

NEEDHAM LINE



ROSLINDALE VILLAGE Robert Street Bridge Replacement

MBTA Robert Street Bridge Replacement Project Virtual Public Information Session via Zoom Thursday, July 16, 2020 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

MBTA Team Attendees

Mike Ryan, MBTA
Frank Tramontozzi,
MBTA
Trish Foley, MBTA

Project Team Attendees

Alan Belniak, VHB
Bryan Delaney, Barletta
Kelsey Munns, VHB
Sarah Paritsky, RVA
Robert Penfield, VHB
Amanda Poggenburg,
RVA

Public Attendees

(from Zoom login names)

Susan Backstrom
Sarah Brooks
Hayden Chernow
Jennifer DiMarco
Matthew Dimare
Caroline Downing
Mary Flahery
Alia Forrest
Steve Gag
Anthony Giordano
John Griffin
Anne Kelly
Dennis Kirkpatrick

George Marsh
Janice McKeown
Scott Miles
Jessica Mink
Thomas Papatthasiou
Gina Perille
Patrick Ruby
Hilary Sullivan
David Wean
Judy Yen
Pat Yingling
Chrfr
Gerard
Timothy
Will

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to present a construction update so stakeholders know what to expect during replacement of the bridge and answer questions from the public.

Meeting Format

The virtual meeting was hosted via Zoom and began with a presentation at 6:00 PM followed by time for public comment and questions.

Materials (Available on project website prior to the meeting)

- Presentation

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mike Ryan, MBTA Project Manager, welcomed the public to the Robert Street Bridge Replacement Project virtual public information session. Mr. Ryan noted the Governor's Modified Open Meeting Regulations, which were signed into law March 12, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alan Belniak, VHB, outlined the public meeting process via Zoom. Instructions on how to join and participate in the meeting were posted in advance on the website and linked from meeting notifications. All public participants would be muted during the presentation but could send written questions at any time. Attendees could also virtually raise their hand, which signaled they wanted to verbally submit a question or comment to the project team. During the Q&A portion, the project team would respond to written questions submitted through the Q&A feature, before unmuting those who virtually raised their hands in the order which they were raised. Mr. Belniak asked that attendees clearly identify themselves either verbally when called upon during the Q&A or by renaming themselves in Zoom. He encouraged attendees that joined by phone to follow along with the presentation posted on the project event webpage. He also mentioned the project inbox (RobertStBridge@MBTA.com) will be monitored for questions and issues throughout construction.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Ryan reviewed the meeting agenda and introduced the Robert Street Bridge, which was originally built in 1898, rehabilitated in 1985, and is nearing the end of its useful life. Accompanying Mr. Ryan during this presentation were representatives from the project team, which includes Barletta Heavy Division, the general contractor; VHB, the designer; and RVA, the public outreach firm.

Mr. Ryan provided an overview of previous public outreach through the design and construction phases of the project. He explained that, in addition to the briefings and meetings, the team has ongoing coordination with the City of Boston and abutters and will provide updates on traffic and service impacts during construction through Variable Message Signs near the project site, email blasts, and the project website, mbta.com/RobertStBridge.

Mr. Ryan showed a map of the project location along the Needham Line just west of Forest Hills, near Roslindale Village Station. A closer view of the map is highlighted to distinguish the existing bridge structure and nearby landmarks, such as Roslindale Village Station, St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church, MBTA parking lots, and a condo building, as well as showing a rendering of the new bridge, which will have a design life span of 80 years. He also reviewed the existing conditions of the bridge before showing a rendering of the final condition of the three girder style bridge.

Mr. Ryan introduced Bryan Delaney, Barletta, to outline the construction staging, which has been separated into four major phases: Phase 1 will build the underground foundations of the bridge; Phase 2 will include the construction of the steel bridge; Phase 3 will move the assembled bridge into position after demolishing the existing bridge; and Phase 4 will include finishes such as replacing sidewalks, cleanup work on the abutments, and repaving the road.

Mr. Delaney explained that Phase 1, which began in early June and will continue into Fall 2020, includes setting up the long-term construction zone. This phase also includes some prep work for the new foundations. Phase 1 will maintain the existing traffic pattern of one lane in each direction but shifted toward the west abutment. One of the two sidewalks will remain open at all times (except for the weekend closure) for pedestrian access, with safe crossings on either side of the work zone. There will be no long-term impacts to the railroad during this phase (except during the weekend closure). Mr. Delaney explained that there will be one weekend railroad and

roadway closure during Phase 1 to allow the installation of drilled shaft foundations at the west abutment. This closure will take the Needham Line out of service for that weekend (though it only runs on Saturdays). Pedestrian access will still be available through tunnel detours to get around the job site. There will also be a vehicular detour in place. At the end of this phase, the foundations of the bridge will be in place.

Mr. Delaney reviewed Phase 2 of construction, which is scheduled for Spring and Summer (April to June) 2021, and will include delivery of steel and erection of the new bridge in a temporary location adjacent to the existing bridge. There will be similar traffic and pedestrian access as Phase 1, with one lane in each direction for vehicular traffic and one sidewalk open at all times for pedestrians. This phase will require a weekend roadway closure with no impact to the railroad, as most of the work will be completed on a Sunday. Once the main bridge structure has been assembled over Robert Street, crews will work on finishing details, such as waterproofing the bridge deck.

Phase 3 of construction, scheduled for June or July 2021, will include demolition of the existing bridge, installing the new bridge, and rebuilding track. Mr. Delaney explained that the bridge replacement will happen over a weekend closure of Robert Street and the railroad. Crews will start by removing the rail for a section of track and demolishing the existing bridge before moving the new steel structure into position with self-propelled modular transports. Once the new bridge is in place, crews will finish the detailing work and replace the tracks in time for Monday Commuter Rail service. A detour will be in place for the roadway closure and pedestrian access will be maintained through the tunnels.

Mr. Delaney explained that Phase 4, scheduled for July or August 2021, will replace sidewalks, clean and repoint masonry on the abutments, and repave the roadway. Robert Street will remain open and the railroad will not be impacted. Pedestrian access will be maintained with one sidewalk open at all times.

Impacts to Robert Street, in addition to the three weekend road closures, include temporary loss of on-street parking spaces adjacent to or under the bridge during construction and temporary traffic controls, such as shifting lanes and occasionally alternating traffic under police control. Pedestrian access will be maintained with one sidewalk open at all times, except during weekend closures when pedestrians will be detoured to tunnels on either side of the job. Commuter Rail Service will also be impacted by two weekend diversions. Mr. Delaney reviewed the detour route, which redirects vehicular traffic up Belgrade Ave. to W. Roxbury Parkway and provides pedestrian access through tunnels, one on the northern side of Roslindale Village Station and the other midway through Fallon Field.

Mr. Ryan ended the formal presentation by providing the project website (www.MBTA.com/RobertStBridge), email (RobertStBridge@mbta.com) and noted that attendees who provided email addresses will be added to the project email list to receive updates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Mr. Ryan introduced Sarah Paritsky, RVA, who explained that she will be facilitating the Q&A portion of the presentation. She asked any elected officials in attendance to use the raise hand

feature. Seeing that none were in attendance, Ms. Paritsky opened the Q&A to questions submitted through the Q&A feature.

David Wean asked if the requests made at the previous meeting to make the bridge more attractive with artistic lighting on the underside, preservation of trees on Robert Street, and for the bridge to be wide enough to accommodate the Gateway Path extension or the addition of a second track resulted in changes to the design and construction plan and if other changes were made. Mr. Ryan replied that the team did make some changes in the design or construction sequence to accommodate some of the questions from the previous meeting. He said lighting is not a requirement for the size and open span of the bridge, so they did not include it in the design. Crews have already taken down the trees that needed to be taken down and the other trees have protection around them to make sure they aren't damaged during construction. He also noted that the new bridge substructure was designed to accommodate the potential addition of a second track.

Alia Forrest asked how the general public will be notified about the closures and if there will be signage, noting that it will be important to know for the Farmers Market. Mr. Ryan replied that there will be Variable Message Signs in addition to the email blasts sent out with traffic and construction impacts. He said the team is aware of the Farmers Market on Saturdays and will work with the Roslindale group that runs those events (later identified as Roslindale Village Main Streets) to make sure they are aware of the dates for the closures. Ms. Paritsky noted that attendees who provided an email address will be added to the project email list, who will receive an announcement of weekend closures, and anyone can sign-up on the website.

Jennifer DiMarco asked when in August 2020 the weekend closure is expected. Mr. Delaney replied that the project team should know in the next couple of weeks and will get that information out to the public as soon as they can, but the closure will not be at the beginning of August.

Dennis Kirkpatrick said both pedestrian tunnels are poorly lit and need new lighting and that the tunnel connecting Belgrade and Ainswoth floods with heavy rain. Mr. Ryan replied that the project team will notify the maintenance department about the tunnel lighting. He also said the team will check the weather for the weekend closures and will not move forward with the closure if there's torrential rain so there would be no need for the pedestrian detour.

Ms. Paritsky opened the Q&A to verbal questions and provided instructions on how attendees could raise their hand via computer or over the phone.

Thomas Papathanasiou said he was concerned about a design issue and that at the last meeting, the team had spoken about how this bridge replacement is similar to the W. Roxbury bridge replacement, but that this new bridge will not be aesthetically similar to the W. Roxbury bridge. He said, based on the graphics, he believes the contractor will be enlarging the wall on the station side and decreasing the size of the sidewalk. He asked why the width of the sidewalk cannot be maintained, noting a concern that the wall may also reduce visibility on the road. Mr. Ryan replied that while both bridges are similar in the accelerated methods, there are some design differences. He said some of the micropiles on the station side are coming outside the

existing face of the abutment due to the fact that they can't impact the station and the platform. Even with the abutment coming out, there will be a gain in pedestrian clearance since the original bridge is three spans and the piling comes down into the existing sidewalk, which will not be case with the new bridge. During demolition, crews will take out the existing piling and, in the final phase, the sidewalks will be poured new, the curb will be reset, and the road will be repaved.

Hilary Sullivan said she is a Board Member and volunteer with Roslindale Village Main Streets. She said they are working on a redesign of Alexander the Great Park, a small pocket park located just below the bridge, with grant funds so they cannot delay work. The work planned includes painting and planting to improve the park and make it more accessible and hopes the work will not be impacted by the bridge replacement. They are also interested in adding LED lighting to the park and are hoping to work with the MBTA around electricity use. Mr. Ryan encouraged Ms. Sullivan to reach out to the project team to coordinate on work. He noted that the lighting is not park of this project and they will need to work with the MBTA's Transit-oriented Development (TOD) Group.

John Griffin said he saw one of the reasons for the bridge replacement is to bring the bridge into a State of Good Repair and asked if there are any concerns before completion of the replacement. Mr. Ryan replied that there is nothing to worry about, that the bridge was originally built in 1898 and rehabilitated in 1985 and has outlived its lifespan. It is no longer sufficient to carry train loads with today's standards. The rating on the bridge is poor but it's not a safety concern that would require shutting down the bridge.

Anthony Giordano asked if the parking spaces will not be back until the end of the project. Mr. Ryan replied that the parking spaces under the bridge will be out of service until later in construction.

Thomas Papathanasiou said the abutment on the station side will be in the shadows and that lighting would be beneficial as the shadows may create a safety issue. Mr. Ryan replied that the bridge sizing and shape do not require lighting, so it was not incorporated into this project.

David Wean asked if there will be an opportunity for the community or a second project to add lighting to the bridge, a community sponsored improvement to the bridge. He also asked if the bus stop on the station side will be restored and when or, if not, where it's going. Mr. Ryan replied that a community program for the lighting could be accommodated and would need to be coordinated through the TOD Group at the MBTA. During construction, the bus stop for Route 51 has been relocated and is just around the corner on Belgrade Ave., now at the same stop as Routes 14, 30, 35, 36, and 37. The stop will be restored under the bridge after construction. The bench and mailbox will also be returned.

George Marsh asked why the bridge has to be a dark color. Mr. Ryan replied that the bridge will be black for technical reasons and due to the paint color durability, which provides the lifespan the MBTA is looking for.

Ms. Paritsky ended the Q&A section of the presentation and thanked everyone for their attendance and active participation. She reminded the audience of the project website and explained that a recording of this meeting will be posted on the project website soon.