-391 and Chicopee Street.

How will this affect you?

Staged construction will be used to maintain traffic on Chicopee Street and I-391 during demolition of the existing bridge and construction of its replacement. Limited detours and closures will be required at times to ensure public safety during certain operations. In addition to the full replacement of the bridge, the parking areas below the bridge will be consolidated to the south of Chicopee street. Enhancements are proposed for the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

When

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 2025
6:00PM

Where

CHICOPEE PUBLIC LIBRARY
449 FRONT STREET
CHICOPEE MA 01013

Please note a stenographer’s transcript will be taken at this hearing.

Visit <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events> for more information.



To ensure its hearings are accessible, MassDOT reasonably provides: translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services. To request such services, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer at 857-368-8580 or MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us. For adequate time to process such request, please make them as early as possible, ideally 10-15 days prior to the event.

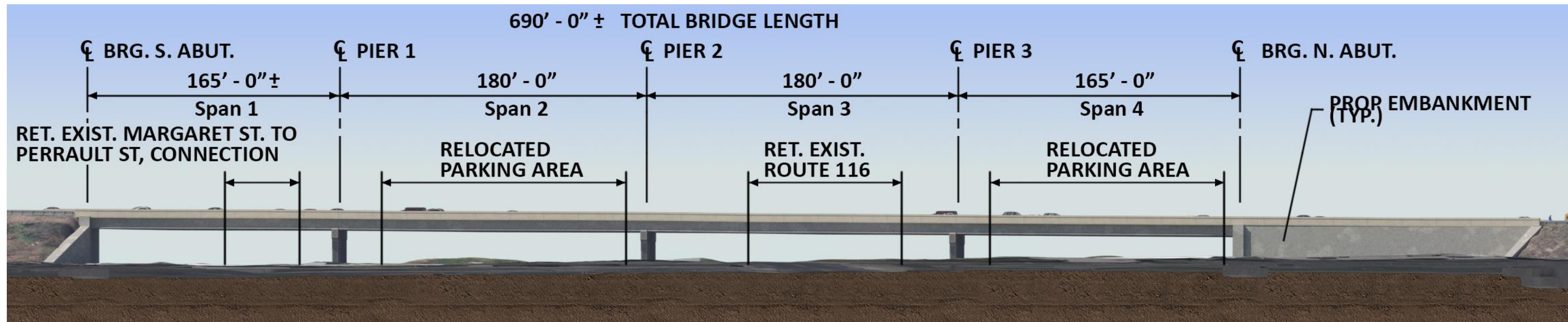
Project inquiries may also be emailed to I-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us
Please submit any written statements regarding the proposed undertaking to: **Carrie A. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: MAJOR PROJECTS PROJECT FILE NO. 612187**



**How has our
design
progressed?**

Our Proposed Span Arrangement

- Four spans
- Reduces unused space below the bridge
- Avoids existing pier locations
- Limits ROW impacts
- Maintains Margaret St. to Perrault St. connection



Our Proposed Structure Type

- I-Girder Superstructure with:
 - A concrete deck
 - An asphalt riding surface
- Resistant to damage from water and deicing salt
- Low maintenance
- Allows for future rehabilitation
- Will use MassDOT's aesthetic pier given neighborhood location



Current MassDOT aesthetic pier –
Boxborough, Route 111 Bridge Replacement
– July 2025

Proposed Approach to Chicopee Street & Parking Lots

- Reconstruct Sidewalks
- Install new lighting below the bridge
- Consolidate parking south of Chicopee Street and reduce to 60 spaces
- Mill-and-overlay of Chicopee Street in the project's final stage
- Restore bus stops to current location in the project's final stage



Proposed Enhancements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park

- Install park enhancements:
 - New fencing along St. Louis Avenue
 - Landscaping to visually screen the bridge
- Upgrades to veterans' memorial plaques
- New paths:
 - Along the memorial columns to improve access
 - Under the viaduct north of Chicopee Street to help connect to Rivers Park and the new parking area





**How will
roadway
users be
impacted?**

Proposed Construction Period Access

- Access will generally be maintained during demolition and construction:
 - NB/SB on I-391
 - Along Chicopee Street
 - For homes and business along Margaret, Perrault, Whitman Streets and Saint Louis Avenue
- ~60 parking spaces available during construction between north and south lots



Proposed Construction Staging

- Pre-stage:
 - Reinforce closed southbound lane
 - Remove sections I-391 median barrier
 - Construct median crossover lanes
 - Shift all traffic to SB side of the bridge
- Stages 1-2:
 - Demolition of existing bridge and construction of replacement in halves
 - Four lanes maintained through traffic shifts
- Stage 3:
 - Replace I-391 median barrier
 - Open bridge to full six lane cross-section

Keeping You Moving During Construction – Pre-Stage 1 – Spring-Fall 2027



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 1 - Winter 2027 to Spring 2030



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 2 - Spring 2030 to Spring 2032



Keeping You Moving During Construction – Stage 3 - Spring 2032



Proposed Approach to Local Traffic Impacts



- Chicopee Street, Margaret/Perrault connector would close for demolition or construction above them, but not at the same time
- Sections of parking would need to periodically close for the same reason



**What are the
environmental,
cultural
resource, and
community
impacts?**

Preliminary Right of Way (ROW) discussion 25% Design Public Hearing

- MassDOT is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in public land for design, construction, and implementation of this project.
 - Fee takings, permanent easements and/or temporary construction easements may be required.
- Affected property owners will be contacted by personnel from the MassDOT ROW Bureau or consultants representing the responsible agency.
 - Property owners are protected under Massachusetts General Laws, primarily Chapter 79.
- Preliminary ROW drawings will be available at the Chicopee Public Library for public review and comment.

At this stage of design, the Right of Way process has not been finalized. This meeting is an opportunity for the public to comment on any impacts to properties.

Known Project ROW Impacts

- Vietnam Veterans' Park's western edge
- Rivers Park's entrance
- Margaret/Chicopee Street corner
- Margaret Street temporary easements during construction



The Park is Important

- MassDOT takes the presence of the Vietnam Veterans' Park seriously
- Coordination with Veterans' Services Director Stephanie Shaw began in November 2024
- **The proposed construction impact to the park will be fully restored at the end of the project**
- Our commitments:
 - The park will be kept accessible for the Memorial Day ceremony
 - Memorial plaques will be kept in their order and remain available for Memorial Day Ceremonies
 - Coordination will continue with Veterans Memorial and Patriotic Committee throughout design and construction



Existing Conditions



Proposed Improvements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park and Parking



Proposed New Fence for Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park



Proposed Birch Grove and Planters at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park



Proposed Stone Dust Path Inside Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park



Local History

SP5 John J. Laskowski, 21 years old, son of John S. and Emilea (Przybyc) Laskowski of 50 Cross Street, Chicopee, MA, a meteorologist, was killed on May 18, 1969 in Xuan Loc, Vietnam when enemy mortar fire shelled his company. SP5 Laskowski was a member of H.H.B. 2nd BN, 35th Arty, 54th Arty Group, and had three months left of an enlistment in Vietnam.

SP5 Laskowski had been awarded posthumously the Bronze Star Medal for heroism, Purple Heart, and the Good Conduct Medal. Prior to his death, he had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one Bronze Service Star, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, and the Expert Badge with Rifle bar.

He was born in Holyoke, October 23, 1947, was educated in the Chicopee school system and was graduated from Chicopee Comprehensive High School in 1965. SP5 Laskowski played basketball and baseball with St. Mary's of Williamsett.

He enlisted shortly after his graduation from high school and took his basic training at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and had been in Vietnam for about nine months. SP5 Laskowski had 3 sisters, Ms. Linda Hernhe, the late Mrs. Joan Deforge and Mrs. Phyllis Potvin. SP5 Laskowski was buried in the St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Chicopee on May 28, 1969.



THE VIRTUAL WALL @ VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL www.VIRTUALWALL.org

Find A Name ▼ The Virtual Wall@ ▼ This Memorial Page ▼

John Joseph Laskowski
Specialist Five
H.H.B. 2ND BN, 35TH ARTILLERY, 54TH ARTY GROUP, II FIELD FORCE, USARV
Army of the United States
Williamsett, Massachusetts
October 23, 1947 to May 18, 1969
JOHN J LASKOWSKI is on the Wall at Panel W24, Line 44
See the full profile or name rubbing for John Laskowski

A collection of military medals and ribbons, including the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and National Defense Service Medal.
A black and white portrait of John J. Laskowski in military uniform.
Logos for St. Stanislaus Cemetery, the American Legion, and other organizations.





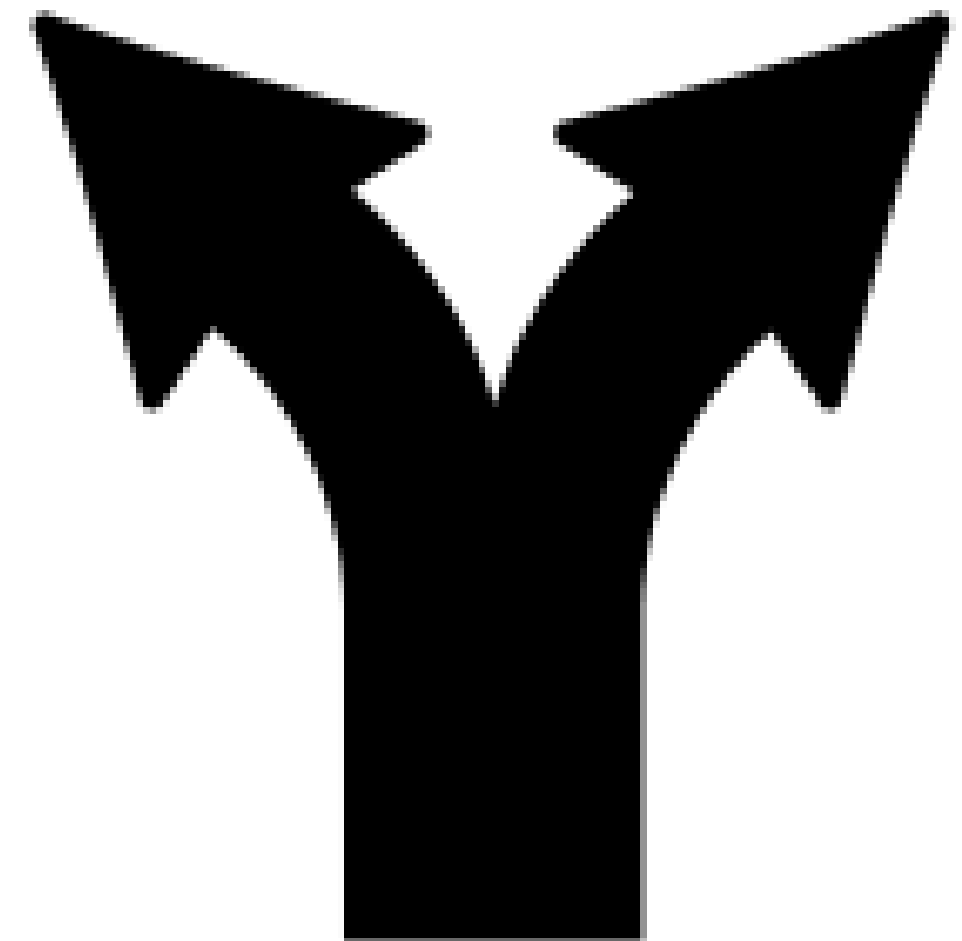
**What is the
construction
approach?**

Proposed construction approach: Design-Build

- Tonight's team will develop a 25% design and base technical concept (BTC) for bid by Design-Build (DB) entities
- DB Best Value procurement
 - Short-List Best Qualified Teams
 - Shorten project duration
 - Promote innovation by teaming the engineer and the general contractor
 - Allow for accelerated bridge construction (ABC) techniques if applicable
- MassDOT's contract with the Design Builder will stipulate requirements for traffic management while also providing the DB flexibility to develop their own approach to staging.

Alternative Technical Concepts (ATC's)

- Design Builders may propose ATC's as part of their bid
- ATC's may address:
 - Construction staging
 - Construction techniques
 - Materials used for construction
 - Structure type
 - Traffic management
- The advantages of any ATC must be proven to MassDOT's satisfaction



Our next steps



Respond to 25%
design comments –
early Winter 2025



Advertise for Design
Builders – Spring 2026



Issue winning Design
Builder Notice to
Proceed - winter 2026



Anticipated start of
construction:2027



Anticipated
approximately five
years of construction



How will we
keep you
informed?

Upcoming public outreach

- Please submit a comment tonight or within the next 10 days
- Robust public outreach will continue:
 - Project website revised to support construction
 - Regular progress report and look ahead emails issued
 - Project email address maintained for questions and comments
 - See www.mass.gov/info-details/about-the-i-495-andover-lawrence-bridge-replacements as an example



How to reach us?

- Submit written comments to:
Carrie Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: MAJOR PROJECTS, PROJECT FILE NO. 612187
- Submit email comments to:
i-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us
- Visit the project website and sign up for project emails at:
www.mass.gov/i-391-bridge-replacement-chicopee



Questions & Discussion



Thank You

Veterans' Memorial Bridge Replacement

Design Public Hearing

Chicopee | December 15, 2025, 6:00 PM

Project File Number: 612187

Aleksey Belov- i-391bridgechicopee@dot.state.ma.us

