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(617)482-7298 fax:(617)482-1837

Meeting Date: April 12, 2010

MassHighway Project Name: Fore River Bridge Replacement, Quincy-Weymouth
Bridge No. Q-01-001= W-32-001

MassHighway Contract No.: 50281

MassHighway District: 6

Designer: STV Incorporated

Minutes Prepared By: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, Howard/Stein-Hudson

Meeting Place: Fore River Clubhouse, 16 Nevada Road, Quincy, MA.

Persons in attendance: Meeting attendance lists have been removed to protect the privacy of audience members.

Purpose: The design team held a public information meeting at the Fore River Club House in Quincy at the request of state Representative Ronald Mariano. This meeting was intended to reach a combined audience consisting of those who live in the communities on either side of the bridge, particularly North Weymouth and Quincy Ward 2. Outreach for this meeting was coordinated through the Representatives's office and advertisements were run in local newspapers including the Boston Herald and Quincy Patriot-Ledger.

Items Discussed:

Mike O'Dowd (MassDOT) opened the meeting by welcoming the audience and thanking them for their attendance. He then identified himself as project manager for the Fore River Bridge Replacement Project. Before proceeding in his introduction, he paused to recognize local state representative Ronald Mariano.

Representative Mariano again welcomed and thanked the audience. He then expressed gratitude to Mike for helping to hold the meeting given the level of interest in the project and its status among area residents. Representative Mariano explained that originally, he had been working with local state Senator Michael Morrissey to obtain funding to build a new, permanent Fore River Bridge, but that construction of the new bridge had been assumed into Governor Patrick's Accelerated Bridge Program as one of that initiatives flagship projects. As the project has gotten underway, Representative Mariano has worked with Quincy Ward 2 councilman, Dan Raymondi to develop a better understanding of local residents' needs and concerns with regards to the Fore River



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Bridge. Chief among those concerns are bridge openings and their impact on the Ward 2 area, both in terms of traffic congestion and decreased mobility.¹ As a result, Representative Mariano has requested that MassDOT make decreasing the frequency and duration of bridge openings a priority in selecting and designing a new, permanent crossing of the Fore River. Having thus framed the presentation, Representative Mariano requested that the audience listen closely to the project team and their recommended solution to providing a new replacement bridge.

Mike thanked the representative for his remarks and explained that the leader of the MassDOT project team is the engineering firm STV Incorporated. STV's role in the project is to create a 25% design and design/build package that will be used in the selection of a design/build contractor who will construct the new Fore River Bridge. The current phase of work also addresses preparing the environmental documentation for the project as well as the architectural envelope for the new span. Within a year's time, MassDOT will select a design/build team based both on the current project team's work and the comments received from members of the community both at the six previous public informational meetings and in writing. Mike praised the majority of comments as both well-intentioned and useful. A central theme of these comments has been the problems caused to local residents by the frequency and duration of bridge openings. MassDOT's project team has sought to address this issue by designing a movable bridge with the greatest closed position vertical clearance that still avoids taking abutting property.

Mike noted that members of the audience, who had attended the February 24, 2010 meeting at the Hingham Town Hall, would recall that at that time, STV had recommended the vertical lift bridge as the type to be pursued in the Environmental Assessment (EA) documentation as the recommended type. At that time, MassDOT was still considering STV's recommendation. Mike explained that as of April, 2010, MassDOT had accepted STV's recommendation and would be pursuing the vertical lift structure as the recommended alternative in the EA. He concluded by explaining that Mark Pelletier of STV would provide the group with the reasons why this choice had been made and requested that members of the audience hold their questions until the presentation's end.

Highlights of the Presentation²

Following his opening remarks, Mike O'Dowd introduced Mark Pelletier of STV. Mark Pelletier and Nikole Bulger (STV) briefed the group on the current phase of the project,

¹ Federal law stipulates that any vessel requesting a bridge opening has priority over motor vehicle traffic passing over the bridge. As such, an opening can be requested, even at times that cause maximum disruption to commuters such as during the a.m. peak period.

² This presentation can be viewed at www.mass.gov/massdot/foreriverbridge/documents.html



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as follows:

- The Fore River Bridge Replacement Project is at roughly the 10% design level. The project is moving as quickly towards the 25% design level but is still actively seeking input from members of the community.
- The Fore River Bridge carries Route 3A over the Fore River between Quincy and Weymouth, Massachusetts. Key elements of the Fore River Bridge's context include:
 - Location in a heavy industrial area.
 - Visibility from surrounding neighborhoods and from Germantown.
 - A vital link in a major commuting corridor, serving roughly 32,000 vehicles per day.
 - *USS Salem* museum ship site.
 - Public amenities surrounding the Weymouth end of the bridge.
 - MassDOT has already entered into an agreement to restore these amenities at the end of construction.
- Key issues in the Fore River Bridge Replacement project include:
 - Community input.
 - The community process for this project has been particularly intense and has included six public meetings prior to the one summarized herein, briefings for specific stakeholder groups such as maritime users of the Fore River Channel and briefings for local elected officials.
 - Environmental concerns.
 - Addressing these concerns has been in part handled through frontloading coordination with concerned agencies including the Federal Highway Administration, United States Coast Guard and the Office of Coastal Zone Management.
 - Selection of a span and approach types based on the needs of road, pedestrian and maritime users.
 - Construction staging to minimize impacts on the surrounding community.
 - Developing a bridge aesthetic that is visually pleasing.
 - Ensuring that the bridge type chosen is cost effective to both build and maintain.
- The scope of the work for the project team includes the following elements:³
 - Coordination with stakeholders and agencies including all public and stakeholder meetings to date.
 - **Evaluation of structure options for the movable and approach spans.**

³ Elements noted in bold were actively underway at the time of the meeting summarized herein.



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- **Selection of the preferred alternative.**
- Preparation of a Environmental Assessment (EA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) filing.
- Establishment of permitting requirements.
- Advance of the schematic design to the 25% level including design, construction staging and traffic management plans.
- Preparation of the design/build package.

- The schedule for the 25% design process includes the following:⁴
 - **Notice to proceed – October 29, 2008.**
 - **Basic design – Fall 2008 to Winter 2008/2009:**
 - **Project development/environmental assessment including test borings, sampling of soil and survey.**
 - **Basic highway design.**
 - **Functional design reports.**
 - **Bridge type study reports.**
 - **MassDOT Highway Division review.**
 - 25% design – Spring 2010-Spring 2011:
 - Federal and state permit filings.
 - Highway plans.
 - Bridge sketch plans.
 - MassDOT Highway Division review.
 - Design/build procurement package – Fall 2010-Spring 2011:
 - Bridge and highway plans, specifications and final estimate.

- Replacement of the Fore River Bridge is subject to the NEPA process. Within this process, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency. The Coast Guard (USCG) is a major coordinating agency. The project team is currently in the process of developing an EA. The EA:
 - Analyzes alternatives.
 - Assesses existing conditions.
 - Identifies potential impacts and proposes mitigations if required.
 - Documents public outreach.

- Once the EA is filed, there is an additional public comment period. Following this period, FHWA will make its final determination with regard to the environmental impacts caused by replacement of the Fore River Bridge.

- As a footprint bridge, that is a structure that runs along the same alignment and that is functionally equivalent,⁵ to the replaced bridge, the Fore River Bridge is

⁴ Schedule items noted in bold are either completed or in progress at the time of the meeting summarized herein.



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exempt from MEPA, Chapter 91 licensing and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. This exemption is so that bridges to be rebuilt or replaced under Section 32 of Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2008, also known as the transportation bond bill can be completed on a timely basis to ensure public safety.

- While the Fore River Bridge Replacement Project is exempt from some Massachusetts environmental permits, it must obtain:
 - A USCG bridge permit.
 - A MassDEP Section 401 Water Quality Certificate.
 - A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 permit.
 - A Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management consistency determination.
- The project has already complied with the National Historic Preservation Act through archival documentation of the 1936 bridge, providing for state and local review of the proposed design and salvage of commemorative plaques from the 1936 span.
- As noted above, the Fore River Bridge carries roughly 32,000 vehicles each day, sitting as it does, astride a major commuting corridor connecting Boston and the South Shore. Bridge openings have a major impact of commuting times and create congestion in the communities to either side of the bridge. Alternate routes to bypass the bridge are long and involve already congested intersections. As such, two key goals of the project are to:
 - Reduce the number of bridge openings.
 - Reduce the duration of bridge openings when they do need to occur.
- The new Fore River Bridge will include two traffic lanes, a bike lane and sidewalk in both directions.
- In designing the new bridge, the project team has developed a roadway profile that is as high as possible, to minimize bridge openings, while:
 - Maintaining the maximum ADA-compliant grade of 5%.
 - Maintaining the roadway design speed of 40 miles per hour.
 - Avoiding any permanent takings of abutting properties.
- The design team has considered several approach structures for the new bridge including steel box girders, an I-girder and a New England bulb-T which is concrete structure. From a layman's point of view, all of these approaches look largely the same. Based on cost and constructability, STV has recommended that MassDOT use steel box girders for the new bridge's approaches.

⁵ Functionally equivalent means the same number of vehicular travel lanes.



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- The fact that the Fore River is a navigable channel has major impacts on this project. The Fore River is a designated port area (DPA) under the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management and as such commercial interests that use or could use the port and channel must be taken into account in designing the new Fore River Bridge.
- Currently, the Fore River provides access to local yacht clubs, the Fore River Shipyard, and the Citgo tank farm. The largest vessels currently using the channel are Panamax class oil tankers. The horizontal clearance afforded by the current temporary bridge of 175 is universally regarded by mariners and USCG as inadequate. As such, a major goal of the project is to improve navigation access to the Fore River.
- Looking towards the needs of future shipping, USCG has indicated that the *bare minimum* horizontal clearance that could be considered as acceptable would be 225 feet at the fender line; the more generous horizontal clearance of 250 feet has been identified as preference by both USCG and the maritime community.
- In evaluating bridge types to replace the current temporary structure, the design team has analyzed two types:
 - The bascule bridge – suited to crossings of 225 feet or less, provides unlimited vertical clearance when open, though this would not be possible here due to the projected size of the bridge.
 - The vertical lift bridge – able to span crossings up to 500 feet easily. Provides a single span configuration with a lower roadway profile.
- Criteria on which the two bridge types have been evaluated include:
 - Agency acceptance of the channel width.
 - Acceptance of vertical channel clearance in the closed position to minimize the required number of openings.
 - Site conditions and impacts.
 - Engineering parameters.
 - Permitting agency constraints.
 - Bridge aesthetics.
 - Capital, lifecycle and maintenance costs.
- If a new bascule bridge were to be constructed to span the Fore River with a horizontal channel clearance of 225 feet, it would be the largest bascule bridge in the United States. It would have several challenges associated with it due to its size. These include:
 - Engineering and maintenance difficulties due to the size of the counterweights needed to move the bridge's leaves or lifting segments.



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- Because of the size of the bridge, four leaves would be required, each with its own set of machinery.
- Bascule bridges are theoretically capable of providing unlimited vertical clearance, at the fender line, when in the open position. Due to the size of this bascule bridge, the leaves would not be able to open to the point of being perpendicular to the roadway thereby negating this advantage.
- If a new vertical lift bridge were to be constructed to span the Fore River with a horizontal channel clearance of 250 feet, it would be well within the normal capabilities of this type. It would have several advantages associated with it including:
 - A single roadway span with a lower profile. This is the case because the supporting members of the lifting truss are above the roadway deck. This provides for both simpler construction and operation as well greater vertical clearance in the closed position.
 - Two sets of lifting machinery, as opposed to the four required for the bascule bridge, provides for simpler construction and maintenance.
- The following table shows the impact of the proposed bascule and vertical lift bridges with regard to required bridge openings.

Bridge	Vertical Clearance above MHW at Fenderline	Navigation Channel Width	Number of Annual Openings	Approx. change in # of openings/year	Approximate average weekly change in summertime openings
1936 Bridge	33 feet	175 feet	646 (2002)	-	-
Temporary Bridge	55 feet	175 feet	587 (2007)	-	-
Proposed Bascule Bridge	43 feet	225 feet	612 (interpolated)	+25 as compared to temporary bridge	+1.6 as compared to temporary bridge
Proposed Vertical Lift Bridge	58.5 feet	250 feet	560 (2007)	-27 as compared to temporary bridge	-1.7 as compared to temporary bridge

- The vertical lift provides a range of significant advantages as compared to the bascule bridge. These include:
 - Greater closed position vertical clearance leading to fewer openings and reduced traffic impacts.
 - Smaller pier footprints mean a lighter environmental impact on the Fore River including reduced scour potential.



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- Greater opportunities for accelerated bridge construction techniques. For example, the lifting span can be built off-site and floated into place. A bascule bridge must be constructed in the closed position.
 - The vertical lift bridge has fewer sets of machinery to maintain.
 - The lifting machinery for a vertical lift bridge at this location would be standard off-the-shelf components, at the low end of the spectrum with regard to size and complexity. For a bascule bridge at this location, the lifting machinery would be at the outer edge of what is available for size and complexity. Not many manufacturers produce this type of equipment. Therefore the vertical lift bridge has better maintainability in the long-term.
 - Bascule bridges must be maintained in the open position, whereas vertical lift bridges can generally be repaired in the closed position. As such, the vertical lift bridge also offers easier maintenance with decreased traffic impacts.
 - The vertical lift bridge will offer better rideability with a standard, noise-dampening concrete deck.
 - The vertical lift bridge is less susceptible to high winds.
 - The vertical lift bridge is inherently more resistant to seismic events due to a lighter, more flexible structure.
 - The vertical lift bridge does not restrict future economic development at the Fore River Shipyard.
 - The vertical lift bridge is ultimately the most efficient bridge for this location.
- Additionally, as is shown by the following table, a new vertical lift bridge will be nothing like the current temporary structure.

Criteria	Temporary Structure	Permanent Vertical Lift Bridge
Design life	15 years	75 years
Basis for mechanical design	Crane construction	AASHTO specifications
Operation in high winds	No	Yes
Wire rope lubrication	Constant maintenance requiring daily off-peak closures	Normal maintenance, 50 year life.
Navigation channel width	175 feet	250 feet
Ease of ship transit through the bridge	Difficult	Easier
Deck system	Steel (loud)	Concrete (quiet)
Average opening time	21 minutes	13 minutes (est.)



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- The project team has clearly heard the community's concern with regard to the aesthetics of a vertical lift bridge. The well-known and regarded firm of Rosales + Partners has been retained to give the bridge a pleasing aesthetic and will work community input into their design to the fullest extent possible.
- The project team also understands that traffic management is a significant community concern.
 - New traffic data has been collected.
 - Traffic management measures will be built into the design/build package to minimize the impact of construction traffic.
 - Permanent VMS signage to alert motorists to bridge openings will be placed during the first phase of construction.
 - The traffic management plan used during construction of the temporary bridge is being reviewed at this time.
 - A truck route, possibly the one used during construction of the MWRA facility, will be used to keep trucks out of residential neighborhoods around the bridge.

Question and Answer Session

Before opening the question and answer session, Mike O'Dowd recapitulated some of the key themes of the public involvement process to date. These included:

- The disruption caused by bridge openings on both the neighborhoods surrounding the bridge and commuter traffic and a request that these disruptions be minimized. This is one of the key drivers behind the choice of the vertical lift bridge.
- Concern over the impact of construction on Quincy's Ward 2 and North Weymouth. Accelerated bridge construction techniques will be used to minimize these impacts. The ready applicability of such techniques to the vertical lift bridge is another reason for preferring this type.
- Some community members have expressed concern over the public involvement process and what happens to written commentary. Mike assured the audience that every comment is logged and read by the appropriate member or members of the project team. All comments will be answered in the environmental assessment document.
- Throughout the public involvement process community members have expressed their wish that the bridge built be as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Now that the vertical lift has been identified as the best transportation facility for the location, the project team is particularly interested in hearing from the community as to how the vertical lift type can be made aesthetically pleasing.
- With regard to labor and how construction workers for the project will be paid, MassDOT will identify the prevailing wage for eastern Massachusetts and ensure that project workers are paid in alignment with this wage.



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- In making decisions, such as which bridge type to advance, MassDOT takes into account all background information, environmental impacts and reports from its consultant team such as type studies, reviews the data, comments on it and may ask for amendments or additional information prior to coming forward with a prudent and feasible project.
- With regard to the environmental process related to replacing the Fore River Bridge, MassDOT is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) which will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This document will be submitted during the summer of 2010. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the EA which will influence permitting for the project.
 - In the environmental assessment document, the vertical lift bridge will be offered as the recommended type, but the bascule bridge will be discussed as well, in part to highlight the advantages associated with the vertical lift span.

Q = Question

A = Answer

C = Comment⁶

Q. During some of the initial meetings, we were told that USCG would be making a recommendation with regard to the channel width. Now it seems that MassDOT is getting to make the decision. Can you clarify this for me?

A. Having read through the comment letters I received after the Hingham meeting⁷ I can see how you might be confused. Recently we met with the mariners and solicited their comments on channel width. They are of course more comfortable with the wider, 250 foot channel. So you understand, the channel width isn't the full span of the bridge. If we went with a 225 foot channel width, we would have a bascule bridge with a 320 foot span. That would exceed what we feel comfortable with regarding both constructability and reliability. It would be the largest such structure in the United States. The upfront cost is really the same between these two bridges, but it's really the long term maintenance costs which are higher on the bascule. Would the City of Quincy and Town of Weymouth be amenable to having to deal with a bridge that would require frequent maintenance in the open position? Certainly it's unacceptable to us and we anticipate it would be unacceptable to you.

With a 250 foot channel, we are at the low end of what can be done with a vertical lift bridge. It's not excessive in terms of the mechanical components and maintenance

⁶ As not every member of the audience identified themselves prior to asking their questions, Q&A is presented anonymously.

⁷ Held on 2/24/2010.



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can be done with the bridge open to traffic. With 32,000 vehicles crossing each day, that's of great significance.

To be fully clear, USCG is more comfortable with the 250 foot channel. FHWA in conjunction with USCG will make the final decision with regard to channel width and bridge type. In the EA we will be highlighting the vertical lift bridge as our recommended alternative. We actually could have drafted the EA and a preferred alternative without coming to the public at all, but this is such an important bridge, the governor has highlighted it, that we have come to the public early and often. In the end, FHWA may disagree with us, but we will present them a full and thorough picture.

Q. Can you tell me something more about the wind characteristics of the bascule bridge versus the vertical lift bridge?

A. The vertical lift bridge is less impacted by high winds because of the nature of the structure. At this size, the leaves of the bascule bridge would act as something of a sail in high winds. This force would be transferred down the leaves into the gears and lift mechanisms all of which have small tolerances and are very susceptible to movement. The vertical lift bridge would have guides on each tower to help keep the lifting span in proper alignment. From an engineering, safety and maintenance standpoint, the vertical lift is a more secure structure.

Q. You seem to have prejudged that we're getting the vertical lift bridge. We'll be traveling over this thing for the next 75 years. Aesthetics are really important and the bascule is a better looking bridge. I really don't care about the mechanical and engineering side of this thing, we're paying for it and you should give us the bridge we want. Why would you have more openings with the bascule bridge? It seems like you're just accommodating Citgo's tankers.

A. If the channel was only used by tankers, then you would be right. We'd get the exact same number of openings regardless of type. The issue is sailboats. With the vertical lift we get a close position vertical clearance of 58.5 feet above mean high water. This means that most sailboats in the Fore River basin would be able to pass below the bridge without an opening.

C. But I don't see that many sailboats going through there. I don't like agencies coming in and saying "we're just doing this for you." We're paying for this. When you talk about the openings, it's not the number of them that count, it's the time. Between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. openings are a big deal. In the middle of the day it makes no difference.



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- A. Maritime users get the right-of-way with regard to openings.
- A. I do want to go back quickly to your comment about how we have prejudged this outcome. What we are saying is that for the purposes of the EA, the vertical lift bridge is our recommended alternative. The outcome is ultimately judged by FHWA and the other coordinating federal agencies. There will be a public comment period and the public gets to weigh in there as well. Right now, we, the project team and MassDOT feel that the vertical lift bridge will best serve the commuter, the mariner and the resident. I can't imagine that you want to see us constantly putting money into a structure that we feel is unreliable from the start after we put in \$250 million up front. We understand that this is a residential area that happens to have a few, commercial industries. We want to create a vertical lift structure you feel happy seeing each day. We will definitely focus on aesthetics as we move forward.

Q. With regard to aesthetics, can you tell us how the process of choosing a look for the bridge will work out? I know there will be a hand-off between you and the design/build team?

A. From here we still have a few issues to resolve. STV is reviewing our comments and we expect answers from them. We have requested that STV start to develop renderings that we can share with you. Contrary to what has been said at some meetings, we can give you a vertical lift bridge that's pleasing to the eye. The towers could be steel or concrete or they could be steel with a cladding of some sort. There are things we can do with the truss: we can vary the diagonals, we could have curved or straight top cord. Next time we see you we will have renderings and get your feedback.

A. There will certainly be community review opportunities with regard to the bridge's look. We'll put specific criteria into the design/build documents that will spell out coordination with the community with regard to appearance and other matters. Right now we have held back from showing you too many renderings because we're at the 10% design and don't want to share something with you that we cannot build.

Q. Did you say it would take 13 minutes for the vertical lift to open?

A. That's the full cycle time: 2.5 minutes to open, 8 minutes for a large ship like a tanker to transit the bridge, and then 3 minutes to get the bridge down again. The bascule bridge would have the same operating time, but a longer transit time and hence a longer cycle overall. We will be taking a trip on a tanker to judge this. The mariners are very concerned that the channel be wider than it is now.



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A. We posed this question several ways to the pilots' association. They told us that with a wider channel and a more robust, reliable bridge, they will feel comfortable making the call for an opening when they can see the bridge rather than while they are still out in the harbor. This means a shorter transit time and a shorter time from when traffic stops to when it restarts.

Q. When will you start construction?

A. We will be granting notice to proceed at the end of 2011 with an expectation of construction beginning in very late 2011 or early 2012.

Q. So does that mean that both this bridge and the Neponset Bridge will be under construction at once? What would that do to traffic?

A. The temporary bridge over the Fore River will not be impacted while we build the towers and lift span. That will be about 1 year of construction during which there's no impact to traffic. So there won't be much impact to being able to cross the Fore River while the Neponset Bridge is under construction.

Q. So if you are delayed on this project, would you lose the ABP funding?

A. Yes, we need to get started so that we can be finished by 2016 when the bond funding runs out.

Q. Will you use a union contractor based in the United States for this work?

A. Whether the project is built by a union company is in part dependent on the contractor. With regard to a US-based company the only companies that could bid on the project would be pre-qualified contractors in this particular classification of work. I would imagine there would be companies from across the United States who would want to take a shot at this project.

Q. While the City of Quincy has no official position on which bridge it would prefer, I am curious as to whether the French bridge you showed us represents your upper end.

A. The bridge in Bordeaux does give you a very special look, in part because the counterweights are inside the tower. That is a very new technology and it doesn't have a track record good or bad. You want to be at the cutting edge of technology, but not the bleeding edge. I think what we wanted to say with that bridge is that we can provide you with a vertical lift bridge that has those long, elegant towers. We understand from speaking with the community that a heavier look isn't attractive and



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we'll be working without architect to provide you with that look. Our architect is creative, imaginative and one of the best.

Q. How much taller would the new vertical lift structure be as compared to what's out there now?

A. At the meeting in Hingham we received quite a few comments regarding a dislike of the height of the towers. Since that meeting we've been able to bring the towers down by 25 feet. The towers of the ACROW bridge are already 210 feet so this won't be much higher than what you're used to already.

C. When you discuss the vertical lift you say that it would lower the number of openings, but you also say that you need a wide channel so as not to curtail development at the shipyard. I think those counteract each other. If there's increased activity at the shipyard, there may be more openings. We keep hearing things about what *could* happen at the shipyard and it never does. I think if the shipyard is reactivated, the air quality in the Fore River basin, which we've fought to improve for a long time, will be negatively impacted. I think this is the tail wagging the dog.

A. We cannot prevent or preclude development by the bridge we build. We need to address current traffic demand and current maritime demand. Would building a bridge that meets current needs attract more shipping? I don't know, but I do know that we have to build for anticipated needs based on current conditions. Limiting what sorts of business can go into the shipyard are more the responsibility of zoning in Braintree, Quincy and Weymouth.

Q. Could you have a vertical lift bridge without the towers?

A. Unfortunately, no; we cannot get 190 feet of vertical clearance in the open position without the towers. These towers won't look like four power plant smoke stacks all clustered together. The height will be close, but the width will be much less. Right now we're envisioning oval shaped towers of roughly 38 feet in width. However, we will be looking at other architectural options and taking your comments into consideration.

Q. How many tankers go through the bridge now? Is there any way you could install an off-shore oil platform and close the tank farm?

A. With regard to the exact number of ships, we can put that on the website. We also floated the idea of the off-shore terminal to the mariners and the environmental



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agencies. We were told that it was not feasible for this location. Has it worked other places in Massachusetts? Yes. Could it work here? Maybe, but you'll be in environmental permitting for it beyond the lifespan of the current temporary bridge.

Q. Is there a cost difference between these two bridges?

A. It's roughly \$240 million for each bridge at the outset. One of the key drivers behind our preference of the vertical lift bridge is that it will cost less to maintain in the long-term, have greater mechanical reliability and have fewer impacts to motorists when it does need maintenance.

Note by the author. At this point, North Weymouth resident Gary Peters showed the group a short video on a combination television/VCR that he had brought with him to the meeting. The video was a news item by Channel 5 dating to the time when the MWRA facility, power plant and temporary bridge were all under construction. The news item addressed the adverse impacts, particular with regard to noise, and air quality of this "triple construction" on the Fore River basin and residents' difficulty in having their concerns addressed by representatives of the various construction efforts. At the end of the video, Mr. Peters articulated his concern that a similar situation would recur and asked for assurances that it would not.

A. Thank you for that, Gary. The Fore River Neighborhood Association has commented to me on this topic as well as Gary himself. How many of you in this room were impacted during that process?⁸ With those projects, how many of them came before you and asked for your comments?⁹ MassDOT, represented by me and my team, have been before you multiple times. This is part of a thorough public outreach, that's why I gave Gary the opportunity to do this.

C. My name is Gary Peters. I'm a registered sanitarian and registered environmental health specialist. I served on the MWRA Citizens' Advisory Committee and Board of Directors representing Weymouth. I was closely involved with all of those projects and they were terrible. I want to move forward with you on what has been a good start. When you make NEPA filing, as this project is, you can get a qualitative exemption which is the lowest level of effort, an environmental assessment, a middle level of effort, or an environmental impact statement with a notice of intent. That's a highest level of effort. It makes you answer the question: what are the significant

⁸ It was roughly 1/3 of the audience.

⁹ Audience members indicated that none of the projects engaged in a meaningful public outreach.



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environmental impacts. A quarter of a billion dollar project, there will be significant impacts. We will surely disagree eventually over this project, but the EIS gives everyone an opportunity to have their say. There's a draft EIS which gets public comments and a final EIS which gets public comment as well. It's memorialized at the federal level in an enforceable document. This is important. You can't put our community through this again.

- A. Mr. Peters has spoken to me, EPA and FHWA on several occasions and I will say this: he is driven to help his community. Questions regarding noise, air quality and water quality are all being addressed by members of the MassDOT design team. They will document current conditions, past conditions, and ensure that we prevent the mess you endured last time. FHWA tells us what the right level of documentation and regulation is. They have directed us to go through the EA and not the EIS. We are moving forward with the EA to meet the FHWA directive. I receive and read all your comments. We assess from those comments what we need to forward with the project while avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts. We want to know your concerns, but I believe that none of you want to see this temporary structure in service for another 6-10 years while we work through an EIS. You are ready, as a community, to get rid of this ugly headache of a temporary bridge and build something new and permanent that meets your needs.

Q. Will there be a difference between where the two bridges connect to the existing roadways? I really prefer the vertical lift. There's nothing worse than when you're driving and you see the big, black, square of the bridge coming up and blocking the sunlight. With the vertical bridge, we'd see daylight, right?

- A. Thank you. Yes, you would be able to see more daylight when the bridge is up with a vertical lift bridge. There won't be any change to the rotary or the homes in Weymouth as a result of either bridge. That was one of our design criteria.

Q. Either way, nobody likes to look at drawbridges. This one will have huge towers, the bascule bridge will have a heavy roadway deck. You talked about everyone's interests, but I think this is really about Citgo. I feel like the people and MassDOT are over backward to accommodate them. Why can't they pay for this?

- A. Well, they are paying taxes just like other residents so in a way they have already paid for it, just like you have.

Q. Has anyone looked at the difference in maintenance challenges and costs between the two bridge types? Could you get Citgo to pay for that?



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- A. To answer your first question, I asked Mark and his team to look into the maintenance issue. In Cleveland, their DOT built a 200 foot bascule bridge after going through a study very similar to this one. Within six months, the mechanical systems on that bridge failed. It had to go through a full mechanical replacement and while the parts were ordered the bridge was up, closed to traffic and completely inoperable. The community and local businesses were harmed. We want a reliable bridge and we look to our designers to give us one. They have experience with this kind of thing. For the span length we need, the vertical lift is their recommendation.

With regard to getting Citgo to pay, they are a participant, just like you or any other member of the maritime community. They are not the driver. We cannot preclude future development in this designated port area. We are required to develop a bridge that serves the community, the commuters and the mariners for the next 75 years.¹⁰

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- C. Since I started coming to these meetings, I've looked at pictures of vertical lift bridges on the internet and most of them are not that pleasing except for the Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge by the Army Corps of Engineers. Would you be open to replicating that sort of bridge?

- A. We're considering all the opportunities on this. I don't know how your neighbors would feel about living next to something like that. Our bridge architect is world renowned and he will provide you with a vertical lift bridge that's attractive.

- C. During the Great Depression, there were amazing, beautiful structures built all over the country. Please don't just obsess about making this cost effective and try to make sure that some artistry goes into this so it's aesthetically pleasing.

- A. Our obsessions are quality and reliability. Whatever provides us with that while being attractive is what we'll aim to achieve.

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- Q. Could you bring in the bridge designer (architect) for the next meeting?

- A. Yes, we will have him present at our next meeting.

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- Q. Is the design/build concept new? Is this being entirely paid for by the federal government?

¹⁰ Representative Mariano indicated that his office had "asked Citgo about this 12 years ago and is still awaiting an answer."



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A. Design/build is somewhat new in Massachusetts, but it's a proven project delivery method. We're using it here to deliver this new bridge quickly, with fewer impacts, and on-time and on-budget. Massachusetts is paying 20% of the project cost through the ABP. Federal Highway is paying for 80%.

Q. Will the new bridge have a heated deck surface?

A. No, it won't, but one of the reasons we're going for a paved surface is so that we can plow, sand and salt like on a regular roadway or fixed bridge.

C. It seems to me that the driving force behind this is the USCG and that we'll be getting a vertical lift bridge. I think we should concentrate on getting the best looking vertical lift bridge we can.

Next Steps

The next public involvement milestone will be a public information meeting tentatively set for mid-June 2010.



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End of Meeting

Note to the Reader: the materials made available through this section of the website have been developed by the project team to support the public involvement process. As the materials cover roughly a year's worth of meetings, the reader should assume that all materials reflect the project team's best understanding of the project at the time prepared. Later materials offer the reader a deeper and clearer look at the project and should be assumed to supersede earlier materials.

These minutes are a close representation of what transpired at the meeting summarized herein, but should not be considered a verbatim transcript. Contact information provided by meeting attendees has been removed to protect their privacy.
